



Wellbeing
& Recovery
College

Midlands Partnership
NHS Foundation Trust



A Keele University Teaching Trust

Building Self-Esteem and Assertiveness

Assertive approaches

Stuck Record Technique

Also known as the broken record technique, it is a verbal response that is firm and conveys a clear message. It can work well in situations where the other person wants to argue, refuses to listen or is disorganised. It employs the skill of calm persistence. The technique involves repeating what you want over and over again, without raising the tone of your voice, becoming irritated or drawn into the issue. Continual repetition ensures the discussion doesn't get side tracked into an argument. The key is to stay calm, be clear about what you want and stick to the point.⁵

Fogging

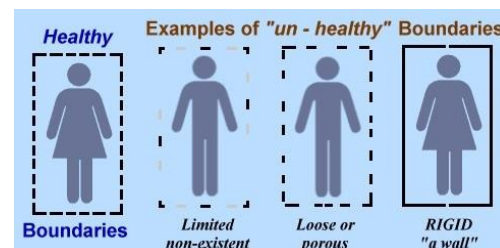
Fogging is a useful technique to deal with someone who may be behaving in an aggressive or manipulative manner. It can prevent the conversation from escalating through agreement rather than disagreement. Rather than arguing back, fogging gives a minimal response using calm language that is neither defensive nor passive to demands being made. It involves agreeing with any truths that are said, even if they are critical. By not responding in the expected way (defensive or argumentative) the other person will cease confrontation, as the desired effect isn't being achieved. It is called fogging because you act like a 'wall of fog' into which arguments are thrown but not returned (Extracts from www.skillsyouneed.com)

Authenticity

Being Authentic means to be true to yourself, your feelings and your beliefs. However, there are times where you wouldn't reveal all that you are thinking and feeling. Being authentic

involves giving an honest genuine response when it's appropriate and not going against your beliefs when it's not. For example, if a friend is distressed and complaining about some criticism that they have received, which you know is true, giving an honest response may not be appropriate in that moment. It may be more appropriate to comfort them in that moment and talk supportively about authentic thoughts later. On the whole, authentic behaviour is consistent with how you truly feel and this reflects healthy self-esteem.

Truthful and thoughtful communication isn't always the easiest option; it often takes courage to be vulnerable, which in turn takes practice. The ability to express emotions freely, clearly and with clear intentions helps to uphold healthy personal boundaries. This is essential for developing healthy self-esteem.



Healthy Boundaries

Understanding what our limits are in relationships and setting boundaries is a skill that isn't often taught in any formal setting. Using the self-awareness techniques from session 1, anyone can learn what is right for them and where their limits lie. Everyone can relate to the experience of having their personal boundaries crossed. If this happens often, it can lead to negative thoughts and feelings about ourselves and others, lowering self-esteem.

ACTIVITY Personal Boundaries

Personal boundaries are limits that we set for ourselves within relationships. They are acceptable ways for ourselves and others to behave that respects our own values and those of others. What feels acceptable will vary from person to person so there is no right or wrong answers.

The following items are types of behaviours that you may encounter in daily interactions with others:

Holding Hands	Text	Share stories from your life
Giving a hug	Shaking Hands	Discuss your health
Sharing personal problems	Tell secrets	Give your phone number
Phoning for a chat	Say hello to	Chat on the computer
Entering their home	Share food with	Stand close to them
Have a joke with them	Doing a favour for them	Trust them

List behaviours that feel acceptable to you in the spaces below:

Family
Friends
Work Colleagues
Acquaintances
Strangers

Personal Boundaries continued...

Place a tick in the box for each row to show where your boundaries lie for each set of people.

Personal boundaries are limits that we set for ourselves within relationships. Our boundaries can be tight or loose or healthy. Our boundaries can vary depending on who we are with and what culture we live in.

Tight

Avoids close relationships, unlikely to ask for help, protective of personal information, detached, avoids other through fear of possible rejection.

Loose

Overshares personal information with others, difficulty saying no to the requests of others, overinvolved with others problems, dependent on the opinions of others, accepting of mistreatment, fear of rejection if don't comply.

Healthy

Values others opinions, doesn't compromise needs for others, shares personal information appropriately, knows personal needs and can communicate them, can say no and accept when others say no.

	Tight	Loose	Healthy
Family			
Partner			
Friends			
Work Colleagues			
Acquaintances			
Strangers			

- Adapted from Therapistaid.com

⁵ Extracts from www.skillsyouneed.com

Learn more about what you can do to make a difference.....

Healthier Boundaries

.A person with healthy boundaries can say 'no' to others when they want to but they are also comfortable opening themselves up to relationships with others.

Some helpful Tips...

Know your limits - the previous exercise will help you identify where your limits lie with different groups of people. Your boundary limits are unique to you. Knowing them before you enter a situation will help you to prevent anything which you're not comfortable with.

Know your values- the values you identified in week 1 will help you to prioritise these over others demands asked of you. Your values are the things that are most important to you and these shape your boundaries.

Listen to your Emotions-if you experience feelings of discomfort or resentment, these can be signs that your boundaries are being pushed beyond healthy limits for you.

Self-Respect-reflect on whether you give more respect to the needs of others than you do to your own needs. There are times when it is important to balance your own needs with those of others.

Flexibility-try to balance the amount of giving and receiving. Some days you may give more than you receive and vice versa. Make sure your relationships are two way rather than one way.



When asserting your needs and wants express them clearly with language such as:

"I'm not comfortable with this"

"Please don't do that"

"Not at this time"

"This doesn't feel right"

"I'm sorry I can't do that for you"

"This doesn't work for me"

"I've decided not to."

"This is not acceptable"

"I'm drawing the line at..."

"I don't want to do that"

Learn more about what you can do to make a difference.....

Assertiveness take-away tips

Using Confident Body Language

Face the other person, make eye contact and use a calm steady tone of voice.

Be Respectful

Avoid yelling, using put downs or giving the silent treatment. Say “no” respectfully and clearly and fairly. Your message will be better received if you are respectful.

Compromise

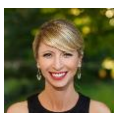
It is possible to compromise sometimes whilst still respecting your own boundaries. This is a good way to soften the “no” whilst respecting the other person. Listen to the needs of the other person.

(Therapist Aid)

Plan Ahead

Think about what you want to say and how you want to say it before entering a difficult discussion.

Clips from the course



Amy Cuddy: Psychologist, Researcher and Speaker.

‘Your body language may shape who you are’

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ks-_Mh1QhMc



Howard Gardner: Developmental Psychologist and Researcher at Harvard University

‘8 Intelligences - Theory of Multiple Intelligences Explained - Dr. Howard Gardner’.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s2EdujrM0vA>

Bullet Journaling



‘My bullet journal (and how I use it to help my mental health).’

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTKAKJc0xbw>

‘How to be a friend to yourself’



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFUxiljp-Nk>

‘Communication Styles- Assertive Passive Aggressive’



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMc8AP9KhEM>

Fogging



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7oKjW1Oljuw>

Reading recommended by some of our students...

Self-Awareness

Self-Awareness: Getting to know the real you. By Janelle Conena. 2016

Self-Awareness and Personal Development: Resources for psychotherapists and counsellors. By Chris Rose. 2011 Edition. Red Globe Press

The Self-Acceptance Project: How to be kind and compassionate towards yourself in any situation. By Tami Simon. 2016. Sounds True

Self-Acceptance. By Dr Harry Barry. 2019. Orion Spring.

Radical Self Forgiveness: The direct path to true self-acceptance. By Colin Tipping. 2011. Sounds True.

Self Esteem

Overcoming Low Self Esteem, 2nd Edition: A self help guide using cognitive behavioural techniques. By Dr Melanie Fennell. Robinson 2016

Six Pillars of Self-Esteem. By Nathaniel Branden. Random House 1995

Assertiveness

Assertiveness step by step. By Dr Windy Dryden and Daniel Constantinou. Sheldon Press 2004

The Assertiveness Workbook: How to express your ideas and stand up for yourself at work and in relationships. By Randy Paterson. New Harbinger 2001

