

# SETTING ASSERTIVE GOALS

## GOALS:

- To decide on areas for personal growth in assertiveness.
- To discover our present strengths in assertiveness.
- To set assertive goals.

## RATIONALE:

In assertiveness training, goal setting by participants is a key component to encourage skill practise and behaviour change. Inventories are often used for the purpose of:

**Assessing Needs:** To help participants recognize particular situations where:

- It is difficult for them to be assertive and
- They are assertive already

**Setting Goals:** To encourage participants to set short-term goals based on areas identified in the inventories

**Monitoring Progress:** To allow participants to report back to the group on progress and success in achieving their goals.

**Training Awareness** To provide the coach with a clear pictures of the kinds of situations where participants need to gain assertive skills.

## MATERIALS NEEDED:

Flipchart, markers, pencils, a copy of one of the ***Assertiveness Inventories*** for each participant (see attached samples).

## **METHOD:**

### **Warm up:**

Ask participants to form a line facing you. Read selected items from an assertiveness inventory and ask participants to move forward or backward according to how assertive they are in each situation. (After each item, participants return to the centre line).

### **Questions to consider:**

- What did you observe in this exercise?
- What does this tell you about assertiveness?
- What did you learn about your own level of assertiveness?

### **Theory:**

See Theory Box.

### **Exercise:**

Invite participants to fill out an assertiveness inventory (see attached samples). Ask participants to choose three areas where they want to be more assertive.

Refer back to the guidelines for goal setting. Then ask participants to write out three specific small behavioural goals relating to the three chosen areas and hand them in to the coach. (Explain that the goal sheets will be handed back to participants at the end of the course).

Encourage participants to share results of the inventory with a partner, if desired.

Ask participants in a round robin style what they learned about themselves in doing the inventory.

### **Note to Coach:**

This is a good time to emphasize the situational nature of assertiveness. Most people are assertive in some situations and not in others.

It is also extremely important to explain to the group that the inventory is a stimulus for self-assessment as opposed to an objective rating of one's assertiveness. The inventories included here are not valid psychological tests. It is not a good idea to compare scores or rank individuals by scores. This would not be meaningful and might be damaging to someone's self-esteem if they take the scores too seriously.

**Variation:**

See Section III **Training Strategies and Techniques: Goal Setting**, p. 38, for methods other than inventories.

**Closer:**

Ask participants to complete the following sentences:

*"One area in which I am already assertive is..."*

*"One area in which I would like to be more assertive is..."*

**EVALUATION:**

Review the session and ask participants what they have learned.

# THEORY BOX

## GUIDELINES FOR GOAL SETTING

- Start small
- Widen your comfort zone - take one risk a day
- Build up step by step from the least difficult to more challenging goals
- Be specific. The more specific a goal, the more likely it is to be reached. For Example: "*I will ask my boss for a 4% raise on Monday morning May 23<sup>rd</sup>*" is better than "*I want to be more assertive at the office.*"

## SOME EXAMPLES OF ASSERTIVE GOALS

- To ask Mr. Smith not to smoke in my car the next time he starts to light up.
- To say "nice day" to the lady at the drug store tomorrow.
- To ask my spouse to help with the dishes on Friday.
- To refuse to do extra work at my job next week.
- To tell my friend that I can't spend as much time with her this month.
- To ask my landlord to fix the broken window by the end of the month.
- To speak three times in each staff meeting.
- To limit my phone calls with Bill's mother to five minutes.

# ASSERTIVENESS INVENTORY (A) - General Assertiveness

**Answer the statements attached using the following rating system:**

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always

1. I can say **no** to high-pressure sales people \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. I can return defective merchandise to the store. \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. I can speak out if someone butts in front of me in line. \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. I can listen to someone point out a mistake I made without becoming defensive or upset. \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. I can speak in front of a group without undue anxiety. \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. I can complain about an unreasonable workload. \_\_\_\_\_
  
7. I can maintain my point of view in the face of disagreement from an aggressive, opinionated person. \_\_\_\_\_
  
8. I am able to negotiate salary increases, changes in job title or function. \_\_\_\_\_
  
9. I am able to ask questions and request further information without fear of sounding stupid or incompetent. \_\_\_\_\_
  
10. I can object when I feel I am being treated unfairly. \_\_\_\_\_
  
11. I can stand up for my rights when someone in authority is rude or unreasonable. \_\_\_\_\_
  
12. I can insist that my landlord (mechanic, repairman, etc.) make repairs, adjustments or replacements which are his responsibility. \_\_\_\_\_
  
13. I can request the return of borrowed money or items without being apologetic. \_\_\_\_\_
  
14. When I need help or a favour from a friend, I can ask directly for what I want rather than using indirect means like hinting. \_\_\_\_\_

- 15. I can make the first move towards beginning a friendship with someone I am getting to know. \_\_\_\_\_
- 16. I can refuse to do something I don't feel like doing, without feeling guilty. \_\_\_\_\_
- 17. I am able to openly express love and affection. \_\_\_\_\_
- 18. I can ask my roommate/spouse to take on a fairer share of the household chores. \_\_\_\_\_
- 19. I can say **no** to the demands of close friends and relatives that I do things their way. \_\_\_\_\_
- 20. When someone does something that bothers me I am able to express my feelings. \_\_\_\_\_
- 21. I can accept a compliment graciously without discounting it in my own mind. \_\_\_\_\_
- 22. I can accept my own mistakes and imperfections. \_\_\_\_\_
- 23. I can make my own decisions and feel good about them. \_\_\_\_\_
- 24. I am (or would be) a good model of assertiveness for my own child. \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total your scores to assess how assertive you are in each area:**

- 95-120** Assertive
- 75-94** Moderately assertive
- 50-74** Inconsistently assertive
- under 50** Needs practise