

SANE AUSTRALIA

SANE Australia Mental Health Meet-Up

Date: 03/06/2021

Topic: Building Assertiveness

Description: Being able to stand up for your yourself or people you care about can be so helpful in many areas of life. We can tend to think of ourselves as either assertive or not assertive as people, but it is a skill that can be developed and practiced by anyone. We're looking forward to a chat where we can all learn from each other!

Hi everyone! Welcome everyone to today's Peer Group Chat talking about building assertiveness.

First, we'd like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the various lands we're all joining this event from. We pay deep respect to the Elders of those Countries, past and present, and we further extend that respect to any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people joining this group tonight. This always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

This is a new peer support service we are trialling! Because of this, we really value your thoughts on how it goes, so we will send a link to a short survey at the end of this chat for you to complete. While this survey is optional, it is a chance to provide feedback for us to improve our services. In case you might need to leave part way through the event, you can access the survey here now: https://sane.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5uUF0sHJRKQ6wyW. Tonight, peer support workers @Girasole @HappyCastle will be facilitating a discussion around the topic of assertiveness. Whether you have lived experience of complex mental health issues, you care for someone who does, or both, anyone can benefit from being more assertive. We'll be moving through a number of discussion questions tonight, and it's entirely up to you how much or how little you are comfortable with sharing. Some of the conversation could be heavy in nature as we talk about mental health struggles. @pisces_1 who moderates on the SANE Forums, is working behind the scenes to ensure our safety. If you're having any technical difficulties, please see our FAQ (<https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat/chat-faqs#what-if-i-am-having-a-tough-time-and-need-immediate-support>), @pisces_1. We're looking forward to creating a space where we can reflect and learn together and expand our ideas of assertiveness. Lastly, just so you're aware the transcript of this group will be made available for download afterwards on SANE's Peer Support website.

Girasole (Peer Worker)

We will be starting the discussion shortly, and will just allow a bit more time for people to log on and join

HappyCastle (PSW) Hey @Shaz5 so happy to see you!

Shaz51 :D

Shaz51 hello @HappyCastle (PSW)

HappyCastle (PSW) Hey @diddz-+welcome to the group!

diddz Hello everyone ☺ Please bear with me.....have just sign up and in to my first chat!

Girasole (Peer Worker) To start off the conversation for tonight - what does assertiveness mean or look like to you? And do you think it's important to be assertive? Why or why not?

HappyCastle (PSW) Assertiveness to me is a journey I have been on for a long time. I equate it to learning to advocate for myself.

BarneyDog Being able to stick up for yourself i suppose. This is difficult if you come from an abusive childhood where you were trying to please everybody all the time. You feel if you try to stick up for yourself and you upset people they will leave you.

diddz Absolutley about advocating for yourself and finding your own voice to speak your truth.

Shaz51 interesting question I thought it was pleasing others and trying to get ahead but when my husband had to go to a assertiveness program , it seems different to what I was thinking @Girasole (Peer Worker)

Girasole (Peer Worker) Welcome @Billblogs and @justme ☺

justme Assertiveness, being able to say no or yes to whats apt for any given situation / relationship

Girasole (Peer Worker) **That's interesting @Shaz51-†, I'd be interested to hear more? :)**

diddz I can relate to what you are saying Barney about that worry that if you voice how you feel people will leave

HappyCastle (PSW) It's a really hard thing to develop I think. I relate to your comment @BarneyDog, I think there can be a lot of fear of abandonment and rejection when thinking of assertiveness

Shaz51 @Girasole (Peer Worker), my husband said to get your point across without yelling and getting upset

pisces_1 (Moderator) For me it is living your life around your own values and placing boundaries to protect ones self

justme agree pisces-1 values and beliefs are important to creating where we draw a line in the sand eh

Shaz51 @Girasole (Peer Worker)having to learn to say yes or no to something and then sticking to you decission

HappyCastle (PSW) Welcome @teej!

Shaz51 hello @teej

BarneyDog In a work environment it is hard to be assertive when you are in a little country town with only 3 employers of what you do and you have concerns about safety or conditions. when others and the boss don't care then you can end up out of a job and with a reputation around town as being disfficult

Girasole (Peer Worker) There can be challenges to being assertive, including being concerned that assertiveness could be perceived by others as aggressive; there could be power dynamics of concern, including potential consequences; there might be a fear of rejection; you might not be used to stating your needs, or expecting those needs to be respected. Does any of this resonate with you? What sorts of concerns- if any- do you have about being assertive?

HappyCastle (PSW) @BarneyDog I can imagine that is an extra layer of complication for sure

justme If boundaries have been violated it can be a challenge to sense / feel them out again appropriately

Girasole (Peer Worker) **One of my concerns about being assertive is that, depending on the context, I worry that it could create a conflict. When I think about it, though, we all have a right to assert our needs! And if someone can't respect those basic needs of ours, that just tells me that the relationship might not be that good, and I might not want to continue to be close to that person**

HappyCastle (PSW) I totally relate @Girasole (Peer Worker). One of the things I've learnt though is that saying no can be a really positive way to open up new opportunities

BarneyDog but what if you need the job and your boss isn't interested in your needs - they have you over a barrel

Shaz51 @Girasole (Peer Worker)being self employed, it is hard to say no as you lose work and future jobs but saying yes and messing up a job is worse so over the years we have learnt more to say no sorry if we think the job is too big for us

HappyCastle (PSW) Happy you could join us @Sunrize0805

justme Isn't there a saying 'satisfaction of expression' where we need to express our truth acknowledging we can't control how others will respond..

HappyCastle (PSW)

I like that @justme

justme

Some folks will dig it, some wont....but at least we know we've taken care of ourselves and aligned with our ethics or passions eh

Girasole (Peer Worker)

We received this question from the community beforehand:- “I would like to reconfigure treatment for increased ego and grandiosity. Derogatory treatment and put downs are not effective- this just lowers my self-esteem, and doesn't treat my issues. I overcompensate with increased ego and dissociate and use escapism. Would a reality check be useful in building assertiveness?” What do you think?–†Have you had any experiences where you've struggled to be assertive in treatment? What have you learned that has helped?

HappyCastle (PSW)

Hey @adge so happy you are here with us!

justme

Id feel that grandiosity comes from a core that feels vulnerable? I'd suggest building a core that's authentic to your belief system, at least an examined version. Healing self not putting down could be called for....

Shaz51

Hello @adge

HappyCastle (PSW)

@Hydrangea welcome!

Girasole (Peer Worker)

Do you find that it's easier for you to be assertive for others you care about than it is to be assertive for yourself? This is not uncommon. If so- is there anything you think that could help to improve your own assertiveness?

HappyCastle (PSW)

Oh absolutely!

HappyCastle (PSW) I think I could improve it by remembering that I am important and my needs are important too. Just like I think other peoples are.

Shaz51 oh absolutely I agree @HappyCastle (PSW)@Girasole (Peer Worker)

pisces_1 (Moderator) I totally agree, it is easier to be assertive and protect others. it is a-shame that i don't feel that is it easy to protect ones self. @HappyCastle (PSW) so true to remember that we are important too!

adge Hi everyone. I had technical issues in getting into this Chat - Would not Accept my Password (weird)....

Girasole (Peer Worker) Sorry to hear @adge, we're glad you're here now :)

adge Learning to be gradually slightly more Assertive - has taken me about 40 years of practice. Thanks @Girasole @HappyCastle

adge Assertiveness is a "Work in Progress" - Essential to fully participating in Life. Essential to Self-Esteem & Well-Being. Essential to not being walked all over, like a Doormat.

Shaz51 very true @HappyCastle (PSW)@pisces_1 (Moderator)

Girasole (Peer Worker) I really look forward to seeing how much more assertive I'll be in the decades to come @adge :) So true that it generally improves over time

HappyCastle (PSW) I guess it shows that it's a constant journey!

justme A practice indeedy...

BarneyDog

But then there is assertive and then there is Pauline Hanson

Girasole (Peer Worker)

Have you supported someone else in developing their assertiveness? Do you have any tips or tricks?

adge

Consistently to be Assertive takes a lot of energy & practice - My Assertiveness is Patchy. That's because of Fatigue & Dissociation. When fatigued &/ or Dissociated, I still get walked all over like a Doormat. When well-focused & rested (energetic), I have stood up to some of the most Violent people - told them that Behaviour is not acceptable

justme

Journalling can allow for insights

HappyCastle (PSW)

wow I'm really proud of you @adge. Not easy to do!

Girasole (Peer Worker)

So true @adge our energy and internal resources can vary a lot, so of course we might not always be able to be perfectly assertive 100% of the time. To me this says sometimes we can give ourselves some slack if we might occasionally struggle with it

adge

An important Tip is to not be hard on yourself For Not Being Assertive (that makes you feel worse) - Just gently encourage yourself that "It's Okay, I will be more assertive next time" - It's okay to not stand up for yourself, when you don't feel able to.

Shaz51

still learning here

adge

Yes Journalling is an excellent Outlet/ Tool @Justme I use it Daily

Girasole (Peer Worker) **Trying to improve our assertiveness is not something we have to do alone. What are some ways that we can involve others to help in the process?~†:blush:~†**

adge I am a Pisces too @Pisces_1

HappyCastle (PSW) I love this question @Girasole (Peer Worker). Being really honest with myself about my boundaries and sharing them with the people close to me has helped a lot

Shaz51 @Girasole (Peer Worker)also find asking the right question helps to make a decision too

HappyCastle (PSW) Hi @victorymarch

HappyCastle (PSW) I'm curious to hear more about that @Shaz51, can you elaborate?

Girasole (Peer Worker) **People close to me can be a source of encouragement to help with motivation when I might be feeling anxious about advocating for myself. Other people being involved is also an amazing way to ensure accountability for my own goals! I feel like I'll be much more likely to do something if I've told others I'm wanting to do it, and knowing they will check in with me afterwards (compared to just navigating it entirely on my own)**

justme Practicing with 'safe' people can build skills I find, although sometimes new levels of assertiveness can require adjustments to..

Shaz51 @HappyCastle (PSW)the more questions you ask helps to find where your own boundaries are and like @Girasole (Peer Worker) just said above , that people close to you know where you stand real helps

Girasole (Peer Worker) **Have your assertiveness skills improved over time? If so, we'd love to hear what has helped you to become more confident and able to communicate what you need**

Shaz51 interesting @Girasole (Peer Worker)

HappyCastle (PSW) Absolutely @Girasole (Peer Worker) I feel like it's constantly evolving. I look back to even a couple of years ago and I see the difference

justme Learning what I need! How-† to nourish and take care of selves. Aint taught in school....it takes time. Yes'm @HappyCastle (PSW) agree there..

Shaz51 @Girasole (Peer Worker) with work we now work smarter then harder and together we are living more as a team

Girasole (Peer Worker) **Welcome @Jezzay and @Keri! :)**

Girasole (Peer Worker) **It's been helpful for me to have some amazing and supportive people in my life, who often remind me of my rights and worth when facing difficult situations**

Kayjay Hi all I need so much help with this trait I am working on it with my psychologist

Girasole (Peer Worker) **We can consider being assertive as an act of self-care, as it involves communicating what we (or people we care for) want, need, value, or deserve. Similarly, it could be seen as an act of self-sabotage to allow for these needs to be deprioritised, downplayed, or abandoned. What do you think?**

Kayjay Yeah I have trouble identifying that and then putting in to words and then having the guts to say it

HappyCastle (PSW) It can be really hard @Kayjay. I think it's incredibly insightful to know it's something you want to/need to work on

Shaz51 same here @Kayjay

Kayjay Well I notice I don't get what I want then worked my way backwards....dummy spitting doesn't work as an adult

justme Sometimes its easier to be assertive around different aspects of life too...

HappyCastle (PSW) @Kayjay lol accurate

Kayjay Yeah seems like most areas of my life I'm either passive or it's a case of dropping my bundle after years of suppression

justme Strong contrasts emerging eh

justme Theres a saying 'perfection is the enemy of done' your observing which is not easy but great!

Kayjay I'd rather be calm , state my wants or needs clearly and remain calm

Shaz51 same here @Kayjay

Kayjay I'm realising I have authority issues and my anxiety is getting in the way.....but I'm trying....

Kayjay Thanks for listening

adge How did you Do that "Highlight their Username" thing @Shaz51

adge Woo Hoo I just Did it myself....

HappyCastle (PSW) thank YOU @Kayjay for so generously sharing with us

Shaz51 @adge

Shaz51 yes @HappyCastle (PSW)@Girasole (Peer Worker)

Girasole (Peer Worker) @Kayjay We were saying a bit earlier that for a number of us, becoming more assertive is something that has developed a lot over time. It's amazing that you're trying- that's all you can really ask from yourself! And I trust that over time, you'll get to where you want to be :)

Girasole (Peer Worker) As we begin to wind up for the evening- have you learned anything helpful from other's experiences here tonight that you might be able to apply in your own life? If yes, what was it that you took away?

HappyCastle (PSW) For me, it's been really validating to know that it isn't just me who is working on this (and struggling with this). I feel like we are all on this journey together and that's a nice feeling

adge I have fear of Authority issues @Kayjay - Comes from people in Authority Doing the Wrong Thing (many times) eg Childhood Abuse

diddz First time here...it has been so great to hear people sharing their thoughts.

Kayjay First timer too, thanks everyone~†

Shaz51 I agree it is great to talk about things and to share them now with other @HappyCastle (PSW)

Girasole (Peer Worker) I really like what @adge said about how we might not always be able to be as assertive as we would like- and that's ok! We're only human. And that we can have the support of others in the process

Shaz51 yes @Girasole (Peer Worker)

Girasole (Peer Worker) Tonight's topic may have brought up some heavy feelings as we talked about the challenges to being assertive. Would some self-care be helpful for you after we finish? If so, what might you do?

justme Appreciate the shared voyages....

adge Eat more Dinner @Girasole (Peer Worker)

diddz I will sing and play piano, that is myself care :)

Shaz51 cup of coffee time here now @Girasole (Peer Worker)

Kayjay I have a 9 pm online meditation

diddz sounds good ayjay

adge It's 6.20pm here - I only had a Quick Bite before this Chat

diddz sorry Kayjay

Shaz51 8-20pm here @adge

HappyCastle (PSW) I'm going to have some dinner and find something good to watch I think

justme Feline cuddles.....

adge Yes I know @Shaz I grew up over there.

Girasole (Peer Worker) **We'd like to invite you to complete a, survey reflecting on your experience in this Peer Group Chat. As we're trialling this service, we'd love to hear any feedback you may have. It will only take a few minutes to complete. Please click this link: https://sane.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5uUF0sHJRKQ6wyW**

Kayjay Nice to meet you all how often do you meet?

justme Thanx folks :)

HappyCastle (PSW) @Kayjay our next group will be 17th June

HappyCastle (PSW) Would be lovely to see you there again

Kayjay Thanks bye xxx

Girasole (Peer Worker) **Here are some further resources on assertiveness you might like to have a look at: Passive vs Assertive vs Aggressive communication styles https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Assertive-communication The importance of saying no <https://mytherapynyc.com/importance-of-saying-no/>**

adge That's a very Late Dinner for you then @HappyCastle

diddz Thank you all for sharing :)

Shaz51 Done @Girasole (Peer Worker)

HappyCastle (PSW) Thanks everyone, so lovely to have you all here. If you get a chance to do the survey, that would be great! It really helps us create this safe space for us all

adge Thanks @Girasole @HappyCastle

adge Thanks everyone.

adge No the Highlight Usernames Thingy is Not Working...

diddz Can i just say thankyou for having this group. It is so important for there to be more oppotunities for support in the community and accessible from home.

Girasole (Peer Worker) Thank you for joining, and we hope you enjoyed the discussion. If you'd like to be informed when our next Peer Group Chat will be taking place, you can sign up to our mailing list here <https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat>. You can also ask a question for our next topic, which will be Celebrating Success

adge Woo Celebrating Success - What a Good Topic!

diddz Take care every one. Bye for now :)

Girasole (Peer Worker) It was suggested by a participant from a previous group @adge 😊

Shaz51 Thank you @HappyCastle (PSW)@Girasole (Peer Worker)

Girasole (Peer Worker)

Thank you everyone! Take care :)

HappyCastle (PSW)

Thanks everyone, take care of yourselves!