ASSERTIVENESS SKILLS

INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

1/2-DAY COURSE

HRDQ
Instructional Design and Learning Philosophy

We are committed to providing the best core-skills content possible for Instructor-Led Training (ILT). The following principles are applied in the development of programs:

Sound Instructional Design

All course content is developed using a variety of research techniques. These include:

- Brainstorming sessions with target audience
- Library research
- Online research
- Customer research (focus groups, surveys, etc.)
- Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)
- Interviews with trainers

Expert instructional designers create imaginative and innovative solutions for your training needs through the development of powerful instructional elements. These include:

- Learning objectives provide effective tools for managing, monitoring, and evaluating training
- Meaningful connections between the topic and students’ past, present, and future
- Appropriate organization of essential ideas helps students to focus on what they need to know in order to learn
- Modeling techniques demonstrate useful behaviors and problem-solving skills
- Active application, the cornerstone to learning, helps students immediately apply what they have learned to a real-life situation
- Consistent instructions and design help students learn and retain new information
- Accelerated learning techniques create interactive, hands-on involvement to accommodate different learning styles

Application of Adult Learning Styles

Adults learn best by incorporating their personal experiences with training and by applying what they learn to real-life situations. Our experienced instructional designers incorporate a variety of accelerated learning techniques, role-plays, simulations, discussions, and lectures within each course to appeal to all learning styles and ensure that the ideas and information will be retained.
Customizing Your Program

There are two ways you can customize this program: 1) Customize the content and 2) Customize the format.

Customizing the content is easy. The Instructor Guide and Participant Guide are created in Word, so you can simply modify the content just as you would any Word document. Some common reasons for customizing content include:

- Changing examples to fit your industry or work environment
- Modifying content to match work rules and procedures
- Adding, deleting or rearranging content to meet training time constraints

The other way to customize the program is to change the formatting. Typically, organizations will do this to add their corporate logo and/or colors, or it may just be an issue of personal preference. Again, treat the Instructor Guide and/or Participant Guide as you would any Word document. For help using Word, consult the Microsoft website.

Preparing for the Training

As you know, preparation is the key to conducting an effective training. Here are some issues to consider:

**Logistics**

- Advertise the training with enough advance notice that participants can block it out on their calendar. Consider contacting potential participants’ managers to encourage their attendance.
- Send a confirmation notice before the training, reminding participants of the date, time and location.
- Room setup: Ideally, use round tables to facilitate partner and small group interaction.

**Equipment and Supplies**

In order for the training to go smoothly, have these supplies and equipment on hand:

- Name tags
- Flip chart and markers, tape
- Laptop with projector (for the PowerPoint)
- Blank paper and pens/pencils, sticky notes
- Timer or watch
- Water for yourself and the participants
- Beverages and snacks (optional)
# Course Activities

## Module One: Understanding Assertiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Activity</th>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Course Objectives</td>
<td>Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Assessment</td>
<td>Written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Definition of Assertiveness</td>
<td>Exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Assertiveness Continuum</td>
<td>Facilitation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Blocks to Assertiveness</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Foundations of Assertiveness</td>
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</tbody>
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## Module Two: Assertive Behaviors and Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Activity</th>
<th>Segment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assertive Language</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assertive Behaviors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Putting It Together</td>
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</table>
Course Activities (cont.)

Module Three: Non-Assertive Behaviors and Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Activity</th>
<th>Segment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passive Language and Behaviors</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Passive-Aggressive Language and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviors</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive Language and Behaviors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing Non-Assertive Behaviors</td>
<td>Written Exercise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Module Four: Straight Talk in Any Situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Activity</th>
<th>Facilitation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saying No</td>
<td>Facilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling Conflict Assertively</td>
<td>Group Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling Criticism Assertively</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with a Boss or Person in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Contents

Module One: Understanding Assertiveness ......................................................... 1
Course Objectives..................................................................................................... 2
Self-Assessment ....................................................................................................... 3
Definition of Assertiveness ........................................................................................ 5
The Assertiveness Continuum................................................................................... 6
Blocks to Assertiveness ............................................................................................ 7
Foundations of Assertiveness ................................................................................... 8
Module Two: Assertive Behaviors and Language ................................................ 9
Assertive Language ................................................................................................ 10
Assertive Behaviors ................................................................................................ 12
Putting It Together ................................................................................................... 13
Module Three: Non-Assertive Behaviors and Language .................................... 14
Passive Language and Behaviors ........................................................................... 15
Passive-Aggressive Language and Behaviors ........................................................ 16
Aggressive Language and Behaviors ...................................................................... 17
Recognizing Non-Assertive Behaviors .................................................................... 18
Module Four: Straight Talk in Any Situation ....................................................... 20
Saying No ............................................................................................................... 21
Handling Conflict Assertively ................................................................................... 22
Handling Criticism Assertively ................................................................................. 23
Dealing with a Boss or Person in Power ................................................................. 24
Appendix ............................................................................................................... 25
Action plan .............................................................................................................. 26
Course review ......................................................................................................... 27
Suggested resource list ........................................................................................... 29
Course evaluation ................................................................................................... 30
Module One

Understanding Assertiveness
Course Objectives

Successful completion of this course will increase your knowledge and ability to:

◊ Define assertiveness
◊ Recognize the assertiveness continuum
◊ Identify personal blocks to assertiveness
◊ Demonstrate assertive language and behaviors
◊ Avoid language and behaviors that are not assertive (passive, aggressive and passive-aggressive behaviors)
◊ Use assertive behaviors in everyday situations

Trainer Notes

5 minutes

Introduce yourself and provide a brief background if participants don’t know you. Go over logistics (schedule, breaks, restrooms, etc.) and any ground rules for the day. Typical ground rules include no electronics in use, show respect for every participant, participate fully, no dominating or interrupting, etc.

Review the course objectives with participants.
## Self-Assessment

*Instructions: Read each statement and place a checkmark in the column that most closely describes you.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nothing like me</th>
<th>Somewhat like me</th>
<th>A lot like me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am direct and clear when expressing myself.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I rarely disagree with anyone.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I place great value on expressing my thoughts and feelings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. I have changed jobs because I didn’t want to work with someone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Other people find me approachable.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I lose my temper easily.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. I speak up confidently in group situations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. I have ended relationships rather than talk through differences.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. I secretly think I’m right but don’t often say it.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. I discuss my beliefs but don’t expect others to always agree with me.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Trainer Notes**

5 minutes

Activity: Allow several minutes for participants to complete the self-assessment. The odd numbers are aspects of assertiveness so people who checked the “a lot like me” column frequently feel they act assertively, while those who checked more in the “nothing like me” column act less assertively. Conversely, the even numbers reflect a lack of assertiveness (either passive, aggressive or passive-aggressive), so those who checked “a lot like me” for most of these act less assertively while those who checked “nothing like me” act more assertively.

Note that for many people, whether and when they act assertively depends on the situation and the people involved. They may behave assertively at home but not at work, or vice versa. The skills we’ll learn today should help participants to act assertively whenever they choose to.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nothing like me</th>
<th>Somewhat like me</th>
<th>A lot like me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. When someone raises their voice, it makes me tense and I want to leave.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. If someone asks me to do something, I don’t always feel compelled to say yes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. People are afraid to disagree with me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I don’t hesitate to ask for help when I need it.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I apologize to end an argument even when I know I did nothing wrong.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Definition of Assertiveness

Your definition of assertiveness:
________________________________________________
________________________________________________
________________________________________________
________________________________________________

Practical definitions
◊ Stating your views clearly and articulately
◊ Having the ability to express your own feelings, even about difficult issues, in a way that is respectful and honest
◊ Standing up for your own needs without violating the needs of others

Benefits of assertiveness
◊ Express your own needs and get them met
◊ Respect and communicate with others effectively
◊ Influence others in order to gain acceptance, agreement or behavior change

"Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don’t matter and those who matter don’t mind."
-- Dr. Seuss

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Trainee Notes
5 minutes
Activity: Before sharing the “official” definition of assertiveness, have participants define assertiveness in their own words. They can work in small groups, or you can work as an entire group and record their answers on a flip chart. Debrief by having participants or groups share their answers.

Review the practical definitions of assertiveness and the benefits of assertiveness.

Emphasize right away that assertiveness is not aggressiveness—it’s not about getting what you want at others’ expense. It’s about communicating effectively to get your own needs met without disrespecting others.

Definition of Assertiveness
- Dictionary: A method of training individuals to act in a bold, self-confident manner
- Practical: Stating your views clearly and articulately, having the ability to express your own feelings, standing up for your own needs without violating the needs of others
The Assertiveness Continuum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passive</th>
<th>Passive-Aggressive</th>
<th>Assertive</th>
<th>Aggressive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Passive**
- Uncomfortable expressing needs and wants
- Quickly backs down to avoid conflict
- Concerned with the judgments and perceptions of others

**Passive-Aggressive**
- Avoids making a direct response
- Demonstrates feelings of aggression in passive ways, such as procrastination, intentional inefficiency, sullenness
- Lots of sarcasm and indirect criticism

**Assertive**
- Comfortable expressing needs and wants
- Can communicate feelings without attacking or disrespecting others
- Aims to consider win-win solutions

**Aggressive**
- Gets needs met at the expense of others
- Uses attacking tactics such as yelling, door slamming, desk pounding, etc.
- Concerned solely with own feelings

Summary of continuum: When people behave passively, they violate their own rights. When people behave aggressively (or passive-aggressively), they violate other people’s rights. When people behave assertively, they take care of their own rights without violating the rights of others.
Blocks to Assertiveness

◊ Wanting people to like you
◊ Needing to be responsive to people with different agendas: supervisor, peers, customers/clients
◊ Feeling responsible for the harmony of your group/department

Activity
In what situation(s) are you most likely to act assertively?

In what situation(s) are you least likely to act assertively?

With whom are you most likely to act assertively?

With whom are you least likely to act assertively?

Trainer Notes

10 minutes

As we mentioned, most people behave assertively some of the time. Why don’t we behave assertively all of the time?

It usually depends on the situation, or the particular person(s) involved.

Activity: Allow several minutes for participants to reflect which situations and people are most or least likely to prompt them to act assertively. Debrief by sharing with a partner or in small groups.

Blocks to Assertiveness

- Wanting to be liked
- Needing to be responsive to different agendas
- Feeling responsible for group harmony
Foundations of Assertiveness

◊ Self-worth
◊ Knowledge
◊ Practice and experience

Your assertive rights

◊ “My needs are as important as (but not more important than) anyone else’s.”
◊ “It’s OK to meet my needs and/or ask to have them met.”
◊ “I accept responsibility for my thoughts, feelings, opinions and behavior. I cannot be responsible for the thoughts, feelings, opinions and behaviors of others.”

Activity

Instructions: Replace each negative “block” statement with positive self-talk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block Statement</th>
<th>Positive Self-Talk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“If I assert myself, no one will like me.”</td>
<td>“It’s okay for my wants and needs to be as important as those of others.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I am worthy and deserve to have my needs met.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If I’m not demanding, no one will listen to me.”</td>
<td>“I can express my needs clearly without disrespecting others.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I have to give in to keep the peace.”</td>
<td>“Conflict isn’t always harmful and can lead to productive solutions.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If I make one person happy, that will make someone else unhappy.”</td>
<td>“I am not responsible for other people’s happiness.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What our Clients Say about the Reproducible Training Library

I have used many of the HRDQ Reproducible Training programs and I can't say enough good things about them. The content is easy to tailor—I've even combined programs to meet my clients’ specific needs. Not only am I able to provide my clients with a professionally developed, customized program at a reasonable price, but I've saved myself a lot of time and frustration, too. I plan to buy more programs in the future. I highly recommend them!

Rosemary C. Rulka, MS, SPHR
President
R.C. Rulka Consulting, LLC

We chose the Reproducible Training Library for the open-source format and customizable materials. The programs are well structured and rich with content. Preparation to delivery was less than 2 hours, and the addition of our company themes make the materials look like they were designed in house.

James T. Puett
Manager, Leadership and Organizational Development
Healthways Human Resources

Delivering high-quality, customized training has never been simpler.

The HRDQ Reproducible Training Library is your comprehensive source for soft-skills content that’s downloadable, customizable, reproducible, and affordable. From communication and leadership to team building, negotiating, and more, our experts have done the development work for you. Whether you use the materials “right out of the box” or tailor the content to your needs—download to delivery takes just a few clicks.

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