

Healthy communication

The basis of healthy communication in intimate relationships is to express your needs in the right way. There are four types of self affirmation: assertive, passive-aggressive, aggressive and manipulative.



Assertive

Expressing to the other person, in a clear, frank and appropriate manner, your emotions, thoughts and opinions so as to defend your rights while respecting those of others. Assertiveness is the healthy way to express yourself in your interactions with others.

Passive-aggressive

Not asserting your needs, thoughts and feelings or to do so indirectly, inappropriately and at the expense of the your own rights.

Aggressive

Expressing your needs, thoughts and emotions in a direct way in an attempt to enforce your rights, but inappropriately and at the expense of the rights of others.

Manipulative

Expressing your thoughts, needs and emotions to defend your rights, but dishonestly and indirectly, thus at the expense of the rights of others.

Healthy communication

Advantages et disadvantages

Behaviours like passive-aggressive, aggressive and manipulative all have short-term advantages, such as pleasing others, avoiding conflict and getting what you want. But they have longer-term negative impacts: causing frustration, dissatisfaction, anxiety, a feeling of being misunderstood, social difficulties and depressive affects.

Assertiveness may require more effort and energy in the short term when you are not used to expressing yourself in this way, and may require you to deal with unpleasant emotions like fear of offending, being rejected, etc. Long-range, however, it will let you get what you want in an efficient way and in a way that preserves your relationships. It increases self-respect and self-confidence and enhances the respect other people have for you.

Strategies for healthy communication

To make sure we are well understood during conflicts with our partner, this strategy can be used to formulate the request :

- 1. When... (explanation of the situation)**
- 2. I feel... (explanation of emotions, thoughts, needs)**
- 3. Because... (details about the situation)**
- 4. I would like... (resolution)**

Using this wording ensures that the other person understands what you're trying to say. It's important to take the time to explain how you feel about this situation, because our feelings are our own and no one can argue with emotions, thoughts or perceived needs. In addition, talking in «I» statements is less confrontational for the person receiving the request. Telling the person what you expect by giving a concrete solution empowers the person in the situation.



Healthy communication



The person is not obliged to accept your request. Keep in mind that you just made a request, you did not give an order. If the person refuses, ask them to explain why, and listen to the answer. You can then try to find a compromise between the two positions.

Compromise is the preferred solution to conflict. Through compromise, you find common ground that suits everyone and ensure that everyone's rights are respected.

Note that conflicts can have different levels of intensity. **Nothing justifies violence.** If you don't feel comfortable or safe in your relationship, please get information and consult the resources at your disposal. Here are a few of them:

Ressources

S.O.S. Violence conjugale

Offers a toll-free helpline 24/7

Phone : 1-800-363-9010

Website :

<http://www.sosviolenceconjugale.ca/>

Maisons d'hébergement

Website : <http://maisons-femmes.qc.ca/maisons-membres/>

<http://fedeqc.ca/>

Violence info

Offers a telephone line, information and referral as well as individual and group help sessions

Phone : 418-667-8770

Website :

<https://www.violenceinfo.com/>

Centre de solidarité lesbienne

Offers intervention and support groups for lesbians and lesbian people victim of domestic violence.

Téléphone : 514 526-2452

Site web :

<http://www.solidaritelesbienne.qc.ca/>