

# Assertiveness

## Is it tough for you to say "no"?

How many times do you find yourself doing things you wanted to refuse? For many people, saying "NO" means that they are rejecting someone. They might also be afraid that it might appear that they cannot handle a situation. These same people sacrifice their own mental health for what they assume the asking party may think about their refusal.

If you can identify with this situation, it may be time to look at improving your assertiveness skills. Following are some ideas for your consideration:

1. ***Take responsibility for yourself:*** You can't control what other people do, think or feel, only what you do, think or feel.
2. ***Feel free to say "I don't know":*** It is no crime to not know everything. Often times someone will have more respect for your honesty than if you try to buffalo your way through on something in which you are unsure.
3. ***Learn to use "I" messages:*** Always talk in terms of how you feel, and what you want rather than focusing on the other person. It makes them much less defensive and forces you to accept the responsibility for your part.
4. ***Say "No":*** Evaluate requests. Do I really have the time, energy and the need to do this? How many other commitments have I made? What are my priorities? There are many polite ways to say "no" and doing so means taking care of yourself.

Assertiveness skills are difficult for many people to develop. At Mercy EAP, a counselor can help you understand what is making this difficult and help you to gain confidence as you practice these skills.

**To schedule an EAP appointment, call 319-398-6694 or 1-800-383-6694.**