

Assertiveness Four-square

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Treatment Modality: Individual or Group

Age: 13+

Treatment Phase: Early or working phase

Goal:

1. Learn four assertiveness skills to assist in getting needs met, advocating for self and others and maintaining appropriate healthy boundaries in relationships
2. Demonstrate assertiveness skills

Materials

- Print out the assertiveness skills page

Procedure:

1. Go over the four different assertiveness skills: "I'll think about it," "Take Responsibility," "So What?" and "Broken Record." Discuss the essence of the skill and also the various examples on the card.
2. Identify a few situations, based on the client's treatment goals, where assertiveness skills would be beneficial.
3. Consider role-playing with your client and have them practice the skill until proficient.

Processing

1. How did you handle these conflict, or stressful situations before?
2. Tell me about one situation where these skills could have been helpful.
3. How confident are you that these skills will help you, even a little bit, in these situations?
4. What concerns do you have about using these skills?
5. What are the benefits of using these skills in future situations?
6. How do you think you will benefit from using these skills?
7. What does it mean to you to be an advocate for yourself?

“I’ll think about it”

You have that gut feeling telling you not to commit, but not quite sure how to turn it down just yet? Use “I’ll think about it” to give yourself some time to craft your response.

“I am not sure what my schedule looks like. I’ll think about it.”

“I will think about joining”

“I am not sure right now.”

“That does sound fun, but I need some time to consider it.”

Take Responsibility

Nothing confuses others more than owning your fair share of a situation. You can use a response such as “I do (agree/own a small piece.)”

“I sometimes do have sloppy handwriting.”

“I do think PRIDE is important, but I don’t have time right now.”

“I do like chocolate a lot, but I don’t want to buy any.”

“I do act ‘gay’ sometimes, don’t I?”

SO WHAT?

Give the problem back to the person. Start with “I don’t understand, how is _____ make me _____.”

“I don’t understand, how does not kissing you mean I don’t love you?”

“I don’t understand, how does not participating in the meetings mean I don’t care about you?”

“I don’t understand, how does my body language suggest I have feelings for you?”

Broken Record

Sometimes you just have to be consistent, be clear and be firm. Say the same thing over and over again until your need is met.

“I don’t want to go to the dance”

“I have no desire to go to the dance”

“I will not be going to the dance.”

“You will not see me at the dance.”

“I am not going to the dance.”

References

Smith, M. J. (1985). *When I say no, I feel guilty*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.