



# Assertive Communication and the IDEAL Model

- 3 Cs: Confident, Clear, Controlled
  - **Confident:** You believe in your ability to handle the situation and are composed.
  - **Clear:** The message is easy to understand and is not exaggerated.
  - **Controlled:** You are “tracking” the other person and modulate yourself if necessary.
- Important in dealing with family and colleagues (communication that works in combat or with your Platoon Sergeant doesn't work at home).
- IDEAL Model
  - **I** = Identify and understand the problem
  - **D** = Describe the problem objectively and accurately
  - **E** = Express your concerns and how you feel (when appropriate)
  - **A** = Ask the other person for his/her perspective and then ask for a reasonable change
  - **L** = List the positive outcomes that will occur if the person makes the agreed upon change



# Communication Styles

**Instructions:** Work in small groups to answer the questions below and complete the Communication Styles chart.

1. What makes communication effective? List 10 factors.

2. Complete the Communication Styles chart:

	<b>Aggressive</b>	<b>Assertive</b>	<b>Passive</b>
What are <b>descriptors</b> of each style (e.g., language, body language, voice, space, pace, etc.)?			
What are <b>Icebergs</b> that cause one to be stuck in the Aggressive/Passive styles? What are <b>Icebergs</b> that help one to stay in the Assertive style?			
What are the unspoken <b>messages</b> that each style sends to the other person?			

3. What Icebergs do you have that cause you to be stuck in either the Aggressive **or** Passive Communication style?

4. What Icebergs do you have that help you to communicate Assertively?



## Communications Scenario: IDEAL Model Example

**Instructions:** Identify and describe a scenario in your own life where Assertive Communication would be helpful. With a partner, try to work through the scenario using either the Aggressive or the Passive Communication Style. Get some feedback from your partner about how the style you used helped or harmed the conversation and the relationship. After you have both taken a turn, jot down a few talking points for each step of the IDEAL model and role-play the conversation with your partner.

**Describe the scenario:** *My teenage son doesn't do his chores when I ask him to (or he does the bare minimum)*

**I** Identify and understand the problem (use appropriate thinking skills to accurately understand the problem): *-Detect Icebergs- I realized I have a couple of strong values: "everyone should do their part," and "anything worth doing is worth doing right"*  
*-Still think it's important to teach him this*

**D** Describe the problem objectively and accurately (the who, what, when, and where):  
*-Only took trash out once in past week*  
*-Bed has not been made up all week*

**E** Express your concerns and how you feel (when appropriate):  
*-Frustrated*  
*-We work hard, everyone needs to do their part to keep the house going*

**A** Ask the other person for his/her perspective and then ask for a reasonable change:  
*-Something going on I don't know about?*  
*-Take the trash out whenever the bag is full*  
*-Tuesday is trash day*  
*-Make bed everyday*

**L** List the positive outcomes that will occur if the person makes the agreed upon change:  
*-Happier house*  
*-Less stressed, less grief from me*



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### Describe the scenario:

**I** Identify and understand the problem (use appropriate thinking skills to accurately understand the problem):

**D** Describe the problem objectively and accurately (the who, what, when, and where):

**E** Express your concerns and how you feel (when appropriate):

**A** Ask the other person for his/her perspective and then ask for a reasonable change:

**L** List the positive outcomes that will occur if the person makes the agreed upon change:



# Assertive Communication: Summary

## Key Principles

**Takes practice:** Assertive Communication takes practice.

**Flexibility:** Adjust your style of communication to the situation/person you are communicating with.

**Skill, not personality:** Communication styles are skills, not personality styles.

**Re-Engage:** Take a break from the conversation. Relax/rethink and then try again.

**Connection:** Connection is a primary target of Assertive Communication.

## Check on Learning

**What is the skill?** Assertive Communication is a method of communication that is Confident, Clear, and Controlled.

**When do I use it?** Use Assertive Communication when confronting someone about a conflict or challenge (and it is the most appropriate style in that situation).

**How do I use it?** Use the IDEAL model: I = Identify and understand the problem, D = Describe the problem objectively and accurately, E = Express your concerns and how you feel (when appropriate), A = Ask the other person for his/her perspective and ask for a reasonable change, L = List the positive outcomes that will occur if the person makes the agreed upon change.



## Assertive Communication: Debrief and Applications

Assertive Communication is Confident, Clear, and Controlled. Assertive Communication can be enhanced through the IDEAL model: I = Identify and understand the problem, D = Describe the problem objectively and accurately, E = Express your concerns and how you feel (when appropriate), A = Ask the other person for his/her perspective and ask for a reasonable change, L = List the positive outcomes that will occur if the person makes the agreed upon change.

**Instructions:** Record important debrief points for Assertive Communication and ideas for how to use Assertive Communication in the Army. List any ideas you have for formal and informal mechanisms for teaching, practicing, and reinforcing Assertive Communication. Consider both individual and group applications.