

Communication Continuum

Non-Verbal Verbal Non-Verbal

Withdrawn	Passive	Assertive	Aggressive	Assaultive
Glares Isolation Silent Treatment Avoidant	Sarcasm Curt Statements Blaming Lying Yes/No Comment	Active Listening I-Feel Statements Calm Tone Humble Heart Changing Self Forgiving Clear Verbiage	Blaming Name Calling Threats Profanity Threats Volume Caustic Stares	Posturing Rage Stealing Hitting Kicking Vandalism Abuse

Withdrawn: Withdrawn forms of communication are non-verbal, and include: stares, dirty looks, gestures and isolation, and self-destructive behaviors such as cutting, drug overdosing, hiding behind alcohol, the internet, or other activities that fuel avoidant behavior from others, etc. Sometimes people cause others to avoid them through muttering in an angry tone.

Passive: Passive forms of communication include: whining, expression of feeling victimized, “poor me,” blaming, “you” messages, turning to others for problem solving, etc. An inability to say “no,” even when saying “yes” may hurt is also a hallmark of passivity. Sarcasm is a primary staple for those that are passive communicators. Passivity is marked by mixed messages and ones that ‘seem’ non-confrontational but underneath are as destructive as the other more intense forms of communication.

Assertive: Assertive communication is the healthy balance point between aggressive/assaultive pattern, and withdrawn/passive patterns. Assertion is incompatible with negative communication at either end of the scale. Assertive communication includes: accepting responsibility rather than blaming or dumping hostility, using “I-Feel” statements, making choices and giving others choices, and developing good listening habits. It has entails calm tone, clear wording, and some level of humility.

Aggressive: Aggressive forms of communication include: loud/angry blaming of others, yelling, name calling, hostile “you” messages, such as “you better watch out,” or “you’re going to get it.” Demands, volume, and light threats also encompass aggressive ways of communicating.

Assaultive: Assaultive forms of communication are non-verbal and include hitting, kicking, or throwing items. It usually entails ones feeling out of control and attempts to punish, harm, or scare the other individual.