**Assertiveness**

**Learning outcomes**

Define assertiveness

Types of communication styles

Benefits  of Assertive communication

Risk of Assertive communication

What do assertive behaviors/characteristics look like

Assertiveness is expressing a point of view clearly and directly while respecting others. Assertive communication minimizes conflict, controls anger, better meets an individual needs, and has more positive relationships with others.

**Types of communication styles**

Assertive communication- Recommended and most effective communication style. "I" statements are the hallmark of using this communication.

Passive communication- avoiding saying what one thinks and feels. Passive communicators avoid their needs, prefer to please people, and are submissive.

Passive aggressive communication- is a pattern of indirectly expressing negative feelings instead of openly addressing them. Passivity exists on the surface, while the aggressive simmers beneath. This style is very toxic in the workplace, spreading discontent and resentment in the team.

Aggressive communication – is described as expressing one's feelings and opinions at the expense of others, ignoring others' rights to support their own. Argues when faced with a disagreement or when they do not get their own.

Manipulative communication- is a pattern of using cunning tactics, deceit, and influence to control the outcome of the conversation and, thus, the actions of the people around them. Manipulative tactics such as gaslighting, lying, blaming, criticizing, and shaming can damage a person's well-being.

**Benefits of assertive communication**

* **Reduce stress and anxiety**: Reduce tensions internally and with others.
* **Increase self-esteem and credibility**: Assertiveness is a form of self-affirmation. When one freely expresses what they think and feel, self-love increases.
* **Increased self-confidence and sense of contro**l: Promotes trust in judgment, respect for own wants, and relies less on other people's opinions and the unconscious forces within you, increasing autonomy.
* **Increase self-knowledge and better-managed emotions**: assertiveness requires being more aware of one's emotions, thoughts, and desires. As self-knowledge increases, one will understand themselves better and channel emotions more effectively.
* **Reduce conflicts and improve relationships**: there is less chance of conflict when one is clear and frank but at the same time respectful. Assertiveness promotes mutual respect and thus builds healthier relationships. Increase empowerment, better decision-making capacity, and job satisfaction.

**Risks of assertive communication**

* **Risk of not listening to others**
* **It may appear too arrogant**
* **It can reflect over-confidence**

**Assertive behaviors/characteristics**

An assertive person is emotionally honest, self-aware, direct, self-enhancing, and expressive. They use direct eye contact, assertive stance, and the four rules of assertiveness. 1) here is what happened; 2) here's how I feel about it;3) here's why I feel that way, so 4) here's what I want.

**Scenario**

Tayla works in the intensive care unit. Today, Tayla checked the assignment sheet and got the report. Tayla noticed that her second patient was in the operating theatre for open heart surgery and would be arriving later. Tayla is a trained intensive care nurse, but it has been a year since she has provided immediate post-operative care for open heart surgery patients, and she does not feel equipped.

Tayla came looking for you since you are in charge of this shift and asked for a quick meeting.

Tayla:

I am sorry to bother but need to let you know of my concern with the assignment given to me today.

Tayla, all the nurses are trained in intensive care nursing so there should not be assignment concerns

Player:

Tayla, the day is too busy for complains

What concerns do you have?

Tayla:

I noticed that I am assigned to look after the patient post-op open heart surgery, but I am not happy to take on that care. I have not looked after a post-op open heart patient for a year. Can I be assigned another patient?

I have no one else as several sick calls came in. You can get some time to review the protocols to remind yourself. You will remember once you read the protocols.

Tayla, I was not aware that you have not looked after a post-op open heart surgery patient for so long. I would love to reassign you. Unfortunately, I have several sick calls today and you are the most senior RN on duty.

Player:

You cannot have another assignment. You are an ICU RN and the care will come back to you as you are trained.

I am concern about this assignment. It may not be safe for me or the patient. Have you tried calling staff of to see if anyone suitable can come in?

Tayla:

Player:

Yes, I called everyone before I did the assignment. No one is available. Can I give you some time to review the protocols?

I am listening and hearing you. Your request is unreasonable, and you are insubordinate. You are a trained ICU nurse.

You being resistant to the assignment is not helping your team. As a senior nurse, you show no flexibility or willingness to help.

Tayla:

How is reading the protocols helpful? Will I have enough time to do so?

Player:

According to our records, when you came here, you placed very experience on the skills sheet given to you at the time.

I know you are the one who will be caring for the patient, and your training should make it possible for you to do it.

The surgery started late, so the patient would not arrive until late evening. I am happy to assist you and support you until you feel comfortable.

Tayla:

Yes, although I preferred another assignment. If I review the protocols and do some quick revision of the care expected, that will help immensely. Your assistance and support will make me feel more comfortable.

Player:

This conversation is finish. There is no help. This is the best we can do.

Tayla, it is what it is today. You have been a senior long enough to understand the staff challenges. Please understand the situation.

Tayla, thank you for understanding and letting me know how you feel. I appreciate your honesty and will do everything to make sure you are supported.

The total responses are 5 for this player. The result is out of 100%; therefore, each response weighs 20%. If the player got three (3) responses correct, the total would be 60%, that is 3/5 x 100= 60%