



Pestalozzi

Training Resources

Education for the prevention of violence at schools (VIO)
Working on assertiveness

by

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Editor: Višnja Raji

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Theme: Education for the prevention of Violence in Schools

Expected outcome

- To be able to negotiate in a spirit of openness and dialogue with colleagues, families and academic authorities following democratic rules.
- To encourage assertiveness as a way to improve communication skills and develop teachers and learners self-esteem, self-worth and self-confidence.
- To be able to develop critical thinking skills: encourage debating, discussing, listening and asking questions, to build constructive assertiveness based on argumentation..

Target group

Type of training	School level / age	Subject area
Initial and in-service training	Primary and secondary	Communication Skills

Brief description of the unit

Sometimes violent situations start when people don't use a proper way to communicate. One of the things we can do to prevent these situations is to train teachers in assertive communication, learning to say NO and how to express their wishes and feelings without being aggressive and respecting the rights of pupils and other people. There are five activities to achieve these goals. In the first activity participants will have to practice self-expression and self-affirmation. In the second activity they will have to think about how they act in different situations and to gain awareness about assertiveness. In the third and fourth activities the participants will practice the different profiles in assertiveness communication (aggressive, passive, and assertive). This activity is designed to work with a group of 16-20 people and some of the activities can be organised in groups of 4-5 participants.

Methods/techniques used

Individual work and collaborative group work, whole group as well as working in small groups.

Time 2:40 hours

Activity 1: Introducing myself with personal information	▶ 35 minutes
Activity 2: How assertive you are?	▶ 20 minutes
Activity 3: There's always a way of saying things properly	▶ 45 minutes
Activity 4: Study Cases in Assertiveness	▶ 45 minutes
Debriefing session	▶ 15 minutes

Tips for trainers:

The aim is to improve teachers' communication skills in order to improve relationship with pupils, families and other people. With activity number 5 you can make a final debriefing of the activities.

Resources

Questionnaire "Are you assertive?"	Appendix 1
Powerpoint "Working on Assertiveness"	Appendix 2
Document "Different ways to react to situations"	Appendix 3
Study Cases	Appendix 4

Activity 1: Introducing myself with personal information



35 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ To develop communication skills ➢ To describe some aspects of our personality as a first step of being assertive. ➢ To be able to create a safe learning environment and develop teachers and pupils self-esteem, self-worth and self-confidence <p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Verbal and non-verbal communication skills ➢ Encourage expression of self-image. ➢ Reflecting on communication and their difficulties. ➢ Developing interest and empathy for the “other’s otherness 	
<p>▶ Methods /techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Working with the whole group 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ A comb ➢ A copy of a 500 Euros note ➢ Car keys ➢ A ruler ➢ A Calendar ➢ A picture of a couple showing their love ➢ A group of friends picture 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A trainer (shoe) ➤ A drawing of a Peace pigeon ➤ A textbook ➤ A ball pen ➤ A poem ➤ A spoon ➤ Brand-name clothes ➤ Sunglasses ➤ A clock ➤ Music CD ➤ A chewing gum ➤ A red lace against AIDS ➤ A sign with the text “Nobody can make you feel inferior without your permission ➤ A condom 	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The whole group seated forming a circle in the room with the table in the middle 	
<p>▶ Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Trainer read the list of the objects they will find on the table. ➤ People have 5 minutes to think about the three objects they will choose. ➤ Each person selects three objects that are on the table which identifies her or him. ➤ One by one, they stand up around clockwise and go to the table. They introduce themselves and tell to the group the objects chosen and say why. They also have the opportunity to express their expectations for the workshop. 	

<p>▶ Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ All the people might feel confidence enough to express themselves. ➢ If it is difficult to get all the objects, some drawings or pictures of the objects can be used. ➢ The first participants has less time to prepare their introducing 	
<p>▶ Debriefing/reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Was it difficult for some people to express themselves? ➢ Are there any other objects which define you better? 	

Activity 2 How assertive you are?



20 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ To identify situations in which we don't use to act in an assertive way. <p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ To think about different situations and how we react ➢ To be aware of different situations where we may not be assertive ➢ To be aware of my behaviour, language and body language, and realize that they all translate. 	
<p>▶ Methods /techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Individual work 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Questionnaire "Are You Assertive? (Appendix 1) 	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ It will be necessary to arrange a big enough room for the whole group. They will need to be seated 	

<p>and a table to write down the questionnaire.</p>	
<p>▶ Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The trainer explains the activity to the whole group. The participants have to read the questionnaire and reflect about different situations and how they use to act. They will have 15 minutes to fill in the questionnaire and grade it. ➤ Participants fill in the questionnaires and grade them. The higher their score, the less assertive they are. ➤ The trainer leads the reflecting process to make them aware about all the situations in which they should act better. 	
<p>▶ Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Participants should keep the questionnaire after filling it in. 	
<p>▶ Debriefing/reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What do you think about the way you act in most of the situations? ➤ Do you think you should act in a different way? ➤ Are you assertive enough? 	

Activity 3 There's always a way of saying things properly



45 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ To learn different ways to respond to different situations as a prevention of violence situations <p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Being able to create a safe learning environment and develop teachers and pupils self-esteem, self-worth and self-confidence ➢ To learn the different profiles in assertiveness ➢ To practice different profiles in real situations in the past 	
<p>▶ Methods /techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Group working 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Appendix 2 – ppt: Are you assertive? ➢ Documents “Different ways to react to situations”(Appendix 3) ➢ Pens with 4 different colours (blue, green, black and red) 	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Every group will need it own table or space to do the activity. 	
<p>▶ Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Participants get in groups of 4. (5 minutes). To form the groups the Trainer lets the participants to sit down freely and then he assigns a number between 1 and 4 to all the members in every table. Then they have to sit in a table with the people with the same number (1 with 1, 2 with 2...). 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Every member of the group will have some tasks to do, depending of the colour of the pen they choose from the table. ➤ Red pen: She/he will speak to summarize what they have talked about. ➤ Green pen: She/he will control that every member of the group participate in the activity. ➤ Blue pen: She/he will act writing down all the main ideas they all talk about in the group, to prepare the final summary ➤ Black pen: She/he will be the time keeper, controlling the time to finish the activity on time. ➤ The facilitator goes through the ppt. Are you assertive (Appendix 2). 5 minutes ➤ After that, they have to read the document and to answer the following questions: (35 min) ➤ Every group member describes a conflict situation or a difficult conversation you had with another person in which you reacted in a passive way. ➤ Every group member can describe a conflict situation or a difficult conversation you had with another person in which you reacted aggressively. ➤ How would you have reacted assertively in the two previous situations? ➤ One member of the group (the one with the red pen) makes a presentation to the big group summarizing what they have talked about. 	
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<p>▶ Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All the instructions must be clear before starting the activity (tasks, colour of pens, documents) 	
<p>▶ Debriefing/reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How do we react as teachers with our pupils in the classroom? ➤ Can we avoid and resolve conflicts with pupils with assertiveness? ➤ Can we improve our teaching using the proper communication style? 	

Activity 4 Study Cases in Assertiveness



45 minutes

Notes

<p>▶ General aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ To learn how to act in different situations to prevent of violence situations in life and in school <p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ To be able to manage conflicts through the application of conflict resolution techniques and problem solving strategies ➢ To recognize the importance of developing own communication skills. ➢ To reflect about real/simulated situations placed in school. ➢ To learn how people can act according with different assertive profiles 	
<p>▶ Methods /techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Group working ➢ Study cases 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Documents of Case studies (Appendix 4) 	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Every group will need it own table or space to do the activity. 	
<p>▶ Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ In the previous activity, all the participants had a number. To form new groups for this activity, they all will stand up an look for people with even or odd number. We will have four groups with the following members group 1 (1-1-3-3) group 2 (3-3-1-1) group 3 (2-2-4-4) and group 4 (4-4-2-2). Every member of the group will have some tasks to do, depending of the colour of the pen they choose from the table. Try not to repeat the colour of the pen. (5 minutes). 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Red pen: She/he will speak to summarize what they have talked about. ➤ Green pen: She/he will control that every member of the group participate in the activity. ➤ Blue pen: She/he will act writing down all the main ideas they all talk about in the group, to prepare the final summary ➤ Black pen: She/he will be the time keeper, controlling the time to finish the activity on time. ➤ In groups of 4, read the text of the Study Case 1 (example) to learn different ways to react to a common situation at school (10 minutes). ➤ Read the Study Case 2 and 3 and discuss about how the teachers will react according to the aggressive, passive and assertive profiles (20 minutes). ➤ One of the group members makes a presentation to the big group summarizing what they have talked about the different ways to react in the situations. 	
<p>▶ Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All the instructions must be clear before starting the activity (tasks, colour of pens, documents) 	
<p>▶ Debriefing/reflecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Did something similar happen to you? How did you react? ➤ Can we avoid and resolve conflicts in school with assertiveness 	

Activity 5: Debriefing/ Evaluation and assessment



15 minutes

	Notes
<p>▶ Specific aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ To reflect on the quality and usefulness of the Training Unit. ➢ To evaluate the resources used and the whole process 	
<p>▶ Methods /techniques used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Group dialogue 	
<p>▶ Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Resources used in the Training Unit 	
<p>▶ Practical arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Arrange a big enough room for all the group 	
<p>▶ Instructions/procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ The trainer leads a discussion with the group of participants using the following questions: ➢ What are the 3 key things you have learned during the activities? ➢ What will this change in your way of communicate with others, including your pupils? ➢ Can we use the same kind of activities to work assertiveness with pupils? ➢ Are these activities useful for the expected goal? What will you change? ➢ What other questions are raised by this unit? 	
<p>▶ Tips to trainers/anticipated difficulties:</p>	
<p>▶ Debriefing/reflecting:</p>	

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Appendix 1:

Are You Assertive?	All the time Score 1	Most of the time Score 2	Sometimes Score 3	Never Score 4
1. Can you speak up and ask questions?				
2. When someone with authority asks you to do something unfair, can you question it?				
3. Are you able to say NO politely but firmly?				
4. Can you criticise your friends face-to-face?				
5. Do you do what is right even if others do not?				
6. Can you admit to making mistakes?				
7. Are you able to ask your friends for advice?				
8. Can you ask a friend for a favour?				
9. If you don't want to lend something to a friend, can you refuse?				
10. When a friend puts pressure on you to do something you don't want to do, can you say no?				

11. When you're not sure about something, do you ask someone to explain it?				
12. When someone compliments you, do you know what to say?				
13. If a group of friends were saying something you didn't agree with, would you say you disagreed?				
14. Do you apologize when you're wrong?				
15. If you saw a group of youngsters bullying someone, would you try to help?				
TOTAL IN EACH COLUMN				

WORKING ON ASSERTIVENESS



PREVENTING VIOLENCE TRAINING UNIT

TRAINING OBJECTIVES



- Being able to negotiate in a spirit of openness and dialogue with colleagues, families and academic authorities following democratic rules.
- Encourage assertiveness as a way to improve communication skills and develop teacher's and learner's self-esteem, self-worth and self-confidence

DEFINITION OF ASSERTIVENESS



- An honest, direct and appropriate expression of one's feelings, thoughts and beliefs.

Myths about Assertiveness



- Other people's feelings and rights are more important than yours.
- You will offend other people by being assertive.
- You are not important enough to express your feelings and rights.

Appendix 3:

Different ways to react to situations"

In different situations we face the need to use correct forms of communication that help us to solve conflicts appropriately. However, in our communication with others, we can react in three different ways:

1. We can be **AGGRESSIVE**:

- We use verbal abuse (humiliation, threats, insult...)
- We show contempt for the opinions of others.
- We are rude, spiteful or malicious.
- We make hostile or threatening gestures
- We use phrases like: "This is what I think you're stupid for thinking differently form "," This is what I want, what you want is not important, "" This is what I feel, your feelings do not count "," You had better ...", "Go away ...", "You must be joking ...", "If you don't ...", "You should ..."

2. We can be **PASSIVE**:

- We let others violate our rights.
- Avoid the eyes of the people talking.
- We talk very low as people can't hear us.
- We do not respect our own needs.
- Our goal is to avoid conflict at all costs.

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- We use phrases like: "Maybe you're right," "I suppose that will happen", "Well, it's not really important, "" I wonder if we could ...", "Would you mind much ...", So, do not bother ",...
 - We don't express our feelings and thoughts effectively

3. We can be **ASSERTIVE**:

- We say what we think and how we feel
- Do not humiliate, disturb, manipulate or bother to other
- We consider the rights of the others
- Not always avoid conflict, but the maximum number of times
- We use phrases like: "I think ...", "I feel ...", "I want ...", "Let's ...", "How can we resolve this?", "What do you think,"...
- Speak with fluency and control, safe, relaxed, upright posture and hands visible, using firmly gestures without hesitation, looking in the eye

Appendix 4:

Study Case 1. Example

Mrs. Brown, teacher of a primary school calls Mrs. Smith to school and in an interview tells her that her seven year old daughter (Mary) does not pay attention in Class and behaves terribly – All because Mrs. Smith has not brought up her daughter in a disciplined way .

THE VARIOUS RESPONSES TO THIS COMPLAINT:

AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE:

Mrs. Smith responds, “You just do not understand my daughter. From what I have heard you are a terrible teacher. I am going to talk to the Principal about this and get my daughter transferred to the Mrs. Pink’s class. She is a good teacher.” Mrs. Smith does talk to the Principal and doesn’t say anything to her daughter who is transferred. The daughter learns that she has nothing to say about whatever happens to her, that her needs and feelings are irrelevant. She begins to feel that she lives in an unreasonable world.

PASSIVE RESPONSE:

Mrs. Smith says ,” Yes, you are right. She does need more discipline at Home. Send us a note every time she misbehaves. Meanwhile we forbid her to watch TV at night.” That night she turns off TV, yells at her daughter, brushes aside her attempt to explain, send her to bed without supper. And she lies awake all night.

In this case her daughter Mary learned that her needs and feelings don’t matter. She feels either that she is bad or the world is unfair. In either case she is being taught to be helpless.

ASSERTIVE RESPONSE:

Mrs. Smith says “Let me talk to my daughter about it. Next week I will come with some ideas.” That Night She has a long discussion with her daughter and her husband and discovers that a boy in class has bullied her. As a result she felt upset.

Mrs. Smith goes back to the School and discusses this with the teacher to see what can be done. Because of her assertive actions her daughter might learn that what she feels and thinks are important to others and can influence in what happens. She also has the experience of having a constructive communication with her parents and the model of the constructive working out of a problem by her mother.

Study Case 2.

Mrs. Smith, the mother of Mary, come to school to talk to Mrs. Brown, Mary’s teacher. Mary was studying during the whole weekend for the last Mathematics exam and Mrs. Brown doesn’t agree with the mark assigned to her daughter. She strongly asks to the teacher for raising the mark or she will talk with the Principle to complain.

Study Case 3.

The pupils of Mrs. Brown want to talk to her. Most of them ask her for changing the exam date to the next week because they have some other exams from other subjects and they say they haven’t study enough to pass the exam. They say they need more time to study for the exam and they have some doubts to ask to the teacher.