

HEALTHY INDIVIDUAL FUNCTIONING: ASSERTIVENESS AND ATTACHMENT

In all our relationships, it is very important to develop the capacity to ***be assertive in the moment***, i.e., at the time of the interaction (and if not then, better late than never!).

- Assertiveness can be viewed as a three-step process around feelings -
 - i. ***experience*** your primary feelings (e.g., emotions within the “Key Five” Feeling Categories” – sad, mad, glad, afraid, embarrassed), etc.
 - ii. ***express*** your primary feelings
 - iii. ***act on*** your primary feelings

- AC-B Model of Assertiveness
 - A** - experience and express - primary feelings (the “Key Five,” etc.)
 - romantic and other close relationships also involve ***attachment fears***, e.g., fear of disappointment/hurt, criticism, rejection, betrayal, abandonment, emotional/physical harm (“perception of danger”), being alone, etc.
 - C** - express two types of needs -
 - i. behavioural needs - need for your partner to change his/her offending behaviour, e.g., "Next time, I need you to be on time."
 - ii. attachment needs - need for your partner to meet your deeper attachment needs, e.g., "I need you to really listen to me so that I will feel safe and supported in our relationship."
 - B** - empathy and genuine concern for your partner's point of view
 - understanding what “You feel ...” and “You need ...” (in contrast to what “I feel ...” [A] and “I need ...” [C]).

Note: See associated handouts, e.g., "Feelings, Attachment Fears and Needs, and Assertiveness" and "Emotion Focused Therapy (EFT) Communication Matrix."