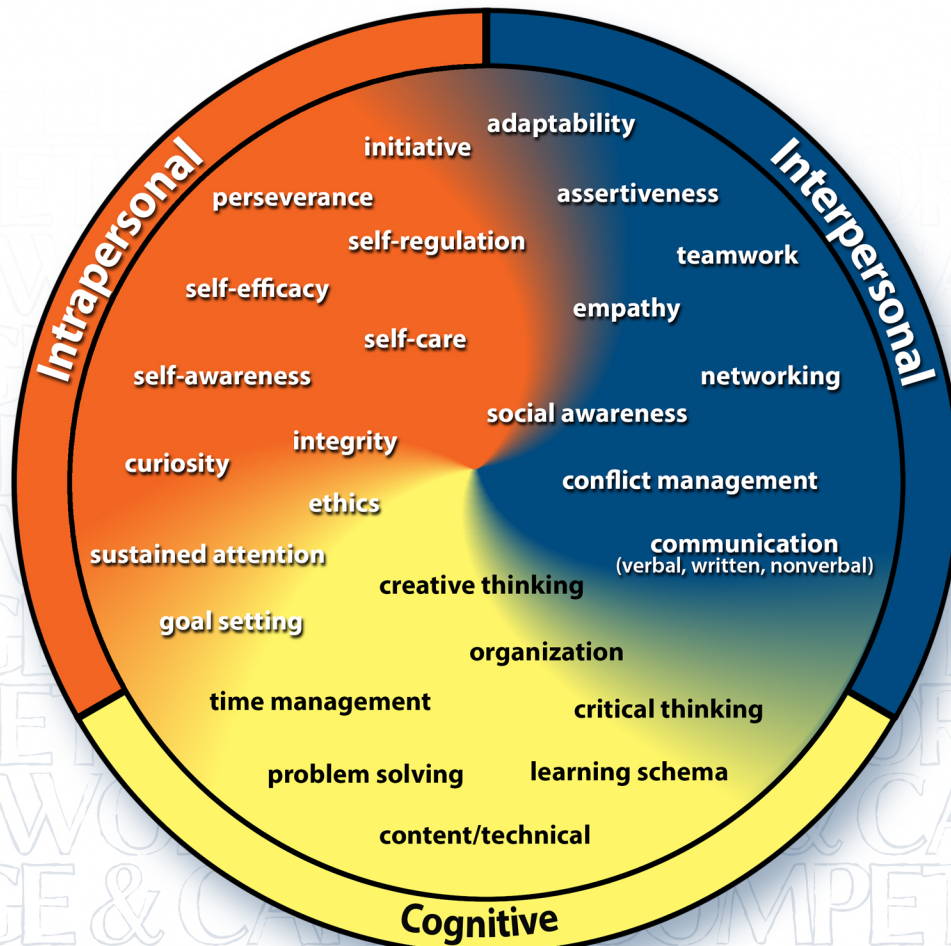


# ASSERTIVENESS

## LESSONS

### SECONDARY



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## Introduction

The *Assertiveness Lessons [Secondary]* contain eight units that build students' understanding and practice of assertiveness concepts. Each unit is designed to be taught across time and contains a series of instructional activities with specific student learning targets. The lessons were developed for students in Grades 7–12, but the primary and intermediate lessons can be used with students who require additional learning support. The scenarios within the *Assertiveness Lessons [Secondary]* can be adapted for adults or students in higher education.

## Instructional Activities

Instructional activities range in length from 20 to 30 minutes and should be taught sequentially. Scenarios, guiding questions, and writing prompts are included in the activities to build students' understanding of key concepts. Students learn and practice ten Assertiveness Strategies, which help them communicate their ideas respectfully, ask for what they need, and understand others' perspectives in various situations. These strategies can be generalized across school and home settings. The ten Assertiveness Strategies are:

1. **Identify Communication Types:** Understanding the difference between passive, assertive, and aggressive communication supports students in choosing the most appropriate communication type for various situations.
2. **Find My Feelings:** Knowing how to identify complex emotions and the reasons behind emotions helps students better understand themselves.
3. **Show Empathy:** Considering the perspectives of others, including their emotions, thoughts, and ideas, allows students to better understand others.
4. **Voice My Feelings:** Expressing their wants, needs, and thoughts respectfully helps students communicate appropriately and advocate for themselves.
5. **Listen and Summarize:** Listening and summarizing what was said fosters students' understanding of others and respectful social and academic discourse.
6. **Show Respect Without Words:** Using nonverbal communication skills allows students to convey respect and engage in more meaningful interactions.
7. **Speak My Mind and Be Kind:** Using a structure for expressing empathy while articulating their own wants, needs, and thoughts helps students to communicate clearly.
8. **Respect My Boundaries:** Identifying and maintaining personal boundaries helps students overcome peer pressure and reduces bullying.
9. **Do My Part:** Working well with others allows students to communicate their own ideas, listen to the ideas of others, and share in the workload, resulting in effective teamwork.
10. **Predict Outcomes:** Understanding how the communication type students use can affect a situation's outcome helps students choose the most appropriate communication type for the situation.

## Teaching Resources

Many of the instructional activities within the units include a prompt for students to demonstrate their knowledge of assertiveness concepts. A complementary workbook, [My Assertiveness Workbook](#), can

help educators document students' growth in assertiveness concepts, refine their assertiveness instruction, and provide individualized feedback to students. The activities can also be effectively taught without the workbook by asking students to respond to the prompts verbally or in writing.

You will refer to the [Assertiveness Definition](#) and [Strategies Posters](#) throughout assertiveness instruction. These should be displayed in the classroom for students to reference while learning and practicing assertiveness.

## Assessments

Students' growth in learning and practicing assertiveness should be measured. It is important to collect baseline data related to your students' current ability to be assertive. There are two assessment tools to measure your students' understanding and application of assertiveness concepts: the *Assertiveness Knowledge Test 7–12* and the *Assertiveness Performance-Based Observation*. Both are described below and are available for immediate use at [www.cccstudent.org](http://www.cccstudent.org).

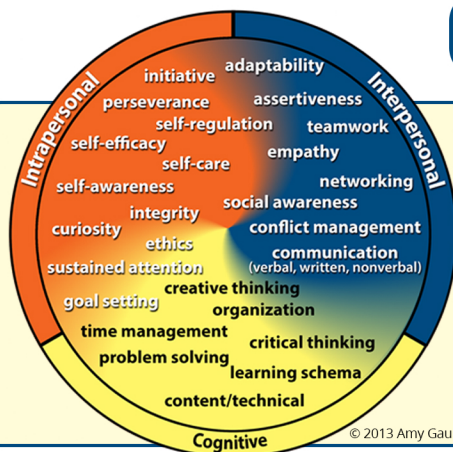
The *Assertiveness Knowledge Test 7–12* (Noonan, Gaumer Erickson, & Heger, 2024) is a curriculum-based measure that assesses students' knowledge of assertiveness concepts. The test includes multiple-choice, true/false, situational judgement, and short-answer items. The knowledge test is directly aligned to the lessons and should be used as a pre/post measure prior to and after teaching the assertiveness lessons. A self-reflection is also included, where students rate behaviors on a 5-point Likert-type scale from *Not Very Like Me* to *Very Like Me*. The results will help students measure their knowledge of specific assertiveness concepts and gauge their ability to apply that knowledge. For additional information on this assessment, see pages 1–3 of the [Technical Guide](#).

The *Assertiveness Performance-Based Observation* (Noonan & Gaumer Erickson, 2018) assesses how well students demonstrate assertive behaviors. It is appropriate for students of any age and can show growth when combined with explicit instruction and practice. This observation tool can be used at purposeful intervals to monitor the development of each student. Based on observations across time or in specific situations, the educator rates each student's assertive behaviors on a scale. For additional information on this assessment, see page 3 of the [Technical Guide](#).

To use the assessments, create an account on [www.cccstudent.org](http://www.cccstudent.org), a free assessment website (students do not need accounts). Once students have taken the *Assertiveness Knowledge Test 7–12* or you have observed their assertive behaviors using the *Assertiveness Performance-Based Observation*, you can view and analyze classroom and individual student results on this website. The assessment results can be used to help refine instruction, and students and educators can use the results to determine growth. Additional details for launching an assessment and reviewing the results are provided on the website.



# ASSERTIVENESS



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The **College and Career Competency Framework**, developed by Drs. Gaumer Erickson and Noonan at the University of Kansas, supports educators and families in developing resilient learners who collaborate to expand skills, express their wants and needs respectfully, and apply strategies to self-regulate and persevere. Visit [www.CCCFramework.org](http://www.CCCFramework.org) to learn more about College and Career Competencies.

## STUDENT IMPACTS

Teachers providing **assertiveness** instruction and classroom practice observe student growth, including:

- Improved communication
- Openness to constructive feedback
- Increased ability to express themselves
- Improved confidence in their own abilities
- Improved conflict management skills

Research in **elementary** and **secondary** education identifies proven student impacts from teaching **assertiveness**.

- Students who have received instruction in **assertiveness** improved their ability to seek assistance and supports (Buell & Snyder, 1981; Lane et al., 2006; Wolfe et al., 2012).
- **Assertiveness** training improves students' self-image and their ability to express themselves (Mohagheghi et al., 2022).
- Adolescents who are **assertive** have improved understanding and knowledge of academic content (Salari Koochfini & Ghasemali Kheirabadi, 2020).
- Students who are **assertive** have higher self-esteem, assert their rights, and self-regulate their emotional reactions (Parray et al., 2020).
- A student's level of **assertiveness** is a good predictor of their adjustment to university (Parmaksiz, 2019).
- **Assertiveness** training reduces instances of bullying (Buell & Snyder, 1981; Hall, 2006).

## DEFINITION

**Assertiveness** is expressing your wants, needs, and thoughts, even when it's difficult, while respecting others (Noonan & Gaumer Erickson, 2017).

Students use **assertiveness** strategies to communicate respectfully and understand others.



## RESOURCES

- **Instructional Activities** for teaching **assertiveness** strategies K–12
- **Teacher Testimonial Videos** for implementing **assertiveness**
- **Family Guidance** for building **assertiveness** in the home
- Measure student growth in **assertiveness** at [www.CCCStudent.org](http://www.CCCStudent.org)



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## Assessing Your Assertiveness Knowledge (Pretest)

**Materials** ([www.cccframework.org/asrt-lessons-sec/#pre](http://www.cccframework.org/asrt-lessons-sec/#pre)):

- *Assertiveness Knowledge Test 7–12* (online version; see pages 6–8 for the items)
- *Assertiveness Performance-Based Observation* (online version; see page 10 for the items)

**Preparation:** To record and access assessment results, you or your school will need an account on [www.cccstudent.org](http://www.cccstudent.org), a free assessment website. Follow the directions on the website to launch the *Assertiveness Knowledge Test 7–12*. Each assessment that you set up will have a specific code. Note the code for your test and provide that code and the link below to the students.

**Assessment Link:** [www.cccstudent.org](http://www.cccstudent.org)

**Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Administer the *Assertiveness Knowledge Test 7–12*

We recommend that students complete the *Assertiveness Knowledge Test 7–12* online. For the students to complete the assessment online, you or your school will need an account on [www.cccstudent.org](http://www.cccstudent.org), a free assessment website. Follow the directions on the website to launch the assessment, and title the pretest so that it is easy for you to identify (e.g., “2024 Assertiveness Pretest Grade 7”). On the website, the students will receive personalized reports that you can also access.

Explain to the students that for Items 1–20, they will use a 5-point scale to rate how each of the statements applies to them. Each rating should be based on how they feel. For example, if students express their opinions, even if others disagree with them, they will choose *Very Like Me*. In the visual on the next page, “N” denotes items that are reversed or negatively worded. Lower scores on these items denote more assertive behavior. Assure the students that there are no correct or incorrect answers and that everyone’s responses may be different because we all have our own thoughts and feelings. Tell the students to pause and think about how they feel about a statement before marking it. Then the students will complete the second part of the assessment, which measures knowledge about assertiveness. Tell the students that they may not know the correct answers now, which is expected as they might not have learned about assertiveness yet. The students will repeat the *Assertiveness Knowledge Test 7–12* after all instruction is delivered.

## Assertiveness Knowledge Test 7–12

Student ID \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

	Not very like me 1	2	3	4	Very like me 5
1. I stand up to my friends if they are doing something I don't feel comfortable doing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I speak up when someone is not respecting my personal boundaries, like "no cheating off my homework" or "I don't let friends borrow money."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I often have a hard time saying "no." (N)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I express my opinions, even if others disagree with me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. When an argument is over, I often wish I would have said what was really on my mind. (N)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I tend to just go along with what everyone else wants instead of stating my own thoughts. (N)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I sometimes avoid asking questions for fear of sounding stupid. (N)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I tend to bottle up my emotions rather than talk about my feelings. (N)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. If I disagree with my teacher, I talk to them about it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. If a person has borrowed money (or a game, clothes, or something else of value) and is overdue in returning it, I talk to the person about it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. I'm usually able to tell people how I'm feeling.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. If I don't like the way someone is being treated, I speak up about it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. I speak up about things I really care about.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. I am careful to avoid hurting other people's feelings, even when I feel that I have been wronged.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. I have a hard time controlling my emotions when I disagree with someone. (N)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. I avoid attacking someone's intelligence when I disagree with their ideas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. I listen to other people's opinions, even if I disagree with them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. In disagreements, I make sure that I understand other points of view.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. In discussions, I communicate that I am listening through body language (nodding my head, avoiding rolling my eyes).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Even in an argument, I don't interrupt the other person.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Multiple-Choice

21. Choose the best definition of assertiveness.

- a. Expressing your wants, needs, and thoughts while respecting others—even when it’s difficult
- b. Ensuring that you respect others’ wants, needs, and thoughts—even when it’s difficult
- c. Expressing your wants, needs, and thoughts
- d. Expressing yourself while respecting others, except in tense situations

**Categorize each of these behaviors as passive, assertive, or aggressive.**

22. You tell your teacher, “You have to let me answer this text; it’s from my mom!”	Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
23. Invading the personal space of others	Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
24. Stating your ideas in an honest and direct manner	Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
25. Glaring and staring at others	Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
26. Apologizing over and over	Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
27. Clear and reasonable tone	Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
28. Interrupting	Passive	Assertive	Aggressive

29. The best way to show someone that you are listening to their concerns is to:

- a. Summarize what the person said to you.
- b. Provide honest, impartial feedback or advice.
- c. Give three to five options for how the person could proceed.
- d. Explain how you would act in that situation to demonstrate your understanding and then model an appropriate response.

30. Which of these options best describes an assertive statement?

- a. Calmly and directly provide a coherent, direct statement of what you want to happen. Be clear and detailed.
- b. Describe the rationale behind your action/request, support your opinion without blaming others (e.g., don’t say “you make me feel angry”), and share feelings.
- c. Indicate you understand the other person’s situation, provide your reasons behind your request, and explain what you’d like to happen.
- d. Provide your reasons behind what you’d like to happen, describe your feelings, and ask for what you’d like to happen.

31. Identify the best example of a three-part assertive statement.

- a. I’m sorry that you’ve had a bad day. If you need to yell at me, I understand.
- b. I understand that you’ve had a bad day, but that doesn’t mean you should take it out on me. All I’m trying to do is help, and you just keep shouting at me. It’s not accomplishing anything.
- c. I know that you’ve had a stressful day, but when you shout at me, it hurts my feelings. Please speak calmly to me.
- d. You’re so mean to me! If you don’t stop yelling at me, I’m going to leave.

32. Which of these actions or behaviors is NOT associated with assertiveness?

- a. Being careful not to hurt others’ feelings—even when I feel I have been wronged
- b. Expressing anger through arguing, making sure my point is heard
- c. Asking questions even when I’m worried that I might sound stupid
- d. Talking about my feelings instead of bottling up emotions

33. **Scenario:** Mackenzie is graduating high school next year. Her parents are both doctors, and they want her to study to be a doctor. Mackenzie doesn't want to be a doctor. She doesn't know what she wants to do for her career, but she knows she wouldn't enjoy being a doctor. Using what you've learned about assertiveness, choose the best option for how Mackenzie should discuss this with her parents.
- Plan to follow her own interests and create a career path based on what she wants. After she figures that out, she'll address the issue with her parents.
  - Tell her parents she understands they are worried about her future but that she wants to figure out her career path on her own based on her interests and skills.
  - Tell her parents that she's planning to become an engineer, because she knows that if she suggests a strong alternative career, they'll stop pressuring her to be a doctor. Then she'll be free to figure out what she really wants to do.
  - Tell her parents they are being overbearing and need to let it go. It's her life, and she'll make her own decisions about what career she plans to pursue.

**True or False**

34. \_\_\_\_ When you lack assertiveness, you have a higher chance of becoming withdrawn and isolated or experiencing depression and anxiety.
35. \_\_\_\_ Personal boundaries are clear expectations of how others should act in various situations.
36. \_\_\_\_ Adults who lack assertiveness are more likely to experience unemployment.
37. \_\_\_\_ As students, we can control our emotions, and some feelings are unnecessary.

**Open-Ended**

38. Write a three-part assertive statement to a teacher who falsely accused you of turning in your homework late.
39. Write a three-part assertive statement to a friend who keeps making plans with you and then cancelling at the last minute.
40. When you choose to be assertive, you won't always get everything you want. With that in mind, why should you still choose to communicate assertively? Provide two reasons.

After the students have completed the online assessment, a Results page will be displayed. Remind them that there are no incorrect responses to the first 20 items and that they will have different answers because they each have their own unique feelings about things. Have the students look over Items 1–20 and identify items they rated high, indicated by checkmarks shaded in green. Ask the students to describe three of these items in the table under the column *My strengths in assertiveness*.

Then, have the students identify items they rated low, indicated by checkmarks shaded in pink or red. Ask the students to describe three of these items in the table under the column *My areas for growth in assertiveness*.

<b>My strengths in assertiveness (checkmarks shaded in green)</b>	<b>My areas for growth in assertiveness (checkmarks shaded in pink or red)</b>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Next, have the students write down their score on the knowledge test:

Multiple-choice score: \_\_\_\_/17      \_\_\_\_%

Explain to the students that they will likely improve on the knowledge test portion as they learn concepts related to assertiveness. They will retake this assessment later in the year, and it will show their growth.

To access both individual and aggregated student results yourself, log back in to your account on [www.cccstudent.org](http://www.cccstudent.org), click on **My Portal**, scroll to the list of **My Assessments**, locate your assessment, and click on the **Results** button to open the teacher view for that assessment. To view the individualized reports for each student, in **My Portal** click on your assessment's title.

The students will repeat the *Assertiveness Knowledge Test 7–12* after all instruction is delivered.

### **Use the *Assertiveness Performance-Based Observation* to observe students**

The *Assertiveness Performance-Based Observation* (see page 10) measures students' assertive behaviors. You will rate each student's assertive behaviors on a 4-point scale. We recommend that you observe and record your students' assertive behaviors three times per year (at the beginning, midway through, and after instruction) to see student growth and challenges.

Reflect on the past three weeks and each student's demonstration of the behaviors listed in the observation. Use the scale to rate each student's proficiency. If you haven't had an opportunity to observe a behavior, select *Not Observed*. For behaviors that you haven't observed, consider providing classroom activities that allow students to demonstrate those behaviors. For example, asking the students to work in groups while completing a project would provide an opportunity to observe how well each student is addressing the fifth indicator, "Demonstrates assertive communication during collaborative learning."

To complete the *Assertiveness Performance-Based Observation*, you or your school will need an account on [www.cccstudent.org](http://www.cccstudent.org), a free assessment website. Follow the directions on the website to launch the *Assertiveness Performance-Based Observation*. Title the observation so that it is easy for you to identify (e.g., "2024 Assertiveness Observations Grade 7"). The website will automatically graph three observations for each student and provide both individualized reports and a class-wide summary.

## Assertiveness Performance-Based Observation

Student ID \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Based on observations across time or in specific situations, evaluate each student's performance. This assessment can be used at purposeful intervals to monitor the development of each student.

*Beginning:* Not yet able to demonstrate without scaffolding.

*Emerging:* Minimal or superficial demonstration; prompting likely required.

*Proficient:* Sufficient demonstration, including self-appraisal and detailed, personalized application.

*Advanced:* Independent and consistent demonstration; teaches/prompts others.

*Not Observed* is documented if there has not been the opportunity to observe the behavior performed by an individual student.

Assertiveness Sequence Indicators	Beginning	Emerging	Proficient	Advanced	Not Observed
1. Respectfully expresses basic feelings and preferences (Strategy 4, <b>voice my feelings</b> ).					
2. Communicates a need or want to peers and adults in a respectful manner (Strategy 7, <b>speak my mind and be kind</b> ).					
3. Demonstrates respectful refusal skills (Strategy 7, <b>speak my mind and be kind</b> ; Strategy 8, <b>respect my boundaries</b> ).					
4. Demonstrates nonverbal assertive communication (e.g., body language, tone of voice) (Strategy 6, <b>show respect without words</b> ).					
5. Demonstrates assertive communication during collaborative learning (Strategy 9, <b>do my part</b> ).					
6. Determines personal boundaries and generates assertive statements to apply if boundaries are compromised (Strategy 8, <b>respect my boundaries</b> ).					

## Unit 1: Introducing Assertiveness

### Learning Targets:

1. I can define assertiveness
2. I can explain communication types
3. I can **identify communication types**

### Materials ([www.cccframework.org/asrt-lessons-sec/#u1](http://www.cccframework.org/asrt-lessons-sec/#u1)):

- Assertiveness Definition Poster
- College & Career Competency Wheel
- Video *What Is Assertiveness?*
- Assertiveness Strategies Poster
- Video ***Identify Communication Types***

### Instructional Activities:

#### 1. I can define assertiveness

Ask the students to think about times when they have had to express their wants, needs, or thoughts. Why is it difficult to express ourselves when others disagree?

Tell the students that they're going to learn strategies that will help them communicate respectfully. Show the [Assertiveness Definition Poster](#).

Define assertiveness: "Even when it's difficult, expressing your wants, needs, and thoughts while respecting what others want, need, and think." Have the students discuss the definition in pairs—specifically, what each of the three parts of the definition means:

- What does "even when it's difficult" mean? What are some examples of difficult interactions? What makes these interactions difficult?
- What does "expressing your wants, needs, and thoughts" mean? Is it just verbal? Could it be written or nonverbal? What does each kind of expression entail?
- What does "while respecting what others want, need, and think" mean? Who might the others be in this situation? How does respectful communication differ from disrespectful communication?

Discuss the answers as a class.

Refer to the [College & Career Competency Wheel](#). Identify assertiveness as an interpersonal competency (that is, a skill that helps us interact with others successfully). Explain the importance of interpersonal skills: Students who interact well with others enjoy school more, are more engaged in learning, and have a reduced risk of mental health issues. Strong interpersonal skills increase your ability to attend and succeed in school, earn better grades, and eventually achieve higher employment rates and salaries.

Show the video [What Is Assertiveness?](#) Afterward, discuss and ask each student to write answers to the following questions:

- How would you explain assertiveness?  
*[Possible response: it means communicating your wants, needs, and thoughts while respecting what others want, need, and think.]*
- Why is it important to be assertive?  
*[Possible responses: so you can ask for what you need or share your ideas, so you can respect others' feelings and ideas when they are different than your own.]*



- How can being assertive help you?

*[Possible responses: it can help me ask for help even when I feel nervous; it can help me understand others.]*

Emphasize that assertiveness is essential to getting along with others. Describe how it helps in school but is also key to success in adult life (e.g., careers, higher education, personal interactions). Relate how our overall goal is to replace our passive or aggressive behaviors with assertive ones. In that way, we will advocate for ourselves, resist peer pressure, resolve conflicts, and seek future career and educational opportunities. This attribute is critical for people in fields like health professions, education, and legal professions.

Explain that assertiveness is important for everyone. It's not just for people who need help speaking up more frequently. It's also for those who need help communicating their thoughts when angry. We want to be able to communicate our wants, needs, and thoughts assertively without being intimidated by others and without intimidating them.

Ask for volunteers to describe, without naming names, a time when they saw someone communicate passively. Then ask for volunteers to describe a time when they saw someone communicate aggressively. Encourage them to describe not only verbal but also nonverbal communication.

**Student Personal Reflection:** Ask each student to think about a time in the last few months that they were angry with someone—it could have been with a friend, teacher, parent, or anyone else. Have them briefly summarize the disagreement, then address the following questions:

- Did you communicate your thoughts to the person? If so, did you do it in a respectful way?
- Were they able to understand your perspective?
- What do you wish you had done differently?

Emphasize that we all struggle with communicating assertively and that the difficulty can vary depending on who we're talking with. Consider the difference between asking your friend to scooch over so you can sit down on the bus and asking a stranger. The purpose of working on our assertiveness is to help us express ourselves better, build better relationships over time, and feel more connected to the people around us. Assertiveness helps us stick to our boundaries and to speak up for ourselves and others, when needed, in a way that others can understand.

Have the students read each example of assertiveness in action in the table below and then describe in their own words how each of those abilities will be helpful in their current and future life.

Ability	Current life	Future life
1. Say no when there is pressure to do something that you don't want to do		
2. Communicate respectfully when you are angry		
3. Stand up for yourself		
4. Tell an authority figure what you want when they may disagree		
5. Stand up for others		

Ask the students to respond to the following as a reflection ticket:

**Improving my assertiveness is important because ...**

Example responses might include:

- I want to voice my thoughts more.
- Sometimes people think I'm angry when I'm just trying to say what I think.
- People don't seem to understand what I'm saying.
- I want to advocate for things I care about.

## 2. I can explain communication types

Using the [Assertiveness Strategies Poster](#), introduce the students to the first strategy, **identify communication types**. Explain that, to understand what assertive communication looks like, it is important to first see how it differs from passive and aggressive communication. When we can **identify communication types** in others, we can start to identify them in ourselves. Then we can choose which type is appropriate to use in whatever situation we find ourselves.

Show the video [Identify Communication Types](#). Afterward, ask the students to answer the following questions individually and then discuss:

- What are some examples of passive communication?  
*[Possible responses: withdrawing from others; looking down; saying, "I don't care."]*
- How would you communicate passively if you were working in a group?  
*[Possible responses: you wouldn't say anything; you would be afraid to share your ideas; you would go along with whatever everyone else said or did.]*
- What are some examples of assertive communication?  
*[Possible responses: making eye contact, clearly explaining what you need.]*
- How would you communicate assertively if you were working in a group?  
*[Possible responses: listen to others' ideas, share my own ideas, hold everyone accountable for completing their portion of the work.]*
- What are some examples of aggressive communication?  
*[Possible responses: raising your voice, yelling, invading someone else's space, talking over people.]*
- How would you communicate aggressively if you were working in a group?  
*[Possible responses: you would tell everyone else what to do; you wouldn't listen to others; you would get upset if someone disagreed with you.]*
- How does understanding the different communication types help you understand assertiveness?  
*[Possible response: it helps us know what assertiveness looks like and what it doesn't.]*

Have the students review the columns in the following table to see how passive, assertive, and aggressive communication types differ. Then, in small groups, have them discuss and answer the questions that follow.

Passive behaviors	Assertive behaviors	Aggressive behaviors
Being afraid to speak up	Speaking openly but without interrupting or disrespecting others	Interrupting others
Speaking softly	Speaking at a conversational tone	Speaking loudly
Looking down	Making eye contact	Glaring and staring at others

Showing expressions that match how others feel	Showing expressions that match how you feel	Grimacing or rolling your eyes
Slouching and turning away from others	Focusing on what others say	Crossing arms and standing too close
Avoiding others	Participating in groups	Controlling groups
Agreeing with others no matter what they say	Expressing your wants, needs, and thoughts respectfully while considering others' wants, needs, and thoughts	Considering only your own feelings and making demands of others
Valuing yourself less than others	Valuing yourself and others	Valuing yourself more than others

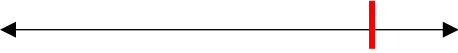


Adapted from "Tell the Difference Between Assertive, Passive and Aggressive Behavior," by Jacqueline Spence, 2012, *Counselling Service in France*

- Think of people you know who often communicate passively. What do they do that makes them seem passive? Why might they choose to communicate this way? How might this be an inadequate communication type?
- Think of people you know who often communicate aggressively. What do they do that makes them seem aggressive? Why might they choose to communicate this way? How might this be an inadequate communication type?
- Think of people you know who often communicate assertively. What do they do that makes them seem assertive? Why might they choose to communicate this way? Why is assertive communication often a better option than passive or aggressive?

### 3. I can *identify communication types*

Using the [Assertiveness Strategies Poster](#), review the first strategy, **identify communication types**. Ask the students which communication types they've seen people use since the last class meeting.

Have the students look at the following table, which describes passive, assertive, and aggressive behaviors. Have them work in groups to **identify the communication type** for each behavior and then explain why they chose that type. Note that some behaviors might be considered passive-aggressive, such as rolling your eyes or pouting—these behaviors should be considered aggressive because they are aimed at making the other person feel bad. In the table, the first behavior has been completed as an example. If time allows, consider asking the students to act out each behavior within their group.

Behavior	Passive      Assertive      Aggressive	Why?
<b>Example:</b> Walking out of the room and slamming the door		Clearly mad but not speaking; expressed anger physically; not respectful since it scared people
1. Distancing yourself physically from the group and not participating		
2. Telling someone when you think they're being unkind		

3. Posting something negative about a friend on social media	←→	
4. Sitting quietly and not sharing your thoughts	←→	
5. Talking face-to-face to a friend you think has disrespected you	←→	
6. Threatening to do something if you don't get your way	←→	
7. Saying "whatever" and rolling your eyes when someone asks what you think	←→	
8. Waiting until the teacher is done giving directions before you ask for help	←→	
9. Asking a teammate to talk less while showing that you understand their perspective	←→	

Summarize the activity by emphasizing the importance of ***identifying communication types***. By ***identifying communication types*** in ourselves and others, we become more aware of how we are communicating. With this awareness, we can choose how we communicate in each situation.

## Unit 2: Using Assertiveness to Express Emotions

### Learning Targets:

4. I can explain how to **find my feelings** and **voice my feelings**
5. I can **find my feelings** and **voice my feelings**

### Materials ([www.cccframework.org/asrt-lessons-sec/#u2](http://www.cccframework.org/asrt-lessons-sec/#u2)):

- Video **Find My Feelings & Voice My Feelings**
- Feeling Words Wheel

### Instructional Activities:

#### 4. I can explain how to **find my feelings** and **voice my feelings**

To express ourselves constructively, we need to understand our feelings. As things happen to us and we interpret the meaning of events, we may have a variety of feelings, depending on the situation. It's important to know that feelings are based on how we experience a situation (our perspective). Feelings themselves are not good or bad—they just are. It's what we do with them that's positive or negative.

Show the video [Find My Feelings & Voice My Feelings](#). Afterward, have the students work with a partner to answer the following questions. Once they have finished, ask them to share their answers with the rest of the class.

- What do you do when you **find your feelings**?  
*[Possible responses: you stop and think about what you are feeling and why you are feeling that way; you name your feelings.]*
- What do you do when you **voice your feelings**?  
*[Possible responses: you say how you feel and what is making you feel that way; you say how you feel in different situations.]*
- When you have strong feelings, like stress or frustration, why is it important to identify your feelings and the reasons you feel that way?  
*[Possible responses: so you understand what you are feeling, so you don't express your feelings inappropriately.]*
- Why is understanding how to **find your feelings** and **voice your feelings** appropriately an important part of being assertive?  
*[Possible response: so you understand yourself and ways to explain your thoughts and feelings appropriately, especially when you have big feelings.]*

Emphasize that when **you find your feelings**, you may have several emotions you are experiencing at the same time. The emotions can be very different from each other. For example, you may be feeling disappointment over not making the basketball team and excitement for your friend who did make the team. When you **find your feelings**, you sort through those feelings and name them.

When you **voice your feelings**, you can explain calmly and clearly how you are feeling. You use sentences like "I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_" or "I feel \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_." Combining the two strategies allows you to express yourself appropriately and helps others understand you better.

#### 5. I can **find my feelings** and **voice my feelings**

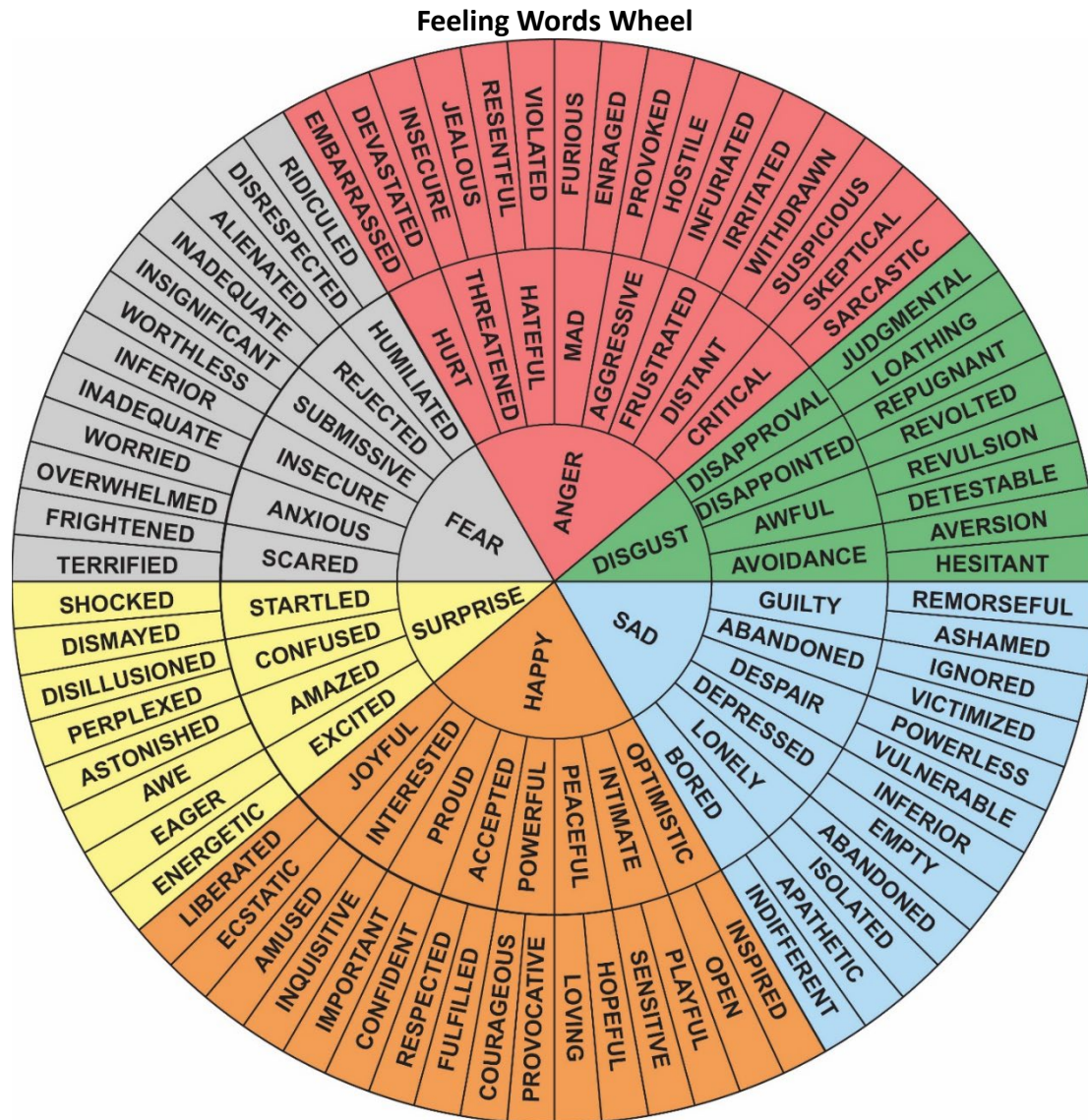
Remind the students that they have been learning how to **find their feelings** and **voice their feelings** and that these two strategies allow them to be assertive because they can explain their emotions appropriately. Hiding feelings can often be counterproductive to finding solutions or building better



relationships with friends. When we don't accept and recognize our feelings, it can create biases, insecurities, and reduced control over our behavior. It is better to understand our feelings, accept them, and then work to express our wants, needs, and thoughts as clearly and directly as possible. As we work to be more assertive, we must also work to better understand our feelings.

Inform the students that they are going to practice combining the strategies ***find my feelings*** and ***voice my feelings*** to communicate their emotions in situations where they are likely to experience a variety of complex emotions and where they may have had difficulty expressing their emotions appropriately in the past.

Show the students the [Feeling Words Wheel](#) and explain that it has a variety of words to help them more accurately describe their feelings.



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For each of the following scenarios, have the students identify three feelings from the [Feeling Words Wheel](#) that they might have. Ask them to avoid choosing feelings in the center circle (i.e., fear, anger, disgust, sad, happy, surprise) or a cluster of feelings in the same domain. Instead, encourage them to identify complex feelings from the two outer rings and from multiple domains.

For example, in response to the first scenario, the students may choose feelings from the domains sad, fear, and anger. Adjust the scenarios as needed for grade level, context, and audience. An example has been completed for you.

Scenario	Three words that best describe what you may be feeling at that moment	<i>Voice your feelings by saying ...</i>
<b>Example:</b> My car won't start, so I'll be late to practice.	Powerless, anxious, frustrated	I feel anxious when I have car trouble because I could be late to practice.
1. Your boyfriend or girlfriend is clearly interested in someone else.		
2. You are the best player on your team.		
3. You lost a piece of jewelry that a friend gave you.		
4. You are in a class where you don't think you can learn the material or do the project.		
5. Your parent has unjustly accused you of doing something you didn't do.		
6. You aced the science unit, and it was easy for you.		
7. You were in a one-car accident, and it was your fault.		
8. You have too much homework and not enough time to get it done.		

After the students have identified emotions for each scenario, remind them that it is important to be able to describe their feelings and the reasons they feel that way. A way they can describe what they are feeling and why they are feeling that way is to use the sentence "I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_" or "I feel \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_." In the third column, have the students write what they could say to **voice their feelings** appropriately. When they are finished, ask a few to share what they have written.

Tell the students to recall a time when they experienced strong emotions and didn't express them appropriately. For example, have they ever felt disappointed and, instead of explaining their disappointment, blamed someone else and yelled at them? Maybe they felt overwhelmed and, instead of explaining that they felt overwhelmed, rolled their eyes and sighed very loudly during class. Emphasize that how we respond to our emotions will affect the outcome of a situation. When we choose to express our emotions appropriately, it is more likely to result in a favorable outcome.

Inform the students that they are going to practice reframing inappropriate responses to strong feelings. They will make the responses more appropriate and assertive by brainstorming ways they could **voice their feelings** respectfully.

Explain that none of the following statements clearly convey feelings. Have the students individually read each statement, think about what feelings they might have in that situation, and then rewrite the statement to respectfully express the feeling(s) they identified. Be sure to go through the example together.

Statement	Better way to say it ...
<b>Example:</b> Stop driving so fast!	When you drive fast, I feel frightened and worry about wrecking.
1. You are a jerk for telling my secret.	
2. This book is awful.	
3. I have to do everything around here while my sibling does nothing.	
4. I hate that class.	
5. This is a great day!	
6. You don't ever text me back.	

After the students have finished, have them partner up and share their rewritten statements with each other. Ask them to write down three or four suggestions or specific pieces of feedback from their partner.

Debrief each of the statements with the whole class. As a class, generate another statement that does not actually convey feelings. Then, in small groups, have the students rewrite the statement so that it respectfully expresses actual feelings. Have them share out with the class.

Ask the students to think about three situations that they currently feel strong emotions about (e.g., an upcoming test, an argument with a friend, trouble making varsity). For each situation, have them **find their feelings** and **voice their feelings**.

Situation	Find your feelings	Voice your feelings
<b>Example:</b> I need to study for a big test next week, but I have to do a lot of chores after school, so I don't have a lot of time to study.	I feel overwhelmed about the upcoming test and irritated that I have so little time after school.	I could tell my mom, "I feel overwhelmed because I don't have time to study after doing chores."
1.		
2.		
3.		

**Extended Activity:** Have the students keep track of the three situations they wrote about:

- To what extent did **finding your feelings** and **voicing your feelings** help you handle each situation?
- To what extent did **voicing your feelings** help you communicate assertively?

## Unit 3: Understanding Myself

### Learning Targets:

6. I can demonstrate passive, assertive, and aggressive behaviors
7. I can **identify communication types** in myself
8. I can identify situations when it is difficult to express my wants, needs, and thoughts
9. I can explain how to **respect my boundaries**
10. I can describe Assertiveness Strategies that are my strengths and those that I need to improve

### Materials ([www.cccframework.org/asrt-lessons-sec/#u3](http://www.cccframework.org/asrt-lessons-sec/#u3)):

- Assertiveness Definition Poster
- Video **Respect My Boundaries**
- Chart paper
- Assertiveness Strategies Poster

### Instructional Activities:

#### 6. I can demonstrate passive, assertive, and aggressive behaviors

Briefly review the communication types by asking volunteers to share or demonstrate passive, assertive, and aggressive behaviors. Refer to the table in [Unit 1, Activity 2](#), characterizing the behaviors of each communication type, and clarify as needed. Explain to the students that they are going to generate examples of passive, assertive, and aggressive communication. Ask them to write one new item in each of the boxes in the following table.

	Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
<b>Body language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Turned away</li><li>• Collapsed posture</li><li>• No eye contact</li><li>•</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facing other person</li><li>• Open posture, feet solidly planted</li><li>• Level, eye-to-eye contact</li><li>•</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Invading others' space</li><li>• Crossed arms</li><li>• Sulking, hostile, or bored expression</li><li>•</li></ul>
<b>Voice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quiet, inaudible, or quavering tone</li><li>• Uncertain intonation</li><li>•</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Firm and audible</li><li>• Clear and reasonable tone</li><li>•</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Muttering under breath</li><li>• Insincere, hostile, bullying tone</li><li>• Shouting</li><li>•</li></ul>
<b>Words</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capitulating ("Okay, whatever you want")</li><li>• Excessive apologizing</li><li>• Self-recriminating ("I'm such an idiot!")</li><li>•</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "I" statements</li><li>• Makes point rationally and sticks to the point</li><li>• Takes responsibility for self</li><li>•</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Abuse ("You're pathetic!")</li><li>• Generalizations ("You never ...")</li><li>• Sarcasm ("Well, Mr. Perfect ...")</li><li>• Feigned indifference ("Whatever")</li><li>• Insincere agreement ("Fine!")</li><li>• Silence or grunts</li><li>•</li></ul>

Adapted from Resilient Kids' Site, by the Mental Health Foundation of Australia, n.d.

Ask a few students to share the examples they generated and discuss why each example is passive, assertive, or aggressive.

Explain to the students that they are going to demonstrate passive, assertive, and aggressive communication. Read the following list of sentences. For each, have the students use body language, tone of voice, and words to demonstrate the different communication types. As they are doing so, call special attention to how changing body language and tone of voice can drastically affect how a message is received. For example, someone saying “I’m happy” but with hunched shoulders and in a quiet voice doesn’t exactly convey happiness.

- I want to go home.
- I’m excited about it.
- You can have it.
- Who knows?
- [Student-created sentences]

Summarize the activity by reminding the students that communication includes our body language, tone of voice, and the words that we use. Learning to recognize the different communication types in themselves and others will help them identify when they need to shift their communication to be more assertive.

## 7. I can *identify communication types* in myself

Ask the students to think about recent interactions they’ve had with friends, boyfriends, girlfriends, parents, teachers, and others. For each interaction, they should mark in the following table where they think their behavior fell on the spectrum of passive, assertive, and aggressive.

	Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
<b>Example: Sibling(s)</b>	←   →		
1. Closest friend (same sex)	← →		
2. Closest friend (different sex)	← →		
3. Parent or guardian	← →		
4. Teacher	← →		
5. Other friends	← →		
6. Authority figure (e.g., boss, coach)	← →		

Have the students reflect on their ratings by responding to the following prompts:

- Write about a time when you wished you had said something or spoken up for yourself.
- Describe a time when you overreacted and hurt a relationship instead of expressing your thoughts and feelings respectfully.
- Reflect on your answers in the table above. Consider why you might act one way (passive, assertive, or aggressive) with one person but differently with another. Write one sentence summarizing what your ratings mean to you.

## 8. I can identify situations when it is difficult to express my wants, needs, and thoughts

Show the students the [Assertiveness Definition Poster](#). Remind them that being assertive has two requirements: 1. We must communicate our wants, needs, and thoughts, even when it is difficult and when we feel afraid or nervous. 2. We must also stop and think about what others want, need, and think, even when it is difficult, so that we can communicate with them respectfully.



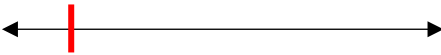




Tell the students they are going to identify situations when it is difficult to express their wants, needs, and thoughts. Explain that we all have times when we feel uncomfortable, nervous, or scared and we find it difficult to communicate. For example, if you are afraid of what others think about you, it might be difficult to express your thoughts or ask for help. It could also be difficult if you know others will disagree with you. Tell the students to work with a partner and identify a few situations where it might be difficult to communicate your thoughts, feelings, or ideas or to ask for something you need. Ask the students to answer the following questions:

- When have you found it difficult to ask for help or tell others what you think?
- Why was it difficult?
- How could you **voice your feelings** respectfully in this situation?

After the students have worked with a partner, ask them to summarize their discussions with the whole group.

Tell the students they are going to reflect on a few scenarios that they have likely experienced and rate how difficult it would be to express their wants, needs, and thoughts in each scenario. Remind them that sometimes our ability to express ourselves becomes more difficult based on the person we are interacting with or the situation we are experiencing. As they are reflecting on each scenario, they should consider the person involved and the situation before deciding how difficult it would be to express themselves.

Have the students read the following scenarios, pausing to consider how difficult it would be for them to express their wants, needs, and thoughts in each. Then rate the difficulty. In the third column, have them jot down a few ideas for how they could **voice their feelings** respectfully, especially for scenarios they rated *Very Hard*.

How difficult would it be to express your wants, needs, and thoughts if ...	Easy	Very Hard	How could you <b>voice your feelings</b> in this situation?
<b>Example:</b> You didn't like the restaurant your friend suggested you go to for lunch.			I know you love that restaurant, but I think it might be nice to go to a different restaurant for a change.
1. Your sibling asked your opinion on the movie you saw last weekend.			
2. You are working on a group project for English, and one group member hasn't done any of their work.			
3. Your friend is spreading rumors about you that aren't true.			
4. You don't understand the algebra assignment, and you need to meet with the teacher to have her explain it.			

5. Your friends really want you to go to a party this weekend, but you don't want to.	←→	
6. Your best friend is making fun of you for getting a bad grade on your science test.	←→	
7. Your parent doesn't agree with the classes you plan to take next year.	←→	
8. Your sister took the same math class last year and said she would give you copies of all the tests.	←→	
9. Your parent was really good at basketball in high school and wants you to try out for the team, but you have never enjoyed basketball.	←→	
10. You know you need to study for your history test, but your friends asked you to go to the movies with them.	←→	

After the students have completed the table, ask them to work with a partner and review their answers. They should also discuss other options for **voicing their feelings** respectfully in each scenario. For example, what could they say? What tone should they use when they are **voicing their feelings**?

Ask a few to share their ideas for expressing themselves in difficult situations. Summarize the activity by reminding the students that part of learning to be assertive is learning to express their wants, needs, and thoughts, even when it's difficult. Identifying situations when they typically find it difficult to express themselves can help them plan how to be more assertive the next time they experience those situations.

### 9. I can explain how to **respect my boundaries**

Remind the students that they have been reflecting on situations when they find it difficult to express their wants, needs, and thoughts. They have learned how to **voice their feelings** respectfully by using the sentence "I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_." Tell them they are going to learn a new Assertiveness Strategy that will help them **voice their feelings** in difficult situations. The strategy is called **respect my boundaries**.

Define boundaries as limits or rules we set for ourselves about what we find acceptable and unacceptable behavior toward us. We set boundaries so that we can be mentally healthier (e.g., calmer, happier, and less stressed).

Show the students the video [Respect My Boundaries](#). Afterward, ask them to individually answer the following questions. Then facilitate a class discussion about boundaries and the importance of respecting them.

- How do you know when a boundary has been crossed?  
*[Possible responses: you feel nervous; you feel guilty or uncomfortable.]*
- What are the three things you can do to **respect your boundaries**?  
*[Possible response: 1. think about past situations that made you feel uncomfortable; 2. identify the boundary that was crossed; 3. plan how you will respond the next time this boundary is crossed.]*
- Why is it important to **respect your boundaries**?  
*[Possible responses: you stay happy mentally and emotionally when you respect your boundaries; people won't take advantage of you.]*

Emphasize that we know a boundary has been crossed when we feel uncomfortable, nervous, or frustrated about what we have been asked to do. To help the students better understand how personal boundaries affect their day-to-day lives, have them pause and think about the following questions:

- Do you feel pressured by people to do things?
- Do you feel the need to behave differently around certain people?
- Are there situations where you often feel attacked or defensive?
- Do you feel uncomfortable when people bring up certain topics?

Ask the students to brainstorm boundaries that they or other people have. Remember, boundaries promote personal wellness. Begin writing a list of boundaries on large chart paper. Use the examples below to help generate more ideas from the students.

Boundaries I set for myself:

- limiting screen time (e.g., on my phone, computer, or iPad)
- limiting sugary snacks
- not letting other people copy my homework or cheat off me
- not letting people drive after they have been drinking
- not letting people borrow money from me
- not letting people ride in my car if they don't put on their seatbelt
- not texting when I am driving; waiting till I stop to respond

After the class has generated a list of boundaries, explain that boundaries can be protected by using assertiveness and respectfully telling another person what you will or will not do. There are things you can say or do to **respect your boundaries**. These include:

- saying, "I am not comfortable talking about ..."
- telling the other person, "No, thanks!"
- walking away

Have the students work with a partner to choose three boundaries from the list just generated, then brainstorm responses they could use when those boundaries have been crossed. Remind them to consider both what they can say and what they can do in response to a crossed boundary. Afterward, ask each pair of students to share their responses with the rest of the class.

Summarize the activity by reminding the students they can identify their boundaries by thinking about times when they have felt uncomfortable, nervous, or frustrated. Then they can plan how they will respond when the boundary is crossed the next time. Tell the students they are being assertive when they can **respect their boundaries** and let others know when those boundaries have been crossed.

## 10. I can describe Assertiveness Strategies that are my strengths and those that I need to improve

Show the [Assertiveness Strategies Poster](#) and ask the students to reflect on the Assertiveness Strategies they have learned so far (*identify communication types, find my feelings, voice my feelings, and respect my boundaries*) by responding to the following prompts:

- Provide examples of how you have applied the strategies.
- Which strategies do you want to work on to use more effectively?
- List three actions you can do to be more assertive.

In small groups, ask the students to discuss their responses. Emphasize that we all have different strengths related to assertiveness. Have the students brainstorm more actions they can do to be more assertive.

Examples might include:

- Speak up for myself more
- When I'm angry, wait to calm down before I talk to someone, and think about their perspective
- Talk about my feelings more with good friends
- Disagree in a respectful way

**Extended Activity:** Support the students in practicing assertiveness by asking them to share what they have written with their parents or guardians and describe the Assertiveness Strategies they consider to be their strengths. Refer families to the family guidance resources at [www.cccframework.org/family-guidance](http://www.cccframework.org/family-guidance) to help build assertiveness in the home.

## Unit 4: Understanding Others

### Learning Targets:

11. I can ask questions to help me understand others
12. I can explain how to *show empathy*

### Materials ([www.cccframework.org/asrt-lessons-sec/#u4](http://www.cccframework.org/asrt-lessons-sec/#u4)):

- Feeling Words Wheel
- Assertiveness Strategies Poster
- Video *Show Empathy*

### Instructional Activities:

#### 11. I can ask questions to help me understand others

Remind the students they have been learning how to be more assertive and express themselves appropriately, even when it's difficult. Emphasize that part of learning assertiveness is learning to understand others. When we stop and think about others' actions or feelings, it helps us to understand them and their perspectives. Inform the students that one way to better understand others is to ask them questions about their thoughts, actions, and feelings.

Tell the students they are going to practice asking questions to help understand a person's thoughts and feelings by using some scenarios they have likely experienced. Divide the students into seven small groups. Have each group read one of the following scenarios (or others you have created that are appropriate for your students). Then each group member writes one sentence on how the person in the scenario may be feeling. If the students have trouble coming up with feelings, remind them to look at the [Feeling Words Wheel](#). Ask them to avoid limiting the feelings to angry, sad, or happy—go deeper. What feelings (positive and negative) might these scenarios evoke? Things aren't always simple, and people often have multiple feelings at the same time. Have the students talk to others in their group if they're struggling.

Then, for their group's scenario, each student writes one question they could ask the person to better understand them. For example, they might ask clarifying questions, like "How are you feeling? It seems like you're going through something tough."

Next, each group reads their scenario and shares one sentence that best describes how the person might be feeling and one question they could ask to better understand the situation and the person's feelings. The students take notes on each group's suggestions for the other scenarios.

Go through one scenario as an example and then give the students 10 minutes to work in groups before they begin sharing.

**Example:** Toby is a straight-A student who takes a lot of advanced classes. He has just encountered a class that he finds pretty difficult and wants to drop, but the teacher and his parents aren't letting him.

*One sentence about how Toby may be feeling:*

Toby is probably frustrated because he's used to good grades and because he feels like no one is listening to him. He also might be worried that he won't be successful.

*One question you could ask Toby to understand him better:*

Toby, what do you think it is about this class that makes you want to drop it, when you've done well in a lot of other difficult classes?



### Scenarios:

1. Sophie recently lost a family member. She's been coming to school every day but doesn't seem herself.

*One sentence about how Sophie may be feeling:*

*One question you could ask Sophie to understand her better:*

2. Jaycee just saw her boyfriend holding hands with another girl.

*One sentence about how Jaycee may be feeling:*

*One question you could ask Jaycee to understand her better:*

3. Isaiah's serious girlfriend breaks up with him via Snapchat.

*One sentence about how Isaiah may be feeling:*

*One question you could ask Isaiah to understand him better:*

4. Your grandparent is diagnosed with dementia/Alzheimer's.

*One sentence about how your grandparent may be feeling:*

*One question you could ask your grandparent to understand them better:*

5. Your parent got a promotion at work, but it includes traveling to another state four days per week.

*One sentence about how your parent may be feeling:*

*One question you could ask your parent to understand them better:*

6. Your friend Dominique finds out he has a serious illness that is curable but will involve a long recovery.

*One sentence about how Dominique may be feeling:*

*One question you could ask Dominique to understand him better:*

7. Isaac did not get the scholarship he applied for, and he needed it to afford college tuition next year.

*One sentence about how Isaac may be feeling:*

*One question you could ask Isaac to understand him better:*

Summarize the activity by reminding the students that being assertive means respecting others' thoughts and feelings, even when they are different than our own. Remind them that asking clarifying questions is a way to gain an understanding of others' perspectives.

**Extended Activity:** Ask the students to identify careers where it's essential to be assertive (including learning about other's wants, needs, and thoughts) and the reasons why it's essential.

Career	Why it's essential to be assertive and learn about others' wants, needs, and thoughts
<b>Example:</b> Emergency room nurse	A nurse needs to learn to ask patients important questions about physical and mental health to treat them. A nurse must also be assertive by showing respect to patients while communicating what needs to be done.

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

## 12. I can explain how to *show empathy*

Using the [Assertiveness Strategies Poster](#), review the strategies the students have learned so far: **identify communication types**, **find my feelings**, **voice my feelings**, and **respect my boundaries**. Have the students talk about how they or others have **respected their boundaries** recently.

Remind the students that they have learned how to understand others by asking questions. In this activity, they will continue to focus on understanding others. When we stop and think about how others might be feeling and let them know we understand, it is called **showing empathy**.

Show the video [Show Empathy](#). Afterward, have the students answer the following questions with a partner and then share their answers with the rest of the class:

- What does **showing empathy** mean?  
[Possible responses: **showing empathy** means you try and understand how someone else feels; it means you can understand them because you have had similar feelings or experiences.]
- What are some ways we can **show empathy** for someone else?  
[Possible responses: stop and think about them, put ourselves in their shoes, ask questions to try and understand more about what they are feeling.]
- Why is **showing empathy** important?  
[Possible responses: to show that you understand someone; to show respect; it helps you understand different perspectives.]

Explain to the students that **showing empathy** starts by identifying the potential feelings that others are experiencing. Inform the students that they are going to do an activity where they practice identifying the feelings of others and ask questions to help them **show empathy**. For each of the following scenarios, they are to identify three feelings from the [Feeling Words Wheel](#) that the person may be having. Remind the students to avoid choosing feelings in the center circle (i.e., fear, anger, disgust, sad, happy, surprise). Instead, they should think about the underlying feelings that the person might be experiencing in the moment, and remember that people can experience both positive and negative feelings at the same time. After they have identified three feelings for the other person, they will write a question they could ask to help them understand what the other person is experiencing.

Scenario	Three possible feelings this person may be experiencing	A question you could ask to gain understanding
<b>Example:</b> Your best friend just got into her long-shot dream school—but it's across the country.	Overwhelmed, ecstatic, flabbergasted	What do you feel about moving to a new place?
1. Your best friend's dog died.		
2. Your friend was accused of cheating but is innocent.		
3. Your cousin just saw the ocean for the first time.		

4. Your teacher has two more classes to teach than last semester and was already swamped.		
5. Your friend donated money to a food shelter after a natural disaster.		
6. Your parent just lost their job.		
7. Your teacher just found out their parent is very sick, but they live in another state.		
8. Your sibling is leaving for college but doesn't have a job or enough money to get through one semester.		
9. A student is grounded for low grades and isn't allowed to attend the school dance.		
10. A friend didn't make the football team.		

After the students independently complete the table, have them get into small groups. Each student chooses three scenarios to share with the group, noting which feeling words they chose and why, then asking if anyone in their group has any different suggestions to add.

Summarize the activity by asking a few students to share the responses they developed for each scenario. Emphasize that identifying feelings and asking questions will help them learn to ***show empathy*** toward others.

## Unit 5: Showing Respect for Others

### Learning Targets:

13. I can explain how to *listen and summarize* and *show respect without words*
14. I can *listen and summarize* and *show respect without words*
15. I can explain why *listening and summarizing* and *showing respect without words* are important

### Materials ([www.cccframework.org/asrt-lessons-sec/#u5](http://www.cccframework.org/asrt-lessons-sec/#u5)):

- Assertiveness Strategies Poster
- Video *Listen and Summarize & Show Respect Without Words*

### Instructional Activities:

#### 13. I can explain how to *listen and summarize* and *show respect without words*

Using the [Assertiveness Strategies Poster](#), review the strategies the students have learned so far: *identify communication types*, *find my feelings*, *show empathy*, *voice my feelings*, and *respect my boundaries*. Ask the students to provide examples of how they or others have *shown empathy* recently.

Divide the class into two groups. One half will be Group A, and the other will be Group B. Ask Group A to leave the classroom for a few minutes while you talk to Group B. Explain to Group B that they are going to demonstrate behaviors that convey a lack of respect without words while Group A is telling them a story. These behaviors could be things like not making eye contact with the other person, looking at their phone, doodling on a piece of paper, or sighing loudly.

Tell Group A to return to the classroom and assign each of them a partner from Group B. Have the members of Group A each tell their partner an exciting story about something they recently accomplished or experienced. As Group A is telling their story, observe the actions of Group B.

After a few minutes, ask Group A to stop telling their story. Then facilitate a class discussion about how it felt when they were telling a story and Group B didn't show respect.

Ask Group A:

- How did you feel while you were telling your story?
- What actions caused you to feel like your partner wasn't listening to you?
- When have you experienced someone being disrespectful without words?

Ask Group B:

- What actions did you use to make Group A think you weren't interested in their story?
- How did you feel when you were disrespectful?

Continue the discussion by asking the students to describe a few situations when they felt like someone wasn't listening to them or like their story wasn't important.

Remind the students that they have been learning how to be assertive and understand others. They have learned how to ask questions and *show empathy* for others in various situations. *Showing empathy* is a way that we can demonstrate respect for other people. Inform the students that this activity will focus on two more strategies that will help them show respect for others.

Explain that listening is important for understanding others' perspectives. It is a part of a larger process through which we try to understand others' feelings, verbally describe our understanding, and ask if our perception is accurate. When we take these steps, we often find that our impressions are based on our own feelings and may be incorrect, resulting in misperceptions of how others feel.

Show the video [Listen and Summarize & Show Respect Without Words](#). Afterward, have the students work with a partner to answer the following questions. Once they have finished, ask them to share their answers with the rest of the class.

- What are the key ideas for **listening and summarizing**?  
*[Possible responses: use your own words to explain the important parts of the other person's story; don't give your opinions or tell them what to do.]*

Emphasize these steps for **listening and summarizing**:

- As someone is talking about their thoughts or feelings, focus entirely on understanding what that person is saying instead of thinking about what you plan to say back.
- Periodically, as the person is sharing their thoughts and feelings, summarize (i.e., restate in your own words) what the person has said, without adding your own thoughts or perspective or telling the other person what to do. This can be difficult, especially if it is a tough conversation. However, it's important that people feel listened to and that we clearly understand their emotions and perspectives.
- Restate the other person's wants, feelings, and reasons in your own words. Start your remarks with "You want ..., " "You feel ..., " or "You think ... "

Continue the class discussion about listening and summarizing and showing respect without words.

- How do you **show respect without words**?  
*[Possible responses: focus on what the other person is saying, make eye contact.]*
- Why are **listening and summarizing** and **showing respect without words** important?  
*[Possible response: they help us understand each other, communicate better, and **show empathy** for others.]*

Explain that by **listening and summarizing** and **showing respect without words**, we not only understand others better but also show them that we are open to what they're saying. When others feel that they are being listened to and understood, they are more willing to communicate ideas openly and honestly, and we all benefit from the exchange of ideas.

When we fail to **show respect without words**, however, others may doubt our sincerity and withdraw from communicating with us. Such withdrawal means both that we miss benefiting from their ideas and that they miss benefiting from ours. We cannot expect others to listen to us if we don't do the same for them.

**Showing respect without words** involves behaviors like making eye contact, keeping your body still, and waiting your turn to speak.

Have the students work briefly in pairs, modeling behaviors related to good listening versus poor listening: tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, and posture.

**Reflection Ticket:** Have the students write two or three sentences in response to this prompt:

- Describe a time when you were listened to. Include the behaviors of the other person that showed they were listening to you.

#### 14. I can **listen and summarize** and **show respect without words**

Emphasize the strategies **listen and summarize** and **show respect without words** on the [Assertiveness Strategies Poster](#). Explain that when we use these strategies, we show respect for others in our actions. Recall how each group felt in Activity 13, when half the class ignored the other half. Tell the students that they are going to learn more about how to **listen and summarize** and **show respect without words**.

Remind the students to use these steps as they **listen and summarize**:

- As someone is talking about their thoughts or feelings, focus entirely on understanding what that person is saying instead of thinking about what you plan to say back.
- Periodically, as the person is sharing their thoughts and feelings, summarize (i.e., restate in your own words) what the person has said, without adding your own thoughts or perspective or telling the other person what to do.
- Restate the other person's wants, feelings, and reasons in your own words. Start your remarks with "You want ...," "You feel ...," or "You think ..."

Use the following scenario to help the students practice **listening and summarizing** and **showing respect without words**. Start by reading the first part to the whole class and responding to the prompts as a group. Have the students individually respond to the rest of the scenarios. Debrief as a whole group.

Your friend says, "I'm not sure what to do. I totally bombed that test, and my parents are going to be so mad. They might not even let me go to the game Friday night when they see that my grade has dropped."

You wouldn't say: [ask the students to give an example violating one of the steps to **listening and summarizing**, like telling someone what to do]

You could say: [ask the students to give examples using one of the steps to **listening and summarizing**, like restating in their own words what they have heard]

One way to **show respect without words** is by: [ask the students to describe body language that shows they are listening]

She continues: "Their expectations are so high that I don't think I can meet them. I tried to do well on the test, but I got distracted while studying. I wish I could go back and repeat the last couple days."

You wouldn't say:

You could say:

Another way to **show respect without words** is by:

She continues: "I wish there was a way they would let me go to the game. I can't wait till high school is over and I don't have to do all this work anymore."

You wouldn't say:

You could say:

A third way to **show respect without words** is by:

### 15. I can explain why **listening and summarizing** and **showing respect without words** are important

Tell the students they'll now practice the steps for **listening and summarizing** and **showing respect without words**. In pairs, one person describes a situation they are experiencing or have recently experienced. The other person **listens and summarizes** while **showing respect without words**. Then they switch roles and repeat the activity.

Give the students a few minutes to think of and briefly write down a situation that they are willing to talk about with their partner. If they have difficulty thinking of an issue, you may need to brainstorm with them.



Then provide instructions for both roles:

**Speakers:** Explain the issue by relating events, results, and feelings (but do not blame others). Provide a couple of sentences at a time and then pause for the listener to summarize. After the listener summarizes, continue saying a couple of sentences and pausing until you've fully explained the situation.

**Listeners:** As the speaker talks, make eye contact and nod your head to show that you're listening. After the speaker says a couple of sentences and then pauses, summarize what you've heard. Don't add your own thoughts or information; use the steps for **listening and summarizing** to help you. Repeat this process until the speaker seems finished. Then ask, "Is there more?" to allow the speaker to continue if necessary. Summarize the situation using this template: "So what I hear you saying is \_\_\_\_\_. And you're feeling \_\_\_\_\_. And you're thinking about doing \_\_\_\_\_. Did I understand correctly?" If you didn't understand, allow the speaker to re-explain. Remember, as the listener, your focus is on understanding what is being said to you and reflecting it back.

After they complete their turn as the speaker, have them complete the Active Listening Checklist.

### Active Listening Checklist

Circle YES or NO for each item below.

The listener made eye contact with me as I spoke.	YES	NO
The listener stayed focused/engaged with me (didn't look at their phone, get distracted, etc.).	YES	NO
The listener used good posture, appropriate facial expressions, and body/vocal prompts (such as shaking their head, nodding, and saying "uh-huh" or other vocalizations to show they were engaged).	YES	NO
The listener allowed me to finish without interruption.	YES	NO
The listener summarized their understanding of what I had expressed.	YES	NO
The listener refrained from giving advice.	YES	NO

Debrief the activity by emphasizing that although the process may feel awkward or difficult at first, this skill is important in life. Facilitate a class discussion on the importance of **listening and summarizing** and **showing respect without words**:

- Why is it important to be able to **listen and summarize** and **show respect without words**?  
[Possible responses: it shows the other person we respect them and that we care about how they feel; it helps us to understand the other person and empathize with them.]
- What are some examples of when you might use these strategies currently?  
[Possible responses: when talking to friends, when learning something new in class, when talking to parents.]
- How could you use the strategies **listen and summarize** and **show respect without words** in future endeavors, like college, your career, or your workplace?  
[Possible responses: during a job interview, when a boss tells us what to do, when there is a concern from a customer or patient.]

Summarize the activity by emphasizing that when we fully understand others by really listening to them, we can be assertive, manage conflicts, and communicate effectively. Remember to refrain from offering your opinions, advice, or solutions when you're listening. If someone wants advice at some point, they will ask you for it. In that situation—only in that situation—you can respectfully tell them what you think.

## Unit 6: Communicating Assertively

### Learning Targets:

16. I can explain how to *speak my mind and be kind*
17. I can *speak my mind and be kind*
18. I can *speak my mind and be kind* to *respect my boundaries*

### Materials ([www.cccframework.org/asrt-lessons-sec/#u6](http://www.cccframework.org/asrt-lessons-sec/#u6)):

- Assertiveness Strategies Poster
- Assertive Statements Visual
- Video *Speak My Mind and Be Kind*

### Instructional Activities:

#### 16. I can explain how to *speak my mind and be kind*

Using the [Assertiveness Strategies Poster](#), review the strategies the students have learned so far: *identify communication types*, *find my feelings*, *show empathy*, *voice my feelings*, *listen and summarize*, *show respect without words*, and *respect my boundaries*. Remind the students that assertiveness means expressing your wants, needs, and thoughts while respecting others, even when it's hard.

Ask for volunteers to describe how they or others have used the strategies *listen and summarize* and *show respect without words* recently.

Explain to the students that they will learn a new strategy that helps them clearly communicate their ideas or what they want to happen: *speak my mind and be kind*. The combination of *show empathy*, *voice my feelings*, and *speak my mind and be kind* makes up a three-part assertive statement.

Use the [Assertive Statements Visual](#) to explain each part of an assertive statement. First, they *show empathy* to explain their understanding of another person's feelings. Then, they *voice their feelings* to explain how they feel and why they feel that way. Finally, they *speak their mind and are kind* to respectfully explain what they want to happen.

Show the video [Speak My Mind and Be Kind](#). Afterward, have the students work with a partner to answer the following questions. Once they have finished, ask them to share their answers with the rest of the class.

- What does it mean to *speak your mind and be kind*? What do you do?  
[Possible response: it means that you clearly and respectfully communicate how you feel and what you want.]
- What two strategies do you use before you *speak your mind and be kind*?  
[Possible response: *show empathy* by showing you understand the other person, and *find your feelings* by explaining how you feel.]
- How can *speaking your mind and being kind* help you when working with others?  
[Possible responses: it can give me a format to use when I don't feel comfortable sharing my ideas; it can help me communicate clearly without making others angry or hurt.]

Ask the students to identify a time when they wish they had been more assertive. This can be at home, in school, with friends, or even during extracurricular activities. Have the students write a paragraph describing the situation with as much detail as possible. If it's easier, they can write about the situation in the third person. The students will return to these examples in Activity 17.

Next, review the three parts of an assertive statement. Emphasize that all three parts are required to form an assertive statement:

- **Part 1:** An empathy statement, or indication that you understand the perspective and feelings of another person. To develop this statement, use the strategy ***show empathy***.
- **Part 2:** The rationale behind your action or request. Share your feelings and reasons to support your opinion. Do not blame others (e.g., don't say "you make me feel angry"), but do share feelings (e.g., do say "I feel frustrated"). To explain what you feel and the reasons for these feelings, use the strategy ***voice my feelings***.
- **Part 3:** A direct statement of what you want to happen. To develop this statement, use the strategy ***speak my mind and be kind***. Be clear and detailed.

Provide an example of a situation and a corresponding assertive statement, such as the following:

Instead of simply walking out of class to use the restroom or arguing, a student communicates this three-part assertive statement: "I understand that you are in the middle of teaching a lesson and this is disruptive, but this is an unexpected dire situation, and I would like your permission to quickly use the restroom."

Ask the students to dissect the assertive statement into the three parts. Summarize the activity by explaining that using three-part assertive statements will help them clearly and respectfully communicate what they feel and what they want to happen. Assertive statements can be written, like in an email requesting help on an assignment, or verbal, like when explaining your ideas while working in a group.

### 17. I can ***speak my mind and be kind***

Remind the students that they have been learning how to respectfully communicate their ideas or what they want to happen by using three-part assertive statements that combine the strategies ***show empathy***, ***voice my feelings***, and ***speak my mind and be kind***. Tell the students that they will practice ***speaking their mind and being kind*** by reviewing some statements and determining if they are assertive or not.

Have the students individually read each of the situations and corresponding statements in the following table, keeping in mind what they've learned about assertive statements. In the second column, they note whether each statement qualifies as an assertive statement. In the third column, they modify the statement to make it an assertive statement that includes the strategies ***show empathy***, ***voice my feelings***, and ***speak my mind and be kind***.

Situation and statement	Assertive statement? (yes/no)	How could the statement be modified to be an assertive statement?
<b>Situation:</b> Riley is distracting you in class. <b>Statement:</b> I want you to stop interrupting my reading. You are frustrating and making me angry.	no	I understand that you're bored in class. I feel frustrated and angry that I'm having a hard time concentrating on my reading. I'd like to focus now, but could we please do something fun together after class?

<p><b>Situation:</b> Hope dislikes you and makes fun of you with her friends.</p> <p><b>Statement:</b> If you stop making faces, gestures, and put-downs about me, I will help you with biology.</p>		
<p><b>Situation:</b> You used too much data last month, so your guardian took your phone away.</p> <p><b>Statement:</b> I want my phone back. It is killing me not being able to talk with my friends. I need it.</p>		
<p><b>Situation:</b> Ray lied to you about not having money to repay what you loaned him.</p> <p><b>Statement:</b> I know you struggle with managing money, but it feels like you took advantage of me. And you lied!</p>		

Debrief as a class, reviewing each situation and asking for volunteers to share their modified assertive statements. Emphasize again that all three parts are necessary.

Next, ask each student to refer back to the time when they wish they had been more assertive (Activity 16). Have them draft an assertive statement, including all three parts, specific to that situation.

When they're finished, ask them to share their assertive statement with a partner and discuss. Ask their partner to provide suggestions for improving the statement.

Prompts include:

- Does it include all three parts?
- If you were to communicate this statement, would it be assertive (e.g., even when it's difficult, expressing your wants, needs, and thoughts while respecting others)?
- What could be changed or added to improve the statement?

After discussing it with their partner and reflecting on their feedback, the students finalize their statements. Ask if anyone would like to share out the situation and the completed assertive statement. It's fine if no one volunteers. Review the students' written responses to determine their understanding of three-part assertive statements.

### 18. I can *speak my mind and be kind to respect my boundaries*

Remind the students that boundaries are limits or rules we set for ourselves about what we find acceptable and unacceptable behavior. We set boundaries so that we can be mentally healthier (e.g., calmer, happier, and less stressed). If you were uncomfortable or frustrated with an individual or situation, it may have been because one of your boundaries was crossed.

Ask the students to brainstorm boundaries that they have (or that people their age often have).

If the students are having difficulty identifying their personal boundaries, some examples you could share with them are:

- I won't let people drive after they have been drinking.

- I won't vape even if my friends are vaping.
- I won't let people borrow money from me.
- I won't let people ride in my car if they don't put on their seat belt.
- I won't let people cheat off me.
- I won't walk away from someone being bullied (even if it is online).
- Family members may not barge in on me in the bathroom.
- I won't text when I am driving; I will wait till I stop to respond.
- I won't do things I really don't want to do to make other people happy.

Describe how we can use assertive statements when our personal boundaries are crossed. When students are aware of their wants, needs, and thoughts, they make increasingly autonomous decisions about what they consider right versus wrong. Boundaries protect our emotional well-being and define limits to relationships. In order to ***respect our boundaries***, we need to ***speak our mind and be kind***.

Ask the students to identify a personal boundary and then write a three-part assertive statement that they could use when their expressed boundary has been crossed.

**Example:** I understand that you lied about planning to spend the night at my house next weekend, because you want to go to the concert and your parents said no [empathy statement], but I don't feel comfortable lying to your parents or mine, especially about something this big [rationale]. I'd like for us to either actually have a sleepover or ask your parents if we can go to the concert together with my older sister [direct statement of what you want to happen].

Ask for volunteers, if anyone is willing to share, but do not require anyone to do so. Emphasize again that continually identifying and refining their boundaries (what they will and will not do in various situations) and using assertive statements to ***respect their boundaries*** will help them prepare to be assertive when the need arises.



## Unit 7: Making Communication Choices

### Learning Targets:

19. I can explain how to **predict outcomes**
20. I can **predict outcomes** for situations I experience
21. I can change passive and aggressive communication into assertive communication

### Materials ([www.cccframework.org/asrt-lessons-sec/#u7](http://www.cccframework.org/asrt-lessons-sec/#u7)):

- Assertiveness Strategies Poster
- Video **Predict Outcomes**

### Instructional Activities:

#### 19. I can explain how to **predict outcomes**

Using the [Assertiveness Strategies Poster](#), review the strategies the students have learned so far: **identify communication types, find my feelings, show empathy, voice my feelings, listen and summarize, show respect without words, speak my mind and be kind, and respect my boundaries.**

Show the video [Predict Outcomes](#). Afterward, have the students work with a partner to answer the following questions. Once they have finished, ask them to share their answers with the rest of the class.

- What do you do when you **predict outcomes**?  
*[Possible responses: you stop and think about what could happen if you used passive, aggressive, or assertive communication; you think about how your reaction will affect the situation.]*
- How can the communication type you choose affect the outcome of a situation?  
*[Possible responses: if you use an inappropriate communication type, it can make the situation worse; it can improve the situation; your communication type could make others angry or allow them to take advantage of you.]*
- Why is **predicting outcomes** important?  
*[Possible responses: it helps you think about the best way to communicate; it helps you process what could happen and choose the best response.]*

Remind the students that we choose our actions and the way we communicate in situations. Our choices can result in both positive and negative outcomes, which can have short- and long-term effects. For example, choosing to hang out with your friend after school instead of studying for a test could have the short-term negative outcome of you doing poorly on the test. Routinely posting negative comments about people online can have the long-term negative outcome of ruining your relationships with others.

Ask the students to work with a partner to identify how their communication type affected the outcome, either positively or negatively, of a recent interaction. They should also discuss how using a different communication type would have resulted in a different outcome. They can use these prompts to help guide the discussions:

- Describe a recent interaction you've had with another person where you chose a specific communication type.
- How did the communication type you chose affect the outcome?
- How could the outcome have been different if you had communicated differently?

Afterward, ask a few students to share how their choice of communication type affected the outcome of a situation. Summarize the activity by reminding the students that how we communicate through our words and actions is a choice. Taking time to think about the most appropriate way to communicate will help them to become more assertive.

## 20. I can *predict outcomes* for situations I experience

Remind the students that they have been focusing on learning to **predict outcomes** and thinking about the most appropriate way to communicate in different situations. Emphasize that there are times when the most appropriate way to communicate can be passive, assertive, or aggressive. Explain that they are going to practice predicting outcomes for situations they have likely experienced.

Have the students work in pairs, read each of the following scenarios, and complete the corresponding tables. The students will note where they think the person's behavior falls on the passive/assertive/aggressive spectrum and **predict outcomes**. Then the students will brainstorm how the person could have been more assertive and predict how the outcome might have been different with a more assertive response.

**Example:** Ethan, a junior, sees a freshman being bullied by another student. He wants to help but is unsure what to do, so he heads to class.

Mark where Ethan's behavior falls on the spectrum of passive, assertive, and aggressive.	<b>Passive</b> <b>Assertive</b> <b>Aggressive</b> ←   →
Predict what will happen next.	Ethan feels guilty about his reaction and realizes that the bullying will continue if no one steps up.
What could Ethan have done to be more assertive?	As long as Ethan felt safe doing so, he could have walked over to the bully and used assertive body language and tone to confidently ask them to leave the freshman alone. He wouldn't have threatened or insulted them, just asked them directly and respectfully to stop what they were doing.
If he had been more assertive, predict what would have happened next.	The bully most likely would have stopped because Ethan took away their target and called them out.

**Scenario 1:** Mackenzie posts a mean rumor about another girl, and several students view the post. Kylee, a student who really isn't involved in the situation, posts, "You're so stupid, Mackenzie."

Mark where Kylee's behavior falls on the spectrum of passive, assertive, and aggressive.	<b>Passive</b> <b>Assertive</b> <b>Aggressive</b> ←   →
Predict what will happen next.	
What could Kylee have done to be more assertive?	
If she had been more assertive, predict what would have happened next.	

**Scenario 2:** Juan is accused of cheating, but he didn't do it. He decides that he won't turn in any more homework in that class.

Mark where Juan's behavior falls on the spectrum of passive, assertive, and aggressive.	<b>Passive</b> <b>Assertive</b> <b>Aggressive</b> ←   →
Predict what will happen next.	
What could Juan have done to be more assertive?	

If he had been more assertive, predict what would have happened next.	
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**Scenario 3:** Sage's best friend talks endlessly about herself. Sage is tired of it, so she tells her friend that she is selfish and needs to learn to be a true friend.

Mark where Sage's behavior falls on the spectrum of passive, assertive, and aggressive.	<div> <div>Passive</div> <div>Assertive</div> <div>Aggressive</div> </div> <div> <div>←</div> <div>→</div> </div>
Predict what will happen next.	
What could Sage have done to be more assertive?	
If she had been more assertive, predict what would have happened next.	

**Scenario 4:** Tracy's parents want him to go to community college to become an electrician. They take him on a campus visit, ask questions, submit his application, and enroll him. Tracy actually likes graphic design but decides that he'd better learn to like wiring houses.

Mark where Tracy's behavior falls on the spectrum of passive, assertive, and aggressive.	<div> <div>Passive</div> <div>Assertive</div> <div>Aggressive</div> </div> <div> <div>←</div> <div>→</div> </div>
Predict what will happen next.	
What could Tracy have done to be more assertive?	
If he had been more assertive, predict what would have happened next.	

Debrief each of the five scenarios with the whole class. Highlight that we experience natural feelings and tendencies for how to deal with situations but that the outcome can be undesirable if we aren't assertive.

## 21. I can change passive and aggressive communication into assertive communication

For each of the following sentences, have the students *identify the communication type* used and then rewrite the sentence to *speak their mind and be kind*.

- If you think I'm doing that, you're sorely mistaken.

Communication type used:

Assertive rewrite:

- Never mind. I didn't want one anyway.

Communication type used:

Assertive rewrite:

- I had plans then, but I guess my plans aren't that important.

Communication type used:

Assertive rewrite:

- What kind of writing is this? Wow, you cannot punctuate a sentence to save your life!

Communication type used:

Assertive rewrite:

- Can't you be quiet for a second? I'm concentrating over here, and all I can hear is you babbling on about your day.

Communication type used:

Assertive rewrite:

- I'm horrible at math, so I was just wondering whether you could help me with this problem. If it's too much trouble, though, I can just wait till you're done or ask someone else. Really, it's up to you. I know you're busy.

Communication type used:

Assertive rewrite:

Summarize the activity by reminding the students that assertive communication is ideal most of the time. By reframing their passive or aggressive communication to be more assertive, they are learning to express their wants, needs, and thoughts clearly and appropriately.

**Extended Activity:** Challenge the students to keep an Assertiveness Log ([www.cccframework.org/wp-content/uploads/AssertivenessLog.rtf](http://www.cccframework.org/wp-content/uploads/AssertivenessLog.rtf)) over the next week. Have them describe their interactions with others, identifying what they did and how they felt; indicate whether they acted passively, aggressively, or assertively; record the result of their actions; and list ways they could be more assertive next time.

## Unit 8: Assertiveness—Putting It All Together

### Learning Targets:

- 22. I can explain how to **do my part**
- 23. I can identify Assertiveness Strategies
- 24. I can demonstrate what I know about assertiveness by **doing my part**

### Materials ([www.cccframework.org/asrt-lessons-sec/#u8](http://www.cccframework.org/asrt-lessons-sec/#u8)):

- Assertiveness Strategies Poster
- Video **Do My Part**
- Assertiveness Strategies Matching Game
- Assertiveness Strategy Cards
- **Do My Part** Reflection Rubric
- [Assertiveness Performance-Based Observation](#)

Use Activity 24 to observe and rate your students' assertive behaviors as they are working on their projects. To record the [Assertiveness Performance-Based Observation](#) results, you or your school will need an account on [www.cccstudent.org](http://www.cccstudent.org), a free assessment website.

### Instructional Activities:

#### 22. I can explain how to **do my part**

Using the [Assertiveness Strategies Poster](#), review the strategies the students have learned so far: **identify communication types, find my feelings, show empathy, voice my feelings, listen and summarize, show respect without words, speak my mind and be kind, respect my boundaries, and predict outcomes.**

Tell the students that they're going to learn one more Assertiveness Strategy, **do my part**. This strategy relies on all the other strategies and helps us work together as part of a group. We've all probably been in groups where one person ends up doing all the work while others avoid any work whatsoever. With assertiveness, however, we can be a better group member and help others stay on track as well.

Show the video [Do My Part](#). Afterward, have the students work with a partner to answer the following questions. Once they have finished, ask them to share their answers with the rest of the class.

- What does it mean to **do your part**?  
[Possible responses: it means you participate in the group; it means you collaborate with others and share responsibility and ideas.]
- What are the four things you do when you **do your part**?  
[Possible response: 1. communicate ideas respectfully, 2. encourage others to share their ideas, 3. listen to each other, and 4. work together to complete the task.]
- Why is **doing your part** important?  
[Possible responses: it helps us work together better; it ensures that everyone is learning and doing their share of the work; it doesn't allow one person to make all of the decisions.]

Emphasize that **doing your part** means you do four things:

1. Communicate your ideas respectfully.
2. Encourage others to share their ideas.
3. Listen to each other.
4. Work together to complete a task.
































By **doing your part**, you are combining several Assertiveness Strategies, like **showing empathy, voicing your feelings, and speaking your mind and being kind**, as you work with others. This combination of

strategies prevents you from dominating the group, pushing all the work onto others, or letting others push all the work onto you.

### 23. I can identify Assertiveness Strategies

Explain to the students that they are going to complete the [Assertiveness Strategies Matching Game](#) to review the strategies.

Ask the students to individually complete the matching game. Then have them compare their answers with a partner and discuss any differences. Review the correct answers as a whole group, clarifying content for any misunderstandings.

<p><b>Answer Key</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Identify communication types:</b> e</li> <li><b>Find my feelings:</b> j</li> <li><b>Show empathy:</b> b</li> <li><b>Voice my feelings:</b> a</li> <li><b>Listen and summarize:</b> d</li> <li><b>Show respect without words:</b> i</li> <li><b>Speak my mind and be kind:</b> g</li> <li><b>Respect my boundaries:</b> h</li> <li><b>Do my part:</b> c</li> <li><b>Predict outcomes:</b> f</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assertiveness Strategies Matching Game</b></p> <p><b>Directions:</b> Draw a line from the assertiveness strategy on the left to its matching description on the right.</p> <table> <tr> <td> 1. Identify communication types.</td><td>a. I will communicate how I feel and why.</td></tr> <tr> <td> 2. Find my feelings.</td><td>b. I will stop and think about someone else's feelings.</td></tr> <tr> <td> 3. Show empathy.</td><td>c. I will communicate my ideas and thoughts respectfully when in a group. I will also listen to others' thoughts and ideas so we can decide how best to complete the task.</td></tr> <tr> <td> 4. Voice my feelings.</td><td>d. I will use my own words to explain the most important parts of what someone else has said.</td></tr> <tr> <td> 5. Listen and summarize.</td><td>e. I can tell if someone is being passive, assertive, or aggressive.</td></tr> <tr> <td> 6. Show respect without words.</td><td>f. Before making a decision, I will stop and think about what will happen if I'm passive, assertive, or aggressive.</td></tr> <tr> <td> 7. Speak my mind and be kind.</td><td>g. I will explain what I want to happen as part of an assertive statement.</td></tr> <tr> <td> 8. Respect my boundaries.</td><td>h. I will set guidelines, or boundaries, about what I will or will not do in challenging situations.</td></tr> <tr> <td> 9. Do my part.</td><td>i. I will make eye contact with the other person, keep my hands and feet still, and focus on what they say.</td></tr> <tr> <td> 10. Predict outcomes.</td><td>j. I can stop and think about my feelings.</td></tr> </table> <p style="text-align: right;">© 2024 Amy Gaumer Erickson and Patricia Noonan   <b>College &amp; Career Competency Framework</b>  <a href="http://CCCframework.org">CCCframework.org</a></p>	 1. Identify communication types.	a. I will communicate how I feel and why.	 2. Find my feelings.	b. I will stop and think about someone else's feelings.	 3. Show empathy.	c. I will communicate my ideas and thoughts respectfully when in a group. I will also listen to others' thoughts and ideas so we can decide how best to complete the task.	 4. Voice my feelings.	d. I will use my own words to explain the most important parts of what someone else has said.	 5. Listen and summarize.	e. I can tell if someone is being passive, assertive, or aggressive.	 6. Show respect without words.	f. Before making a decision, I will stop and think about what will happen if I'm passive, assertive, or aggressive.	 7. Speak my mind and be kind.	g. I will explain what I want to happen as part of an assertive statement.	 8. Respect my boundaries.	h. I will set guidelines, or boundaries, about what I will or will not do in challenging situations.	 9. Do my part.	i. I will make eye contact with the other person, keep my hands and feet still, and focus on what they say.	 10. Predict outcomes.	j. I can stop and think about my feelings.
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Tell the students to take a few minutes to reflect on and answer these questions:

- Why is communicating assertively important?
- What do you think taking steps to increase your assertiveness looks like?

After the students have written their answers, facilitate a brief class discussion. Remind the students that they have answered similar questions before (in [Unit 1, Activity 1](#)), when first introduced to the idea of assertiveness.

**Optional Activity:** Make one set of note cards with the names of the Assertiveness Strategies, one strategy per card. Make another set of cards with the definitions of the strategies, one definition per card. Hand out all the cards (you'll have 20). (Or download and print the [Assertiveness Strategy Cards](#).) Have the students move around the room, matching the names of strategies to their definitions.



## 24. I can demonstrate what I know about assertiveness by *doing my part*

The purpose of this activity is for the students to apply what they know about assertiveness by **doing their part** and collaborating on a group project. Remind them that they have been learning Assertiveness Strategies to understand themselves and others. They have also learned how to communicate their wants, needs, and thoughts respectfully and how to practice assertiveness when they work with others by **doing their part**. Ask volunteers to recall the four things they need to do to **do their part**:

1. Communicate your ideas respectfully.
2. Encourage others to share their ideas.
3. Listen to each other.
4. Work together to complete a task.

Tell the students that they are going to work in groups to complete a project that emphasizes the importance of good teamwork and **doing their part**. Explain that the goal of the project is to share what they have learned about assertiveness and why it's important. While working on the project, they should explain at least three Assertiveness Strategies and provide examples of how each strategy could be used.

Have the students choose one of the options below (or provide your own additional options that address the same intent):

- Perform a skit about assertiveness. The skit should include examples of students demonstrating at least three Assertiveness Strategies and discussing how each strategy can help them communicate better.
- Create a video to share with younger students. In the video, describe situations they're likely to encounter when it will be difficult for them to express their wants, needs, and thoughts respectfully. Explain how to use at least three Assertiveness Strategies to communicate appropriately in those situations.
- Write a group essay to share with others that describes at least three Assertiveness Strategies and ways you could use each strategy to improve your communication.

Show the [Do My Part Reflection Rubric](#), which will be used to score their projects, and discuss the criteria. Remind the students to use strategies they have learned in the previous activities to successfully complete their projects.

As the students are completing their assertiveness projects, use the [Assertiveness Performance-Based Observation](#) to observe their application of assertiveness concepts. During the project, have the students revise their projects based on classmates' feedback.

After the students have completed their assertiveness projects, ask them to reflect on how well they **did their part**. They should use the [Do My Part Reflection Rubric](#) to self-assess their use of the strategy **do my part** during the group project. Consider meeting with each student to review the rubric and the [Assertiveness Performance-Based Observation](#).

### Do My Part Reflection Rubric

	I fully demonstrated <i>doing my part</i> .	I <i>did my part</i> some of the time.	I found <i>doing my part</i> challenging.
I clearly and respectfully communicated my own ideas.	I communicated my thoughts and ideas by <b><i>showing empathy, voicing my feelings, and speaking my mind and being kind</i></b> each time I shared an idea or stated what I thought the group should do.	I partially shared my thoughts and ideas assertively but not always. It was sometimes hard for me to <b><i>speak my mind and be kind</i></b> and directly state my ideas.	I was unable to do all of the parts of the assertive statement ( <b><i>show empathy, voice my feelings, and speak my mind and be kind</i></b> ) during the project.
I encouraged others to reframe their passive or aggressive communication to be more assertive.	When I <b><i>identified communication types</i></b> and noticed a group member communicating passively or aggressively, I encouraged them to use assertive communication and <b><i>do their part</i></b> .	I encouraged others to reframe their passive or aggressive communication a couple of times.	I noticed when others were using passive or aggressive communication, but I didn't encourage them to reframe their communication to be more assertive.
I listened to others as they shared their ideas.	Each time someone shared an idea, I <b><i>showed respect without words</i></b> by focusing on what they were saying and making eye contact.  We all <b><i>listened</i></b> , and someone in our group <b><i>summarized</i></b> after each person shared.	Each time someone shared an idea, I <b><i>showed respect without words</i></b> by focusing on what they were saying and making eye contact.  We all <b><i>listened</i></b> , but there were times when we didn't <b><i>summarize</i></b> after each person shared.	I didn't consistently <b><i>show respect without words</i></b> . I didn't always <b><i>listen</i></b> to the ideas of others.
As a group, we worked together to develop a plan for completing the project, and each member <i>did their part</i> .	We communicated assertively and collaborated to develop a plan and complete the project.	We were able to complete the project, but each member didn't <b><i>do their part</i></b> completely. We didn't communicate assertively the whole time.	Our group was unable to work well together. As a group, we didn't all <b><i>do our part</i></b> .

## Assessing Your Assertiveness Knowledge (Posttest)

**Materials:** A computer or tablet for each student

**Preparation:** To record and access assessment results, you or your school will need an account on [www.cccstudent.org](http://www.cccstudent.org), a free assessment website. Follow the directions on the website to launch the *Assertiveness Knowledge Test 7–12* again as a posttest. Note the code for your test and provide that code and the link below to the students. The items on the posttest are the same as those on the pretest.

**Assessment Link:** [www.cccstudent.org](http://www.cccstudent.org)

**Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Re-administer the *Assertiveness Knowledge Test 7–12*

Explain to the students that they will each be taking the *Assertiveness Knowledge Test 7–12* a second time. The multiple-choice items will measure their knowledge of assertiveness concepts. Comparing the results of the second section to their pretest results will demonstrate how much their understanding has increased.

For Items 1–20, encourage the students to pause for a moment after reading each item to think about their ability over the last couple months to express their wants, needs, and thoughts while respecting what others want, need, and think.

Tell the students that Items 21–40 test their knowledge of assertiveness concepts and potential ways to communicate assertively.

Give the students time to complete the assessment (approximately 15 minutes). Tell them that after submitting their answers, they should stay on the Results page for the next activity.

### Reflect on posttest results

Give the students some time to individually review their posttest results. Have they learned more about assertiveness? After reviewing the questions that they missed, do they understand why their answers aren't correct, or are there some questions that are still confusing?

Ask the students to respond to the following questions:

- How do Assertiveness Strategies help me?
- Looking at my score for Items 21–37 on the posttest, what have I learned about assertiveness?
- What questions do I have about assertiveness?

While the students are individually reviewing their posttest results, briefly review the full-class results in the teacher view on [www.cccstudent.org](http://www.cccstudent.org), including comparing them to the overall pretest results. Emphasize learning and overall growth as a class. Celebrate the students' successes in learning and practicing assertiveness. Reteach assertiveness concepts as needed.

Provide numerous opportunities during the year for the students to practice assertiveness. Coach the students to apply Assertiveness Strategies in class and extracurricular activities. Assertiveness is a skill that we all practice and continue developing throughout our lives.

## Assertiveness Activity Crosswalk

This table shows the location of each Assertiveness Strategy within the three grade bands of the *Assertiveness Lessons [Primary, Intermediate, and Secondary]*. Regular font indicates that the strategy is addressed but is not the primary purpose of the activity. Bold font indicates that the strategy is a primary focus of the activity.

Strategy	Primary Activities	Intermediate Activities	Secondary Activities
 IDENTIFY COMMUNICATION TYPES	<b>2, 3, 7, 8, 21, 23, 25</b>	<b>2, 3, 7, 23, 25</b>	<b>2, 3, 6, 7, 21, 23</b>
 FIND MY FEELINGS	<b>4, 5, 25</b>	<b>4, 5, 25</b>	<b>4, 5, 23</b>
 SHOW EMPATHY	<b>13, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25</b>	<b>12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 23, 25</b>	<b>12, 13, 16, 17, 22, 23</b>
 VOICE MY FEELINGS	<b>4, 5, 6, 18, 19, 20, 23, 25</b>	<b>4, 5, 6, 18, 19, 20, 23, 25</b>	<b>4, 5, 8, 16, 17, 22, 23</b>
 LISTEN & SUMMARIZE	<b>16, 17, 25</b>	<b>16, 17, 25</b>	<b>13, 14, 15, 23</b>
 SHOW RESPECT WITHOUT WORDS	<b>14, 15, 16, 17, 25</b>	<b>14, 15, 16, 17, 25</b>	<b>13, 14, 15, 23</b>
 SPEAK MY MIND AND BE KIND	<b>18, 19, 20, 23, 25</b>	<b>18, 19, 20, 23, 25</b>	<b>16, 17, 18, 21, 23</b>
 RESPECT MY BOUNDARIES	<b>9, 20, 25</b>	<b>9, 20, 25</b>	<b>9, 18, 23</b>
 DO MY PART	<b>24, 25, 26</b>	<b>24, 25, 26</b>	<b>22, 23, 24</b>
 PREDICT OUTCOMES	<b>21, 22, 25</b>	<b>21, 22, 23, 25</b>	<b>19, 20, 23</b>

Heger, E., Noonan, P. M., & Gaumer Erickson, A. S. (2024). *Assertiveness lessons* [Teacher lessons and student workbook]. College & Career Competency Framework. [www.cccframework.org/competency-lessons-and-student-workbooks](http://www.cccframework.org/competency-lessons-and-student-workbooks)