

## Tips for Behaving Less Aggressively

**Give others a chance to speak:** It's important to express yourself, but if you're the only one speaking or you constantly control conversations, you may not be giving others the chance to express themselves.

**Respect others' opinions:** You may disagree with other people's opinions (and some of them may be outrageous.) but everyone has a right to their opinion and the right to express it. If you disagree with someone, try to discuss your differences rationally.

**Be diplomatic:** Expressing your opinion is important, but not always at the expense of others. If you know what you are going to say could be painful, yet you feel it still needs to be said, try:

Saying it in a kinder way (for example: "I disagree" instead of "You're wrong")

Cushioning your comment with a compliment (for example: "Mary has some great ideas. I'm not sure this one will work." Instead of "that's stupid")

Recognizing it's a difficult topic and handling it discreetly (for example: "I think you need to know something but I really don't want to hurt your feelings)

### **Choose assertive (not aggressive) language:**

Focus on specific behavior and facts instead of offering opinions (for example: "These documents weren't filed in order" instead of "You're sloppy and disorganized")

Avoid exaggerations (for example: "You were late for the third time this week" instead of "You're never on time.")

Focus on "I" not "You" language (for example: "I would like a chance to say something" instead of "You're always interrupting")

**Avoid bullying and demanding behavior:** When making requests, avoid phrases that may make people feel bullied like "You must" or "You have to" and focus on language like "I think it would be better if...") Also, think about what you are asking of others. Are your requests reasonable, or are they unrealistic, unfair, or selfish.

**Avoid physically aggressive behavior:** Behavior such as glaring, slamming doors, throwing things, or invading other's personal space is physically aggressive. This behavior both scares and alienates people. No matter how angry or passionate you are about an issue, it is important to exercise physical control. Others won't respect you if your behavior indicates that you don't respect them.