Assertive Communication Best Practices

Wording Choices

- Use statements that begin with "I feel, I think, I want, I would prefer".
- Avoid using "you" statements that accuse. Many people interpret statements that begin with "you" as blaming and often become defensive in response.
- Eliminate "should", "ought to", and "have to" statements
- A simple "no" is enough, don't give excuses.

Don't Minimize Your Comments

- Eliminate adding qualifying statements to your opinions or requests (e.g., "you'll probably think this is crazy, but…", "…I guess", "but that's just my opinion").
- Reduce tag questions (e.g., "does that make sense?", "is that okay?").

The Assertive Mindset

- Take responsibility for your own thoughts, opinions and actions. Avoid taking responsibility for others.
- You have a right to your opinions and decisions.
- Discern between something that is **your** problem from something that is **their** problem.