



Exercise: Identifying Your Interaction Style

When placed in stressful or taxing workplace situations, we can sometimes gravitate toward certain “default” styles of interacting with others. Even the calmest and most assertive individuals may find that certain situations or circumstances can prompt them to use an unhelpful interaction style. This can threaten a manager’s effectiveness, because it is particularly important in stressful situations for a manager to use his or her communication skills to their fullest.

Think about your default style when under stress. What types of workplace situations may trigger each of the following styles for you?

Passive behaviour (not standing up for your rights; not expressing your ideas/feelings)

Aggressive behaviour (expressing your ideas/feelings without allowing others to do the same; getting your way at the unfair expense of others)

Passive-aggressive behaviour (communicating a hostile/unkind message through non-verbal behaviours such as eye-rolling, gesturing or ignoring others; giving deliberately frustrating verbal responses)

Reflect on what you can do in stressful situations to actively remind yourself to engage in an assertive communication style (one where you express your needs in a clear, open, non-defensive and respectful manner, and also allow others to express their needs).