



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Assertive Communication Toolkit: Speak Up with Confidence

*Centre for
Continuing Education*

Assertive Communication Toolkit: Speak Up with Confidence



Do you struggle to talk in meetings, express your ideas, or speak up when your opinion differs from others? Would you like to become a more confident and influential communicator? This two-day assertiveness course will help you communicate clearly and professionally, without sounding aggressive or feeling nervous. You'll discover the power of assertive communication and gain the confidence to express yourself more effectively.

If you're already confident in everyday communication but find it challenging to handle difficult conversations assertively, this advanced course will provide you with a toolkit for speaking up successfully. You'll learn to remain calm and professional in stressful or emotionally charged situations by regulating your emotions. Discover how to respond assertively to others using empathy-building statements and master advanced self-disclosure techniques, including consequence assertion, feedback assertion, discrepancy assertion, and negative feeling assertion. Finally, you'll learn how to build win-win solutions to problems, so you can take a collaborative approach to difficult conversations.

This two-day course combines the content from our Assertive Communication Skills: Advanced and Assertive Communication and Conversation Skills: Practical Training courses to offer a comprehensive assertiveness toolkit.



Course duration

2 sessions, 16 hours total



Time

9am - 5pm



Format

Face-to-face
or
Online in real-time



Dates

Browse available
[course dates](#)

Intended audience

Anyone who needs to use confident and respectful communication to influence others – including professionals, team leaders, supervisors, line managers, and customer service providers – as well as those who have already mastered the basics of assertive communication and want to take their skills to the next level.



Upon completion

Every participant receives a University of Sydney certificate of completion.



Aims

We aim to help you express yourself clearly and assertively, while maintaining respectful and collaborative relationships. You'll also gain tools to handle difficult situations and 'courageous conversations' professionally.



Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- monitor your communication style and shift into assertive mode, so you can express yourself clearly and confidently
- cultivate an assertive mindset, by applying core models of assertiveness to everyday situations at work
- use three assertive language patterns (I Statements, Broken Record and Fogging) and ask quality questions to express your needs, feelings and opinions without violating the rights of others
- set appropriate limits and boundaries, using assertive techniques for giving feedback, making requests and saying 'no'
- disagree respectfully, using the Yes And Formula for collaborative conversation
- plan to handle your own challenging situations using your new skills
- apply the principles of advanced assertiveness to real-life situations
- regulate your emotions during challenging conversations
- respond to others' emotions with empathy and assertiveness, so you can defuse emotionally charged situations
- clearly express your perspective using assertive self-disclosure techniques
- listen and speak courageously during difficult conversations
- take a collaborative approach to build win-win solutions to problems, using the assertive dialogue-building model.



Content

Day 1

Topic 1: What is assertiveness?

Assertive people can express their opinions, feelings, needs and wants in respectful ways. They know how to balance the skills of advocacy (speaking up for yourself) and enquiry (listening to the perspectives of others), respectfully. Plus, they understand the concept of assertive rights and responsibilities. In this module, you'll learn the difference between assertive and non-assertive communication. Then you'll discover how to structure a conversation which balances advocacy and enquiry - even in tough situations.

Topic 2: Building an assertive mindset

You can't speak assertively unless you think assertively. In this module, you'll learn 7 core principles that drive assertive thinking. You'll discuss how to apply these to everyday situations at work. Plus, you'll get tips for staying issue-focussed, rather than taking things personally.

Topic 3: Using assertive language patterns

When it comes to speaking up, there are three key language patterns for expressing yourself without violating the rights of others: I Statements, Broken Record and Fogging.



Hear how each works and practice using them effectively. Additionally, asking quality questions and appropriately matching language patterns are explored.

Topic 4: Setting appropriate limits and boundaries

Confident people know how to set limits and boundaries in their relationships. Once you can do this, you'll no longer feel uncomfortable asking for help, guilty about saying 'no' or worried about giving feedback to other people. Learn a simple boundary-setting formula that helps you stand your ground, without creating resentment.

Topic 5: Disagreeing respectfully

This module introduces the Yes And

Formula, which helps you disagree without sounding disagreeable. You'll get tips for using this powerful technique to express an alternative perspective, without offending others or triggering arguments. Then you'll work out how to use these tips to handle 'difficult people' in your workplace.

Topic 6: Handling real-life situations

During the final module of this assertiveness course, you'll practice holding assertive conversations and plan how you can apply what you've learned in future conversations. Don't worry. This session does not involve role-play or acting. But it does include an opportunity to discuss your real-life situations and get advice on how to handle them assertively.



Day 2

Topic 1: What is advanced assertiveness?

Find out how advanced assertiveness differs from basic assertiveness. Discuss 5 principles of advanced assertiveness and pinpoint where you can use them. Identify your key strengths as a communicator and your areas for improvement.

Topic 2: Managing your own emotions

Learn to recognise, interpret and influence your own emotional state in challenging situations. Use cognitive reframing to shift your perspective or calm yourself down. Discuss strategies for pausing or redirecting heated conversations, so you can maintain your professionalism at all times.

Topic 3: Responding to others' emotions

In this module, you'll try out a simple process for responding assertively to others' emotions using three types of empathy-building statements. This will help you create a supportive atmosphere that fosters open communication and safe emotional expression.

Topic 4: Speaking 'courageously'

Discover advanced patterns of assertive self-disclosure, such as consequence assertion, feedback assertion, discrepancy assertion and negative feeling assertion. Learn how to use these patterns effectively in challenging conversations such as giving feedback, raising concerns, expressing a contentious opinion or responding to inappropriate behaviour.

Topic 5: Listening 'courageously'

In many professional situations, you need to listen even when it's uncomfortable. This helps you gain new perspectives and build a constructive dialogue. Find out how to listen courageously, using active listening tools, so you can become an effective problem solver and negotiator. Build the skills you need when receiving feedback, listening to opinions you don't agree with and facing upset or 'difficult' people.

Topic 6: Collaborating to solve problems

Explore a tried and tested model for building win-win solutions to problems. This four-step model will help you take a collaborative approach to difficult conversations, while still maintaining your assertiveness. Find out how you can use this process in real-life situations.



Delivery style

This course is interactive and based on experiential learning. You will be involved in group conversations, discussing case studies and completing written exercises. There will be several opportunities to ask the course facilitator questions or request tips for dealing with your real life situations.

You will get the most from this course if you are:

- willing to contribute to group discussions
- confident communicating verbally in English
- comfortable participating in role-play style activities

Materials

Course materials, including a presentation and a course booklet, are provided electronically.



Organisational training and development

This course can be delivered as a private session for groups, and tailored to meet the needs of your business. Contact us to discuss our range of organisational training solutions.

[Learn more](#)



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We recognise and pay respect to the Elders and communities – past, present, and emerging – of the lands that the University of Sydney's campuses stand on. For thousands of years they have shared and exchanged knowledges across innumerable generations for the benefit of all.

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inspire leadership

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