



## COMMISSION ON CORRECTIONAL PEACE OFFICERS STANDARDS AND TRAINING

### CPOST 15 MINUTE TRAINING

# ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION FOR STRESS RELIEF

BET 11056250

**WHAT IS ASSERTIVENESS**  
THE ABILITY TO EXPRESS ONES  
FEELINGS AND ASSERT ONES RIGHTS  
WHILE RESPECTING THE FEELINGS  
AND RIGHTS OF OTHERS.

Experts agree the clearest, most  
productive, and most effective way to  
communicate is honestly and openly,  
which is assertive communication.



### Assertiveness Quiz?

- ◆ Do you have difficulty accepting constructive criticism?
- ◆ Do you find yourself saying yes to requests that you should really say no to, just to avoid disappointing people?
- ◆ Do you have trouble voicing a difference of opinion with others?
- ◆ Do people tend to feel alienated by your communication style when you do disagree with them?
- ◆ Do you feel attacked when someone has a different opinion than your own?

**Saying yes to any of these questions could mean that you would benefit from practicing assertive communication.**

**Knowing where you stand on the assertiveness spectrum and knowing where you want to be will help you use the appropriate tips to balance your communication skills.**

#### Tips to Communicate More Assertively

- ◆ **Remember.** Assertive communication is centered on respect; for yourself and the person making the request.
- ◆ **Practice saying no.** Don't hesitate-be direct. If an explanation is appropriate, keep it brief. Taking on too many requests to please others can be a major source of unnecessary stress.
- ◆ **Use body language.** Communication isn't just verbal. Act confident even if you aren't feeling it. Keep an upright posture, but lean forward a bit. Make regular eye contact. Maintain a neutral or positive facial expression. Practice assertive body language in front of a mirror until it is habitual.

#### Tips to Practice Less Aggressive Communication

- ◆ **Use 'I' statements.** Using 'I' statements lets others know what you are thinking without sounding accusatory. For instance "I disagree," rather than, "You're wrong."
- ◆ **Use facts, not judgements.** Example: "Your punctuation needs work and your formatting is inconsistent," instead of, "This is sloppy work."
- ◆ **Keep reactions in check.** Conflict is hard for most people. Maybe you get angry or frustrated, or maybe you get quiet or withdraw when you get upset. Although these reactions are normal, they can get in the way of resolving the conflict. If you feel stressed or reactive going into a situation, wait a bit if possible. Take a walk and calm down. Breathe slowly and keep your voice even and firm.