

Skills for Well-Being Group

Week 5: Assertiveness and Values

Homework

- Hierarchy and Activity Scheduling
- Thought Records
- Keep practising relaxation

Aims of Session Five

- To learn assertiveness techniques
- To learn about values:
 - how they can inform our activity planning
 - how they can inform our goal setting
 - How acting in line with our values can increase our mood and wellbeing

What is Assertiveness

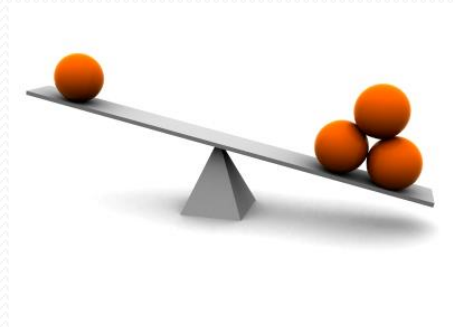
- What does Assertiveness mean to you?



- Does a lack of assertiveness impact on your life?

Communication Styles

- Assertiveness is one of 3 communication styles:
 - Passive
 - Aggressive
 - Assertive



- Often we can swing between passive and aggressive communication (or vice versa). This can create an unhelpful cycle of guilt and resentment.

Passive		
Thinking your needs do not matter as much as others		
Giving in		
Trying to keep the peace		
Remaining silent, not being heard		
Being bullied		
Not saying what you think		
Damages relationships – others respect you less		
Damages your self-esteem		

		Aggressive
		Thinking only your needs matter
		Taking
		Looking out only for yourself
		Talking over people
		Bullying others
		Shouting and sometimes aggression and violence
		Damages relationships – others do not like aggression
		Damages others self-esteem

Passive		Aggressive
Thinking your needs do not matter as much as others		Thinking only your needs matter
Giving in		Taking
Trying to keep the peace		Looking out only for yourself
Remaining silent, not being heard		Talking over people
Being bullied		Bullying others
Not saying what you think		Shouting and sometimes aggression and violence
Damages relationships – others respect you less		Damages relationships – others do not like aggression
Damages your self-esteem		Damages others self-esteem

	Assertive	
	Recognising your needs matter just as much as other peoples' needs	
	Compromising	
	Making sure things are fair for you and others	
	Talking and listening	
	Standing up for yourself and setting boundaries	
	Expressing your point clearly and confidently	
	Healthier relationships – other people know where they stand	
	Builds self-esteem	

Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
Thinking your needs do not matter as much as others	Recognising your needs matter just as much as other peoples' needs	Thinking only your needs matter
Giving in	Compromising	Taking
Trying to keep the peace	Making sure things are fair for you and others	Looking out only for yourself
Remaining silent, not being heard	Talking and listening	Talking over people
Being bullied	Standing up for yourself and setting boundaries	Bullying others
Not saying what you think	Expressing your point clearly and confidently	Shouting and sometimes aggression and violence
Damages relationships – others respect you less	Healthier relationships – other people know where they stand	Damages relationships – others do not like aggression
Damages your self-esteem	Builds self-esteem	Damages others self-esteem

Rules of Assertion

I have the right to...

- Respect who I am and what I do
- Recognise and express my own needs as an individual
- Make mistakes
- Change my mind if I choose
- Say no if I don't want to do something
- Make decisions without having to justify them or apologise for them
- Not take responsibility for the actions of other adults
- Interact with others without being dependant on them for approval
- Say I don't understand

Tips for Being Assertive

- Ask for what you want (*rather than hoping someone will notice what I want*)
- Request time to make a decision
- Make clear statements about how you feel and what you think.
- Be straightforward and honest so you can say your point effectively
- Avoid apologising and giving elaborate reasons for saying no
- Tell the person if you are finding it difficult
- Respect other people and their right to be assertive
- Remember that it is better in the long run to be truthful than breed resentment and bitterness

How to Get Started

Five Steps to Assertiveness:

1. Decide what you want – this reflects your rights (refer to Rules of Assertion)
2. Decide if it's fair – this reflects the other person's rights
3. Be prepared to take risks
4. Ask for it clearly (Using Assertiveness Techniques)
5. Keep calm (other Anxiety Management strategies can help)

Assertiveness Techniques

Some specific assertiveness techniques:

- **The Broken Record**
- **Saying “no”**
- **“I” statements**
- **Scripting**

1. The Broken Record

- A basic assertiveness technique whereby we repeat what we want over and over again – calmly.
- Particularly useful when dealing with situations where your rights are in danger of being abused or if you feel vulnerable.
- Once you have prepared your script, you can relax and repeat your argument.

The Broken Record - Example

- John: Can I borrow £10 from you?
- Neil: **I cannot lend you any money**
- John: I'll pay it back as soon as I can, I really, really need it.
- Neil: **I cannot lend you any money**
- John: But you wouldn't miss £10 surely. You are my friend, aren't you?
- Neil: Yes, I am your friend but **I cannot lend you any money**

Saying “No” Can be the Hardest Word

- Be straightforward and honest so you can say your point effectively
- You have the right to say no if you don't want to do it
- Avoid apologising and giving elaborate reasons for saying no
- Tell the person if you are finding it difficult
- Remember that it is better in the long run to be truthful than breed resentment and bitterness within yourself

“I” Statements

Use statements of the form:

I would like to....

I want to....

I would appreciate it if.....

I feel.....

“I get very upset when you arrive late for dinner because I put a lot of effort into preparing the meal and when I have to serve the food cold, all my efforts seem to have been in vain”

Avoid using “You” statements such as “You will do this”, “You have to...”, “You make me....”. These can put the person that you are addressing on the defensive and may decrease the likelihood of getting what you want

Scripting

Remember **D E S C**:

- **D** – Describe the situation, relationship or practical problem that is important to you
- **E** – Explain how you feel about the situation or problem
- **S** – Specify your needs or what you want to happen to make things different
- **C** – Consequences, how will making these changes improve the situation for you and others

Body Language and Assertiveness

- **Stand Tall** – this makes you appear more confident. Hunched body language makes us appear more passive. Being too close or leaning over can appear aggressive
- **Eye contact** – avoiding eye contact can look passive. Staring intently can appear aggressive. Try find a good balance.
- **Relaxed** – being relaxed will help you stay in control, maintain credibility and increase the chance of getting the desired response.

Common Worries when Becoming Assertive

- **How will people react?**
 - You are not responsible for their reaction. Ask yourself if your request or boundary is fair. If it is fair then their reaction may be due to their own issues and not yours.
- **Will they still like me/talk to me?**
 - We can't predict how others will react. However, people have grown used to us communicating in a certain way over the years and it takes time to adjust to change. If you stick to being assertive then others tend to adjust to your changed communication. If their friendship relies on you never saying no or having boundaries is it a helpful relationship for you?

Break



What are Values?



Examples of Values

- Honesty
- Compassion
- Loyalty
- Connecting
- Appreciating
- Understanding
- Creativity
- Achieving
- Learning
- Teaching
- Pleasure
- Justice
- Love
- Caring
- Helping
- Travelling
- Faith
- Family
- Health
- Nature

Why are Values Important?



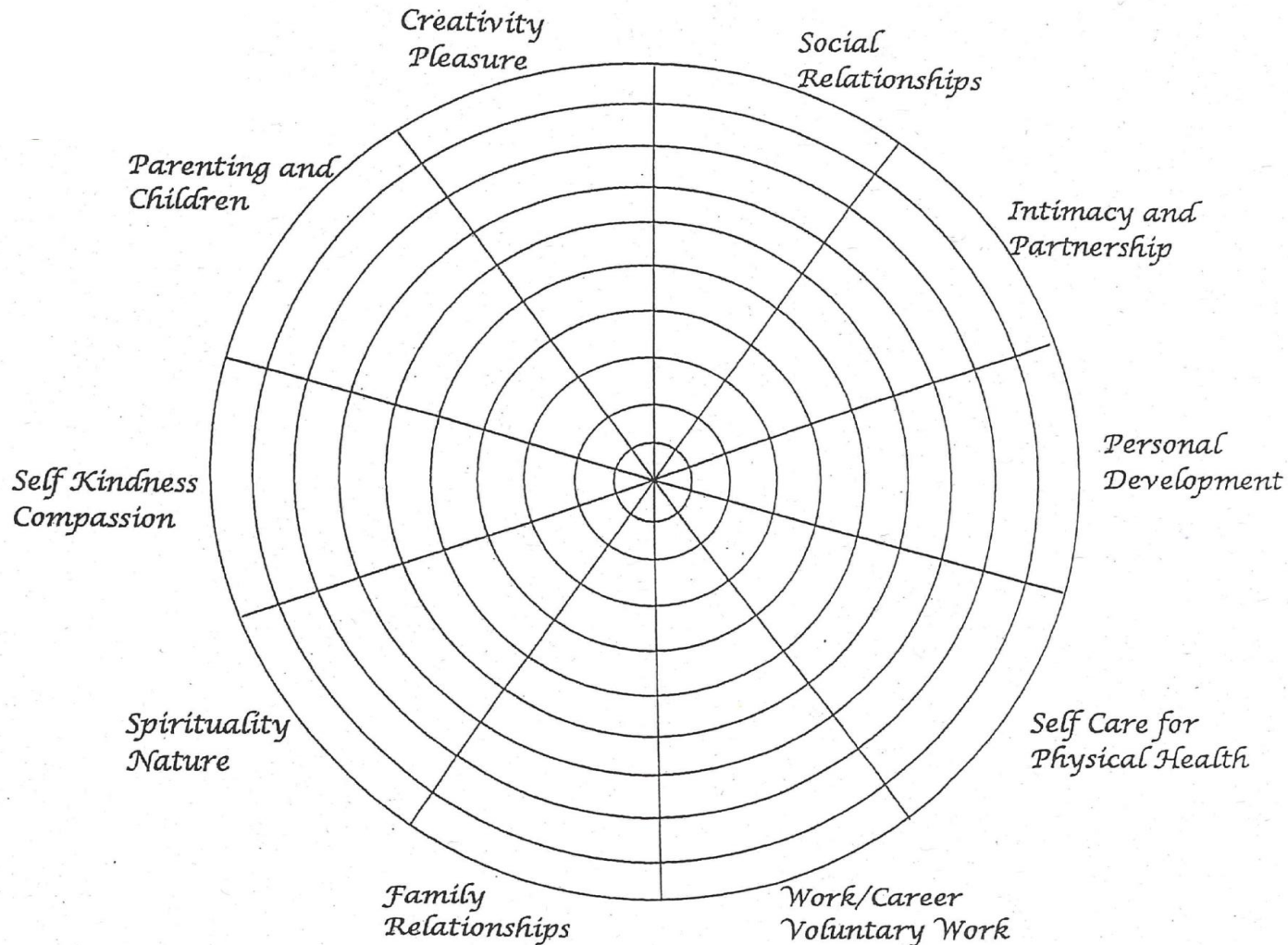
- Values:
 - Form part of our identity/self-concept
 - Can help us make decisions
 - Can act as a compass, helping us to lead a life that fulfils us (only if we act in line with our values)
 - Can help us focus upon what we're moving towards, rather than what we're running away from.
 - Can assist us to reduce avoidance/safety behaviours
 - Can lower stress levels (anxiety and depression)

Values



- Sometimes in life we become disconnected from our values.
- This can happen for a variety of reasons:
 - Placing too high a priority upon pleasing others that we forget about pleasing ourselves
 - Feeling overwhelmed by life events
 - Becoming preoccupied with the “have to’s” in daily life and forgetting/neglecting the “want to’s”.
 - *Reframe your behaviours as “choose to’s”*
 - Being unaware of or resisting a shift in our values (e.g. Becoming a parent can shift what we prioritise as important)

Values Wheel



Clarifying your Values



- Since acting in line with our values can help us lead more pleasurable and fulfilling lives, it is important for us to clarify and connect with our values.
- On the values wheel provided:
 - 1) Beside each value place a score (0 – 10) to identify how important each value is to you
 - 2) Now shade in the rings for each value showing how much you currently fulfil each value (with 0 = the centre point)
 - 3) Are there any differences between how important a value is and how much you fulfil it?
 - 4) If so, begin to form goals (session 4) to incorporate more value based activities into your life. (e.g. Spend more time on self-care or social relationships)

Working with Values

When working with values it is important to:

- Acknowledge and reward yourself when you act in line with values
- Understand that there may be situations in life that require us to prioritise one value more than another
- Recognise that values do not form set and rigid rules to live by; they are flexible guides that can evolve over time

Homework

- Continue with Relaxation Practice
- Continue using the Five Factor Model and Activity Diary
- Monitor any occasion where you used an Assertiveness Technique throughout the week.
- Try to work on your values wheel through the week
- **Sleep diary for next session** if sleep disturbance is relevant for you

Sleep Diary

Complete this form each day: write in the shaded area just before going to bed, and the non-shaded area in the morning

Day / date							
Mood level during the day 0 – 10 (10 worst)							
Fatigue level during the day 0 – 10 (10 worst)							
Naps taken during day – what time? How long for?							
Activity during day? 0 – 10 (10 most active)							
Caffeine, nicotine, alcohol during day, and during evening?							
What did I do just before going to bed?							
What time I went to bed							
What did I do in bed? (Read, TV, sex)							
What time did I put the lights out?							
How many minutes before I fell asleep?							
What time did I wake up?							
Number of times I woke up?							
Number of hours I slept?							
On waking up in the morning, how rested do I feel? 0 – 10 (10 most rested)							