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Peer Group Chat

Date: 20/10/2022

Title: How To Be More Assertive

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!

Girasole (Peer Worker)	Hi everyone! Welcome everyone to today's Peer Group Chat talking about how to be more assertive. First, we'd like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the various lands we are 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.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Tonight, Peer Support Workers @Amber22 and myself will be facilitating a discussion around the topic of being assertive. Whether you have lived experience of complex mental health issues, you care for someone who does, or both, anyone can benefit from being able to be 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 may be heavy in nature as we talk about how and why we may struggle with assertiveness. @LunaSky, a counsellor, 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) or message @LunaSky. We're looking forward to creating a space where we can reflect and learn more together about becoming more assertive!
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Within this group tonight we'll be talking about: -The value that assertiveness can bring to our lives -Being assertive for others around us -Overcoming barriers by improving our own ways of being assertive
the magician	hi people!
Amber22 (PSW)	Hi there! @the magician

Girasole (Peer Worker)	Great to see you @the magician :)
Girasole (Peer Worker)	We'll be starting the chat shortly, and will just allow a bit more time for any more people to log on and join 😊
Jacques	hello ladies, gentlemen and gender neutral peoples :)
Amber22 (PSW)	Hey! @Jacques
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Welcome @Jacques , it's good to see you! :blush:
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?
Amber22 (PSW)	Being assertive to me means standing up for your interests and values, and being able to respectfully express how you feel. I think it is really important as it can communicate what you really think and feel. :)
the magician	it means having boundaries with your information. respecting your own self esteem and being able to interact with others without being taken advantage of.
Jacques	being assertive for me is not compromising on my beliefs, and for standing up for the vulnerable. it is a very fine line between asertive and agressive though. sometimes i do cross that line.
the magician	sometimes i don't use enough I feel words or speak up.
Jacques	i don't think i could be assertive outside the virtual realm but i have a lesbian friend and she cops a lot of online abuse for her sexuality and i find i am very protective of her. i do try to be a polite but need to be assertive to get my point across.
Amber22 (PSW)	It can be a lot easier to be assertive online! Sometimes it can be very intimidating in person
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I like all the ideas that are coming up here, about how to be assertive is important for some pretty significant reasons – to try and help prevent being taken advantage of; to respect ourselves and others; to act in line with our interests and values, etc
the magician	yes that's it!
Jacques	yes i agree @Amber22 (PSW) if something upsets me enough in real life my anger over rides my fear and i will speak up, but for the most part i can't.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	There can be challenges to being assertive. What sorts of concerns– if any– do you have about being assertive?
Amber22 (PSW)	Some challenges that I face when being assertive is often being perceived as aggressive by those around me (like we were just

	saying!) Another challenge I personally face with being assertive is fearing that other people may reject my ideas and needs, rather than respecting them, which can always be a bit tricky to navigate.
the magician	i tend to remove myself and be more quietly upset with thoughts of whats bothering me
the magician	scared of the response?
Jacques	oooh as i said before it is a very fine line between assertivness and agressiveness. also i do notice a sex devide in assertiveness, when men are assertive it is respected, when a woman is assertive it is taken as agression, or other derogitory terms. i have seen this online too.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	100% @Jacques
the magician	sick of running as fast as you can? would you get there quicker if were a man?-SONG
Amber22 (PSW)	Love some Taylor Swift
Jacques	my main concern about being assertive is getting into an argument, i have been an admin on a lot of gaming forums and servers. sometimes you have to be assertive, online people are different, they feel comfortable abusing you or using threats. it is sometimes really difficult to be assertive in those environments.
Amber22 (PSW)	I agree @Jacques ! I think that even though it may be easier to be assertive online, it can also make it a much more vulnerable place as well
the magician	i feel she's someone who would know about assertiveness when it comes to criticism and reputation.
Amber22 (PSW)	Definitely! @the magician
the magician	does someone really need to be assertive with Putin?
Jacques	yes @Amber22 (PSW) online can be a really scary place, the normal rules of society don't always apply
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I also find it harder to be assertive with people where I'm not sure if they'll respect my needs. On the flip side though, being around people I trust and I know respect me, I find it much easier to be assertive. I've really realised the value of who I choose to have around me in my life, in that sense. But fully appreciate sometimes there are people we need to be assertive with, where we might have much less control about their presence in our lives (e.g. a medical specialist). In those cases it can be helpful to have someone supportive alongside you, wherever possible :purple_heart:

the magician	being vulnerable can open yourself up to growth etc
Girasole (Peer Worker)	100% @the magician !
Jacques	yes i find that too @Girasole (Peer Worker) it is different with people you have a repaw with, i am lucky people i know online respect me and i feel comfortable to speak my mind around them.
Amber22 (PSW)	Yes! @the magician Couldn't agree more
the magician	i was assertive with a nurse once who was really rude. i said i find your insensitivity unbearable.
LunaSky (moderator)	Sometimes I find it uncomfortable to be assertive, and it takes a bit of courage - especially when in a new situation, or am not sure of how I will be received
the magician	it can take guts
Amber22 (PSW)	I agree with that - it can be really intimidating, especially in new environments with new people!
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I think these hesitations make so much sense. If we don't know if we can trust people, of course we'd be a bit more on guard - because ultimately we want to protect ourselves <3
Jacques	yes, i guess the problem is you don't know how others will take what you are saying, it can be taken poorly or positively. i have found sometimes being assertive some people take it as me being aggressive or rude when i was actually trying to be helpful
Girasole (Peer Worker)	It could be seen as an act of self-sabotage in not being assertive when needed, as this allows your needs to be deprioritised, downplayed, or abandoned. We can, however, 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. What do you think about this?
the magician	sometimes its just too much for ones personal space
Amber22 (PSW)	I think it is very true! Being assertive and communicating openly your thoughts, emotions, and values is really important for your self-care. It can remind us to always prioritise our own needs. I think it is important to listen to others, but never to diminish our own thoughts and feelings.
the magician	also helps to be clear about what you want
Jacques	yes @Girasole (Peer Worker) it is so true, you need self confidence and self esteem to be assertive, my partner struggles to be assertive with her daughter who is being troublesom because of the abuse from her late husband, she can't stand up for herself. sometimes when you are put down all the time you just let people walk over you.

Jacques	yes @the magician sometimes it can get lost in translation of you don't have a clear intention. i have had that happen myself
LunaSky (moderator)	for me it can feel like a lasting self care, it can feel easier in the moment to not be assertive, however when I have been assertive, the benefits last longer and it becomes easier within the situation/relationship, and in newer situations too
the magician	sometimes my mum needs someone to be a bit mean for her. she usually just ignores troublesomeness and brushes it off
Girasole (Peer Worker)	So true @LunaSky (moderator) - when I can work myself up to be assertive in a situation where I'm being quite negatively impacted, it's also the best and most rewarding feeling after. But yes of course underlying struggles with assertiveness can be past trauma, so having a chance to work towards healing, and rebuilding a strong sense of self-worth, with support from others, is helpful. This can all take a decent amount of time, of course. But is certainly possible for anyone, I genuinely believe that
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Q: Is there anything you think that could help to improve your own assertiveness?
the magician	i have to be really assertive about returning to uni. when others see a quicker path for me. when i have enough reasons and choice about how i spend my time. and what are wanting to gain from goals. without being cushioned of my mental health if that makes sense.
Amber22 (PSW)	Yes, I personally think that I need to learn how to say no more, and to practice prioritising what I really want to do as opposed to what others want me to do. I often try and do this by saying "let me double check and get back to you", which is a lot easier than saying "no" on the spot sometimes!
the magician	what could help :intrinsic goals as opposed to extrinsic. in communication. and reflecting what are passionate about.
Jacques	self confidence, self esteem, trying to reduce my anxiety and fear and overthinking. i struggle to be a bit selfish sometimes and put at the forefront my needs. be better with how i word things too. im not very social so i do struggle with social cues.
the magician	sometimes just saying thats a bit hurtful and putting it out there
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Can I just say, I love all of this! All of these desires to be more assertive, or trying to find ways to help - reflects us knowing our worth and our needs, and wanting to communicate that to others. That's just an inherently amazing and valuable thing :purple_heart:
Amber22 (PSW)	I second that! :heart_eyes:
Jacques	hi Colo
the magician	assertiveness definitely reflects self worth - such an important thing.

Girasole (Peer Worker)	Welcome @Colo :)
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Q: Have you had experiences being assertive for others, where they've needed that extra support? Did you learn anything from these experiences?
Amber22 (PSW)	I have had experience being assertive for a friend that felt as if they couldn't voice how they really felt in a group situation. I stepped in and helped her voice her thoughts and feelings, which gave her a lot more confidence to then continue the conversation herself. I learnt that sometimes giving others a helping hand being assertive can lift their own confidence to share what they are really feeling.
the magician	helped someone with their family come out about their sexuality. the response wasnt good so i was assertive and direct for her. people can be judgemental even to close ones.
Jacques	yes @Girasole (Peer Worker) my best friend is gay, she suffers from severe anxiety and can't speak up for herself, people online are so mean to her and i do feel like a big brother to her, men asking her to perform sex acts and giving her a hard time for being gay and i always protect her and sometimes i do have to get assertive with some people to protect her. sometimes i have had to be assertive to other friends to protect her. it can be really difficult. but i am proud of standign up for my beliefs and my friend.
Wellwellwellnez	Sorry I'm so late. Hi all. I'll catch up on the convo. I could use some assertion advice.
Jacques	yes @the magician i have found the same. i don't know why people are still so judgmental about others. i just odn't get it. hi @Wellwellwellnez welcome. is Colo able to type?
Amber22 (PSW)	Welcome @Wellwellwellnez ! Definitely have a read of our conversation, there are some great tips from everyone :)
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I noticed something from those experiences above - of course, even with being reasonable and assertive, sometimes we may still be treated poorly in return. And we might not have control over that. But, something we have more control over (and perhaps might be better to focus on) are our positive, supportive relationships helping us get through those times
the magician	if we are treated poorly in return its a good lesson to learn to rise above it. it says more about them than you.
Amber22 (PSW)	Very true! @the magician
Jacques	yes @Girasole (Peer Worker) supportive relationships do make all the difference, i was scared standing up to other friends, but got a shock and a pleasent supprise when they felt it was good to be assertive and help them see when they where being disrespectful.

Jacques	so true @the magician
Girasole (Peer Worker)	True! If we've respectfully acted in our values in being assertive, standing up for our worth, I think that's something we can take pride in @the magician
Amber22 (PSW)	Thats great that you had such a good experience with that @Jacques , its lovely when people really value you standing up and saying what you really feel!
the magician	negative opinions don't mean they're facts either.
Jacques	yes it is scary but very rewarding @Amber22 (PSW) and does help with any doubts i had
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Q: 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?
Wellwellwellnez	My thing, is doing the tricky task of not responding to people infantilizing me by being infantilized. It is tricky. Looking at this conversation, I'm thinking that "seeking growth" is the way to be the grown-up without being the bully.
Amber22 (PSW)	I think that raising how you really feel to the people around you, can sometimes push them to help them find their voice in certain situations too where they might usually diminish their thoughts and feelings (e.g., group situations). Sometimes leading by example is a great tool!
the magician	express care and concern for anothers wellbeing
Jacques	i have found advice from people i trust and respect can go a long way to help with confidence and be sure that my assertiveness does not over step the mark.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Same @Jacques !:)
the magician	sometimes my verbal choice of words the way i phrase things can be offensive when completely unintended.
Jacques	i agree @Wellwellwellnez assertiveness is a sign of maturity.
Jacques	yes i have found the same @the magician it is so easy to be misinterpreted. i do have to and do chose my words very carefully.
Amber22 (PSW)	Thats completely fine, as long as you are aware! Sometimes it can even be great to be pulled up on it so you know for next time, I definitely know this has happened to me a few times, and I am grateful when it does happen! @the magician
Wellwellwellnez	I actually found a trick. I assert myself through others now. Instead of feeling the need to say everything, I just wait for the when someone else says the thing I wanted someone to agree with. And then, I agree with them. Then it's two people's idea.

Amber22 (PSW)	Oh wow that sounds interesting! Then at least you know you both agree with what is being said, and it can also be a little bit easier to voice what you're feeling if you know that someone else is thinking/ feeling it too :) @Wellwellwellnez
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Q: Are there any situations you would like to be more assertive in? What would be the impacts of that? Are you feeling any more motivated, prepared, or capable of trying?
Amber22 (PSW)	I would love to be able to be more assertive in situations without feeling guilty about it. For example, I would like to be able to say no if I really can't mentally or physically fit something in. I think that it would overall really help my mental health and my state of mind. I definitely feel a lot more confident to do this now after this chat
Jacques	yes, i would like to be more assertive when standing up for things, i sometimes leave a conversation if i feel personally attacked. with my anxiety i struggle to keep my assertiveness going for periods of time. if i was able to stand up for others more i feel people would learn to be more compassionate to others. online can be a really hurtful place if you are not perfect. i think i will try in the future and see where it leads. it has felt validating seeing so many others feeling the same struggles here tonight
LunaSky (moderator)	I am more motivated to try saying 'Let me double check, and I will get back to you' to give me a bit of space to check in with myself before commitment to something that might not be in my best interests
the magician	id like to be more assertive about private information with new people who are a bit nosy! ive found ways of wording that now. id like too try to replicate that confident assertiveness within the workplace.
Jacques	oh that is a good one @LunaSky (moderator) i will try that one too, i find i get caught if i have to make a snap decision. that is a really good one.
Wellwellwellnez	More assertive with my life goals. I guess that in part means not letting fear of people so easily dissuade me from inflicting myself upon the world.
the magician	especially the bullies!
Jacques	i love that @Wellwellwellnez fear can prevent us so much from doing things. i know it does for me.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I'd like to be more assertive with my free time - not making so many commitments! I have very limited time and energy and have recently realised I need to cut back on how much I try and do. Which may inherently involve disappointing some others as I learn to say no more - but its for my own survival and wellbeing
the magician	understand that one@Girasole (Peer Worker)

Amber22 (PSW)	Definitely resonates with me too :)
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Q: Have you learned anything helpful from others' experiences here tonight that you might be able to apply in your own life? If yes, what did you learn? :blush:
Amber22 (PSW)	Yes, I learnt that having a supportive network around you when you are wanting to be assertive in a situation, can make all the difference!
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Yes @Amber22 (PSW) , I like what @Jacques said about that earlier - "supportive relationships do make all the difference" :)
the magician	i learnt assertiveness can be scary in some situations. but vulnerability can be a super power.
Amber22 (PSW)	Very true! @the magician
Wellwellwellnez	So, importantly true, Girasole. Saying no is imperative for the word, yes, to have any meaning.
LunaSky (moderator)	I have learned that being assertive bring with it complex feelings, and that many struggle with it. By practicing it myself, it can help me and others around me - Thank you everyone!
Jacques	yes i did, i feel validated in my feelings and experiances, standing up for others, the maturity of assertiveness i have never thought of until @Wellwellwellnez brought it up, @LunaSky (moderator) saying "can i get back to you" is really valuable to me, to give me time. @the magician saying it is good to stand up to bullies and @Amber22 (PSW) and @Girasole (Peer Worker) showing how it can benifit my mental health.
Wellwellwellnez	Group assertive is kind of what modern life has taken fro us. It's also what modern life, really needs right now. That's the vibe I'm getting.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	It's also been really illuminating to appreciate how much assertiveness is linked to honouring our self-worth, wellbeing, and lives generally :green_heart:
the magician	self worth is the biggest lesson for me in this.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Q: Would some self-care be helpful for you after we finish soon? If so, what might you do? 🧘
the magician	read a new book
Jacques	self care for me is my worry beads, i use them so much now, and spend time with my partner. maybe some usic to help me sleep later.
Amber22 (PSW)	Self care is always helpful to me. I think I am going to have a sleepy time tea, and enjoy my candle and a good book :)
Girasole (Peer Worker)	My self-care will be prioritising sleep tonight. Maybe having a nice tea as well before then :)

Girasole (Peer Worker)	Here are some further resources we recommend having a look at: 1: Passive vs Assertive vs Aggressive communication styles https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Assertive-communication 2: Assertive-communication: The importance of saying no https://mytherapynyc.com/importance-of-saying-no/ 3: Ten tips to become more assertive https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-be-assertive
the magician	goodbye and goodnight people see you next week!
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Thank you so much everyone for joining, and we really hope you enjoyed the discussion 😊 I certainly did! 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 questions for us to discuss in future peer chats!
Jacques	thank you so much moderators and friends for the amazing chat tonight, i really appreciate each and every one of you, hugs everyone, good night
Amber22 (PSW)	Thanks everyone! I hope you all have a lovely, restful night :)
Wellwellwellnez	This was my self care. I really needed this. Was ruminating on these exact issues. Now I feel like things make sense.
Amber22 (PSW)	I'm so glad you enjoyed it! We loved having you here @Wellwellwellnez :)
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I wish everyone the best in practicing more assertiveness for your self-worth in your lives <3
the magician	:sparkling_heart: hugs sweet people