

# Build Skills: Communication

<b>Purpose</b>	Group members will learn communication and negotiation skills to assist in carrying out responsible decisions.
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## Session Overview

(125 minutes)

- 1 Opening Ritual and Review** (15 minutes)
- 2 SODA Decision-Making Model: Step 4** (15 minutes)
- 3 Communication Game** (15 minutes)
  - Option A: Communicating Without Words
  - Option B: Changing Messages
- 4 Communication Styles: Aggressive, Assertive and Nonassertive** (35 minutes)
- 5 Sex: A Decision for Two** (40 minutes)
- 6 Wrap-Up and Closing Ritual** (5 minutes)

## Preparation

### Pre-Session Activities

- Read over and become familiar with all Session 5 activities.
- Copy **Communication Styles** handout for each group member. (See page 144.)
- Prepare snacks.
- Review the **Resource Guide for Teens** information gathered in Session 3.
- Research national and local statistics on date rape to present to increase group understanding in this session. Local statistics are preferred because local information brings the date rape story closer to home. You can contact the local health department or Rape Crisis Services Agency for information.
- If possible, invite a counselor from a local rape counseling center to attend the session, if you feel this would be helpful for your particular group.

- Prepare a cautionary statement about the fact that Latrice’s story may bring up issues that some members of the group may have experienced. Warn youth in advance of the session so they can opt out of the session if desired, and then follow up with support, possibly with case-management or referral services.
- Review **Latrice’s Story**. (See pages 150–151.)
- If you have been using Story 2 in Appendix A for the Family Tree, please see Session 5: Alternate Activity 5—Malik’s Story on pages 235–239 in Appendix A.

## Materials

- snacks
- Question Box
- Group Agreements, Family Tree, SODA Model and Challenges charts
- masking tape
- chart paper and markers
- props for roleplays (hats or aprons, tie for shoe store salesperson, shoes, etc.)
- Communication Styles** handout, 1 for each group member

# 4. Communication Styles: Aggressive, Assertive and Nonassertive

- ☺ **Objective:** By the end of the session, group members will be able to demonstrate and distinguish aggressive, assertive and nonassertive communication styles.
- 🕒 **Time:** 35 minutes
- ✂️ **Materials:** Roleplay props: hats or aprons, tie for shoe store salesperson, shoes, etc.  
**Communication Styles** handout, 1 for each group member

## Procedure

- 1 Choose a volunteer to be a busy shoe salesperson at a sporting goods store. Explain that the group leader will play a customer who is returning a \$100 pair of shoes because they had a hole in them.
- 2 Perform the first roleplay. Play an exaggerated “nonassertive” or “passive” person. Look down at the ground. Try to get the salesperson’s attention in a barely audible voice. Meekly state the problem and don’t offer any solution. More than likely the salesperson will not give you a new pair of shoes. Leave the store quietly.
- 3 Ask:
  - How was I acting?
  - What was my voice like?
  - Did I tell the salesperson what I wanted (a new pair of shoes)?
  - Did I get what I wanted?
  - Where were my eyes?
  - What was my body like?
- 4 Repeat the roleplay. This time play an “aggressive” person. Go into the store yelling and screaming. Don’t give the salesperson a chance to respond. Storm out of the store exclaiming that you will never shop there again.
- 5 Again ask youth the questions:

- How was I acting?
  - What was my voice like?
  - Did I tell the salesperson what I wanted (a new pair of shoes)?
  - Did I get what I wanted?
  - Where were my eyes?
  - What was my body like?
- 6 The third time, play an “assertive” person. In a clear voice, looking right at the salesperson, explain that you were in the day before and bought a pair of shoes, but they have a hole in them and you would like to exchange them for a new pair. You have your receipt.
- More than likely, the salesperson will give you a new pair of shoes. If he/she doesn’t, politely ask for the manager. Have another youth play the manager and repeat the above scenario. Leave with your new pair of shoes.
- 7 Ask youth the questions:
- How was I acting?
  - What was my voice like?
  - Did I tell the salesperson what I wanted (a new pair of shoes)?
  - Did I get what I wanted?
  - Where were my eyes?
  - What was my body like?
- 8 Ask which method gave you the results you wanted—to have the shoes exchanged. Tell youth that **assertive** behavior is more likely to get us what we want in a way that is respectful of others.
- 9 Distribute and review the **Communication Styles** handout. Briefly review 3–5 examples from the chart to demonstrate the various communication styles.
- 10 Take a moment to talk about cultural differences in communication styles. In some cultures an action might be perceived as aggressive, while in another it might be perceived as assertive. Ask youth if they can think of any examples, and offer some of your own if they cannot. (For example, direct eye contact is considered aggressive, not assertive, in some cultures. Speaking up clearly about what you want might be considered rude/aggressive rather than assertive in some cultures.)
- Remind youth that people must look at each individual circumstance to determine the best way to communicate. It’s important to be sensitive to the other person’s reaction. If the person reacts negatively, you may need to back off and find another way to communicate (or leave a situation if someone becomes aggressive toward you).
- Discuss how a person’s background affects the way they think and speak. Discuss how the same behaviors can be passed down in families. (Example: Mama always yelled to get her point across, therefore you yell because you think it will get your point across better.)

**Notes for  
Group Leaders:**


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When doing roleplays, you have the option of breaking participants into smaller groups and having the groups roleplay among themselves, or of assigning roles and then bringing the small groups back together to do the roleplay in front of others. Be mindful of age gaps when pairing youth for roleplays. If necessary, a group leader may participate in the roleplays.

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- 11** Have youth break into groups of 2 or 3 and roleplay another scenario. Let them know that they will have 2 minutes each to complete the roleplay. Have one be the customer, one be an employee and one be the manager of Mama's Moose Burgers. The customer asked for 2 Mama Moose burgers with *no* Mama Moose sauce and extra cheese, but received 2 burgers with *extra* Mama Moose sauce and no cheese.

Give instructions to the small groups:

- Decide who will be first to be the customer, the employee and the manager. Remember that everyone will have a chance to play each role.
- Roleplay the situation in your group so that each person acts out the part 3 times using these 3 styles of communication:
- Nonassertive and soft (They don't exchange your burgers.)
- Aggressive and hard (They don't exchange your burgers; they call Security.)
- Assertive and respectful (They replace the burgers as you requested.)

Chart the 3 styles of communication.

If time allows, you can have one or more small groups do the roleplay in front of the whole group.

**Notes for  
Group Leaders:**


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Have examples of nonassertive, aggressive and assertive ways to handle the Moose Burger roleplay and be prepared to share them if the group is having trouble with the exercise.

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- 12** Discuss the roleplay using the following questions:
- What behavior worked to get the results the customer wanted?
  - Are there times when someone should be aggressive? (e.g., sports, when life is in danger)
  - Are there times when someone should be passive?
  - Are passive or aggressive behaviors something that you are born with or something you learn?

**13** Do another roleplay either in small groups, or with volunteers before the full group. Give each group 2 minutes for each roleplay. In this roleplay, Eric has brought Shauna back to her house after going together to a movie. Nobody else is there, and Shauna isn't allowed to have a date in the house when her grandma isn't home. She and Eric say goodnight out front, but then Eric follows her inside. Eric says he's glad they can have some time alone because he really wants to be close to Shauna.

Have the person playing Shauna demonstrate a nonassertive, assertive and aggressive response to Eric.

**14** Discuss the roleplay.

- What was the least successful approach for Shauna in this roleplay?
- What communication style worked best for her to get what she wanted (for Eric to leave the house)?
- If she really liked Eric, what would be the best way for her to get him to leave the house while still keeping open the possibility that they'd go out again?
- When might it be a good choice to use aggressive communication in a situation like this? *(Possible answers: If Eric wouldn't listen to assertive communication; if he became aggressive towards Shauna; or if he threatened to harm her in any way. Other strategies might include leaving the house herself, calling the police, calling her grandma if she could reach her, or getting help from a neighbor.)*

**15** Summarize by saying that there may be times when someone should be aggressive, and times when someone should be nonassertive, but assertive communication is most likely to help you get what you're asking for. In the next activity, they will explore what happens when communication breaks down and a decision is made that hurts someone else.

**Handout**

**Communication Styles**

	<b>Nonassertive (Timid or shy)</b>	<b>Assertive (Strong)</b>	<b>Aggressive (Bossy)</b>
Content	often unclear nonspecific indirect	clear specific direct problem-oriented suggests a solution	nonspecific, especially in terms of outcome wanted from the other person
Voice	soft trailing off	clear moderate in tone	usually loud, harsh
Facial expression	avoids eye contact, eyes downcast	eye contact	glaring
Posture	hunched over fidgety	straight comfortable	rigid tense
Your feelings	shy anxious scared	confident self-respecting comfortable	self-righteous angry
The other's feelings	confused unclear	respected	hurt angry
Goal of the behavior	avoid conflict	a change in the situation; a change in the other's behavior	put the other person down