

Being assertive:

Being assertive is using a combination of qualities and skills, for example being open, honest and direct whilst showing respect for the other person.

Assertive behaviour doesn't always get what you want, but the cards are stacked more in your favour if you are. With assertiveness you are more:

- Confident
- Self controlled
- Influential
- Resilient
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Sheila wants to get an appointment at the surgery at short notice. Which one of these three is an assertive approach?

	1. I need an appointment to see a doctor and I need it now!
	2. Hello, I really need the earliest appointment you have to see the doctor. Do you have one available today or tomorrow?
	3. I'm sorry to be a pain, but the thing is I was hoping to get an appointment – I don't suppose there's any chance of that?

When you want to say NO!

We all get asked to do things that really we don't want to do. It's not easy to know how to respond without appearing unhelpful. There are three options...

1. Say **YES** and wish you hadn't!
2. Say **NO** - bad for them and probably not great for you!

The following is the better option for all, as they get the outcome they want and you've helped them along the way.

3. Say **I CAN HELP YOU, BUT NOT IN THE WAY YOU SUGGESTED!**

When you want to remove someone’s reason for saying NO!

This is simple; the answer is to include a negative in your answer.

“Can you think of a good reason why we shouldn’t go ahead?”

So when they say NO, **“there aren’t any reasons why we shouldn’t”** - in other words, **“we should”**.

There are only two types of answers to a negative question and they are...

Option	They respond	What happens next
1.	NO	You: Great. Let’s get started. I’ll kick things off by doing...
2.	YES	<p>You: What’s that?</p> <p>Them: I’m worried about x</p> <p>You: (Remove their worries about X if you can)</p> <p>You: Any other reasons why we shouldn’t go ahead?</p> <p>Them: No (in which case you start) or YES (in which case you remove their second concern, and so on).</p>

When you know you have to initiate challenging conversations:

This is known as the **‘serve and volley’** technique. You serve an enticing opening sentence and the respondent just has to ask more, then you go for the volley!



Your Serve: “I’m not sure the way you spend your time on the mobile phone isn’t bringing my wife the best experience of your nursing care as it could”..

District Nurse Return: “What do you mean?”

Your Volley: “Well it would be better if...(now you are discussing the topic you wanted to)...

When you want to stop wasting your time with people who can't make decisions:

This involves a three step process:

1. Finding the decision maker	If it's not obvious who the decision maker is then ask the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who's the ultimate decision maker?• Who's responsible for XYZ?• Who's the budget holder?• Who has to approve the process?• Who do we need to consult?
2. Getting in front of them	If you are speaking to a PA, GP receptionist or someone who is the gatekeeper to who you really want to speak to, then work with that gatekeeper recognising that you want to help them to. "I recognise you may well be busy, I want to speak to Dr X, what's the best way of doing that?"
3. Saying the right thing to the decision maker	Now you are in front of the decision maker – have a script/prompt of bullet points that you want to raise. If the answer is less favourable for you, then keep progressing with... "If we can only take action on one thing, what thing must that be?" or "If we did nothing, what would be your biggest concern?"