



Almost everyone has felt the frustration and disappointment of not being heard. For some people, a lack of confidence may prevent them from sharing their ideas. For others, the way they share their ideas alienates people and they end up having their ideas ignored.

A much more effective way of communicating is by being assertive. Assertive communication is based on a kind of mutual respect – respect for yourself and respect for others.

By respecting yourself, you realise that your opinions and needs are important and that it is your responsibility to share these. By respecting others, you realise that their opinions and needs are also important and that it is your responsibility to listen to these. Assertiveness aims for a win-win situation; a situation where the needs of both parties are met and everyone is satisfied with the outcome.

Like any skill, learning to become assertive takes practice and doesn't come naturally to everyone. Assertive communication requires that you:

1. **Be clear and unapologetic about your needs.** You can't expect to get what you want if no-one knows what you want.
2. **Listen and give feedback.** Make sure you are understanding the other person's perspective.
3. **Take a solution focused approach.** How can the situation be resolved?

Being assertive is not always easy and sometimes it helps to have an outside perspective on how you communicate.

If you feel that speaking with a counsellor might help you to communicate more assertively, call Converge International on 1300 our eap.