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## Module 1

### Taller 1.1: Assertive Communication

#### Skills to be acquired:

- To transmit other people a piece of information in a correct way
- To learn to help the group by communicating in a positive and effective way
- To learn to make participants disciplined during the sports activities
  - To Trust yourself so that others can trust you
    - To have good relational and communicative abilities
  - To be very patient and to know how to listen very well the others
- To make up your own opinion and to be able to express it to others
  - To learn to work in group



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## Introduction

Scientists have found three different styles of communication which are used by everyone starting from their previous experience and different social contexts. We distinguish the **aggressive style**, whose feature is defending your opinions without considering what other people think; the **passive style**, whose feature is not defending your opinion because you consider it less important than the others' one and the **assertive style**, whose feature is defending your opinions, but considering both what other people think and their feelings.

Practicing the assertive communication through groups' works, could be useful for young people to communicate in an effective, positive and sensible way with other people.

**Here you are 10 strategies about assertive communication which are important to exercise:**

**1) Talk in a positive way:** language is the main communication mean that we use, but it is also the mean of social construction. It is important to use a positive language, so instead of starting a sentence by a don't like "don't do so" or "don't shout", it is better to give the same message, but in a positive form. For example: "try to speak not in a so loud tone", or "I can listen to what you are saying", or "I can see you"

**2) Describe concrete things:** it is about putting a solid base to the negotiation, were it is not possible to argue. It is important to avoid giving an intentional judgment, such as "you are a very lazy man", while it is better to say "you pass a lot of time sitting on a chair, while other people are tyding up"

**3) Express your own feelings and thoughts:** communicate in a clear and precise way how we feel in front of what has happened it's an ability called emotional intelligenc. Practicing it means express yourself in a calm and open way instead of giving subtle signs of dissatisfaction. For instance "I was sad when he told me he could not go to the party last Saturday"

**4) Demand (and not ask) in a concrete form what we want from the others.** It is not important to talk in a generic form "I would like you to act more politely", but it is necessary to be concrete and operative: "I need you to look at me when I speak".  
Concrete behavior are easier to understand and to fulfill.

### 5) To specify the consequences of a behaviour

It is important to clarify what happens when the other person does what we have asked her to do. We can tell what could happen if the person doesn't fulfill what we have asked to do, but take in count that the positive way it is much more powerful. More useful are reinforcements and treat, rather than threats and punishments. "If you force yourself in studying, you will have more positive possibilities in the future and you will have success" or "if you don't study, you will have to repeat the year"

### 6) Messages ME.

This messages' aim is to face up negative feelings in a positive, respectful and honest way. If the message is written in second person, it could cause anger and culpability in the person who receives it, while if we write messages in first person we can obtain the person to change his behavior.

"I feel miserable when you use that rude tone because what I'm doing is my best, I suggest you to be more patient "

**7) Fog bank:** it is a technique that helps us to respond to a manipulative behaviour made by other people. It consists of founding a thought, a point you can agree with what your rival is saying. In other words, you can partially agree or you can agree from the beginning. It is a technique used when we





manifest our negative opinion and for that reason we could be object of pressure, verbal aggression or unfair criticism to try to manipulate ourselves. The technique consists in recognizing the effective reason or the possible one that the other person can have, but without changing our decision or idea. It's like escaping the risk of fight with the person who tells you something or who wants to offer you something. The technique consists in not making an argument with the other person. How can we do it?

- It is better not to argue about partial reasons, which can be acceptable;
- tell the other person he is right: it is important to recognize every kind of thought which is present in his declarations also when he suggests us something not suitable for us;
- Tell the other person he is right or possibly right about the fact that things can be as they present us.

To do so, we must use expressions like "I think that..." or "it could be probable that...". If we analyze a case of a friend of us, we have to tell him that we cannot always be at his disposal, both because of our job and for other things we have to do. We would not have nor to discuss, nor to react, in a visible angry way, by saying to him that he is not always present for us. This one would be our instinctive and emotional reaction, but following the fog bank technique, our way of going on will be different. When we are accused by our friend, we should stop our impulses and tell him: "I can understand the reason why you are angry at me, it is because you think I am never here for you". By saying so, we are not telling him that we agree with him, but we are sending him a message. we understand what he thinks it is happening, thing that probably will keep him calm.

**8) Broken disk:** this technique consists in repeating all the times which is necessary a sentence which expresses in a clear way what we need from the other person. This way of thinking can be used, for example when a seller is very persistent and calls us a lot of times because he wants us buy something. If we answer all times is necessary "thanks you, but I am not interesting in it" will be the method with our interlocutor will stop going on doing so.

**9) Sandwich technique:** it consists of saying "no" in a subtle and polite way. This technique is very useful to people who find difficult to deny themselves and who do things they do not like doing. The way in which we express a disagreement or a negation is very important, both for please ourself and for giving the other person a nice treatment, everybody has the right in deny himself towards everything. Your wellbeen must always be in the first place, do not forget about it. if you tell us what you don't want to do, this will make you stronger from an emotional point of view.

in this technique, there are three different phases and all of them are important:

1. positive message: we must generate positive feelings in the other person

2. disagreement: we have to express what we don't like

3. positive message: we must conclude with a positive message and we have to help the other person in finding a solution.

Example n°1

1. You know how much I care about you

2. BUT I have a problem you should know about: I do not feel fine WHEN we are in public and you talk about our disagreements. (brief pause), I would be grateful if ,from now, our quarrels could remained between us

3. ANYWAY it's important to me knowing what you think and feel because I care about you and about you think about me

Example n°2: a friend of yours invites you to go to a concert of a band you really dislike

1. thanks for inviting me to this concert, when I spent time with you I always had a very good time

2. I have a problem: I really dislike this group, the concert would be very long for me and I would get bored

3. you certainly can go with somebody else, did you ask....?



**10) Active listening:** this technique consists of listening and understanding what the other person is saying, but not from our point of view, but from his one, and this means to put in other person's shoes. Your interlocutor must feel free and understood so that he can express himself in the best way. To do so, you must focus your attention not only in what he is saying, but also in how he feels.

1. to start, avoid to judge even if it's very difficult this is certainly the most necessary: it is very important not to judge the other person or to draw conclusions
2. don't give advices: a lot of time when we speak, we do so because we want pieces of advice from other people but be careful because these are probably relied on a context which maybe is not the right one.
3. it is important to interrupt only when it is strictly necessary
4. remind about details: in general, we are not able in remembering details of conversations which we have had before. if you remember only one, even if it is small, and you are able to talk about it during the conversation, it will have a very important effect.
5. point the conversation again to the main topic when necessary: sometimes conversations are easy to change topics
6. repeat what you just heard: this shows you were listening to the interlocutor
7. reflect your speaker's feelings so that he can open from an emotional point of view. In a conversation you can share pieces of information, datos, opinions, but also feelings which are more difficult to guess, but they are very important because they create a stronger link with your interlocutor when you show empathy and implication in something.
8. ask which are the consequences of what we have just said. This is the most powerful and simply technique to make the person reach the solution of his problems alone.
9. you can help your interlocutor in clarifying his feelings and his thoughts. when he stops, you can ask him some open questions about his emotions, like what does really worry you?
10. use a positive reinforcement and an open body language. A way to show that you are paying attention to the other person is using words or expressions like: I understand how you feel, I am here with you, I see, I know what you mean... and all the expressions you usually say.
11. respect silences. One of the most important points of the active listening is listening, but you must respect silences. These are important because they give the other person the time to find words to express what they want to say.
12. think about what you have talked about and make a conclusions which have come up from the conversation.

## Objectives

- To transmit other people their information in a right way
- to learn how to help the group to communicate in a positive and effective way
- to make participants disciplined during the sport
- to trust yourself so that also participants can trust you
- to have good relational and communicative skills
- to learn to be patient and to truly listen the other person
- to make up your opinion about participants and activities and to tell it others
- to learn to work in a group and cooperate

## Phases

### FIRST PART OF THE WORKSHOP





We explain young people the three communicative styles and we ask them to do a simple exercise: they are asked to move in the space without talking, but assuming the attitude of the style they are representing. In this part the leader must lead the group by describing what a person who has this communicative style can think in that moment. For example by saying: “now you have to move like an aggressive person. You are angry because you are still thinking about the time in which your friend had fun of you in front of your significant other. Your face shows anger and also your way in which you are walking. You think about what you should tell your friend next time you will see him so that he can be sorry to have maltreated you”. The leader now asks all participants to stop and to think about how people who have this kind of style can live.

Let's now change the style: “Now you are a passive person. You think your value is very low, that you are not important and that the others are always right while you are always wrong. You move in a slow and uncertain way. Your sight is facing the ground and your face shows sadness when you remember your friend telling you in a very rude way in front of other people how bad you get your work done when it was his fault. You feel miserable because you couldn't answer him back and you stayed silent so that other people could think you were effectively guilty”. Now the leader asks all participants to stop and they are experimenting how do people who have this communicative style can live.

Let's change the style again: “Now you are an assertive person. You are a person who is sure of himself and you walk in a confident way which can show your calm and interior peace. You walk looking in front of you with a tender smile on your face. You are a sincere and open person and you are not afraid in telling what you think while keeping in counting that your words would not hurt other people. You say hello with your eyes to people who look at you. You are thinking about when your friend was angry at you because you could not go to his birthday party. You told him you felt sorry not to go there and that you would have liked to celebrate his birthday with him, but you had to work very hard in a very important thing for you and for your company”. Now the leader asks all participants to stop and they are experimenting how do people who have an assertive communicative style can live.

## SECOND PART OF THE WORKSHOP

Divide the group in couples. Ask the participants to remind about a fighting situation and, in fifteen minutes, they must explain it each other and then they must represent the conflict in front of all the class and each scene must last three minutes. Now give to each couple a paper with the description of one of the assertive communicative strategies described in the introduction of this workshop. Now each couple repeat the same show, but the leader must stop the conflict before it arrives to its turning point and he asks the person who is not telling the history to use the technique he tells him before, to solve the fight, if it fits the situation.

At the end of each show, the leader asks if the technique was effective or if the participants have a suggestion for the solution for the case conflict. The participants reflect about the technique and how they can be useful in the every day life situations.

## Suggestion about the methodology to use to make sure if the competences has been acquired

We will follow a **qualitative evaluation**. At the end of it, the trainer will ask himself:

- Did everyone understand the different communicative styles?
- Could each participant act his fighting scenes?
- Did each participant find a solution for the conflict by using the appropriate style? can each participant think about how much it is important to have an assertive communicative style in everyday life?



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- What should we keep in counting for next time?
- What are the strongest points of the laboratory? What the weak ones?

