

# SUSTAINABLE LIFE SKILLS CAFÉ TOOLBOX

6 modules and 18 lesson templates of practical-based learning material

[www.SLSCAFE.eu](http://www.SLSCAFE.eu)



Co-funded by  
the European Union

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein



# contents

<b>01</b>	<b>GETTING STARTED &amp; GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER</b> ..... 05
	Building Trust Quality or Skills to Get Strengthen Identify Hopes for the Future
<b>02</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION</b> ..... 22
	Attentive Listening Verbal & Non-verbal Behaviour Assertive Skills to Reduce Vulnerability
<b>03</b>	<b>RELATIONSHIPS</b> ..... 43
	Change of Ideal Images Positive Conflict Resolution Creative Ways of Solving Conflict & Win-win Situation
<b>04</b>	<b>DECISION MAKING &amp; REACHING GOALS</b> ..... 61
	Determining the Risk & Safe Behavior Decisions & Effects Setting Realistic Goals & Reach Them
<b>05</b>	<b>COPING WITH EMOTIONS AND STRESS</b> ..... 81
	Identifying & Expressing Feelings Verbally and Non-verbally Express Feelings Safely Coping Strategies for Positive Thinking
<b>06</b>	<b>CREATIVE THINKING</b> ..... 99
	How to Understand Innovativeness? What does Analytical Thinking Represent? What is Fostering Creativity?



Co-funded by  
the European Union

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein

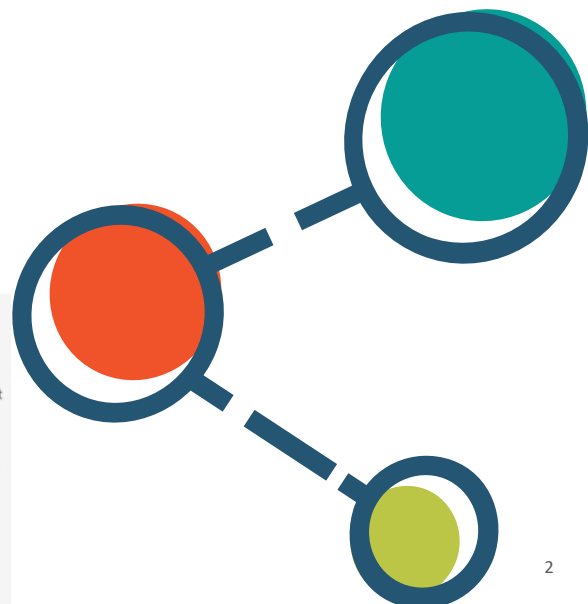
CC BY-SA 4.0

Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International

This license requires that reusers give credit to the creator. It allows reusers to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon the material in any medium or format, even for commercial purposes. If others remix, adapt, or build upon the material, they must license the modified material under identical terms.

BY: Credit must be given to you, the creator.

SA: Adaptations must be shared under the same terms.



## 01 | Guide to this Toolbox:

Within the Sustainable Life Skills Cafe PR1 toolbox, each part consists of several lessons. There are a total of **6** modules and **18** lesson templates included in this practical-based learning material. This publication contains a constructive structure including a logical sequence of lessons. Therefore, it is recommended not to change the sequence of the lessons. However, the trainers/tutors and practitioners might decide to leave out a specific lesson or activity or to extend another of the modules. And, for example, if there is not sufficient time to complete during Life Skills Cafe gatherings, it is also possible to apply the pick and choose approach.

This publication is written so that anybody, but specifically low-skilled/disadvantaged adults can benefit from it along with facilitation of tutors, mentors, coaches etc. In this way, we first pave the way on how to perform these tools in informal learning environments and then it enables peer education as well. This means that for example an adult participant can deliver a session to other participants. All the lessons include practical activities for the learners in the context of sustainable life skills mindset. The activities are closely related to practice and the real world. In this way the course encourages practical learning. Learners should be encouraged to ask questions, as many questions as they can think of.

## 02 | How to Use Lessons in the Training Material

In order to complete and facilitate the impact of the Training Material it is deemed important to provide a set of informal activities ready to be used by practitioners around the facilitators of Sustainable Life Skills Cafes. Activities should not be taken as isolated events but considered as a process contributing to the personal growth of the learner and its development in terms of life skills mindset.

Each lesson comes with a step-by-step instruction planning to guide some trainers/tutors/facilitators performing the activity. The following lessons will offer an opportunity to stimulate the learners'

reflections and skills through practical, participatory and dialogue-based experiences.

By following these lessons, participants will practice a list of competences which is based upon the European Competence Framework for better lives, also known as LifeComp. This Framework aims to build consensus around a common understanding of Life Skills Competence by defining **9** competence areas (see image below). These competences are linked to the lessons in this training course.

## 03 | Sustainable Life Skills Competence Framework

Empowering and supporting disadvantaged adults plays a key role in Europe’s Economy since these adults are in a vulnerable state in the labor market, many of them lacking the skills, work experience, job-search abilities and financial resources to find employment. The LifeComp Framework presented in this report proposes a concept of “Sustainable Life Skills” that can be explained in connection with internal capacities and behaviors that allow individuals to “build the needed competencies for human development and to adopt positive behaviors

that enable them to deal effectively with the challenges.

LifeComp is a conceptual framework that describes 9 competencies (P1-3, S1-3, L1-3) that can be learned by everyone in formal, informal and non-formal education. These Competencies are structured in 3 intertwined competence areas: Personal, Social, and Learning to learn. Each of the-areas is made up of 3 competencies, which, together, constitute the building blocks of Life Skills as a competence.

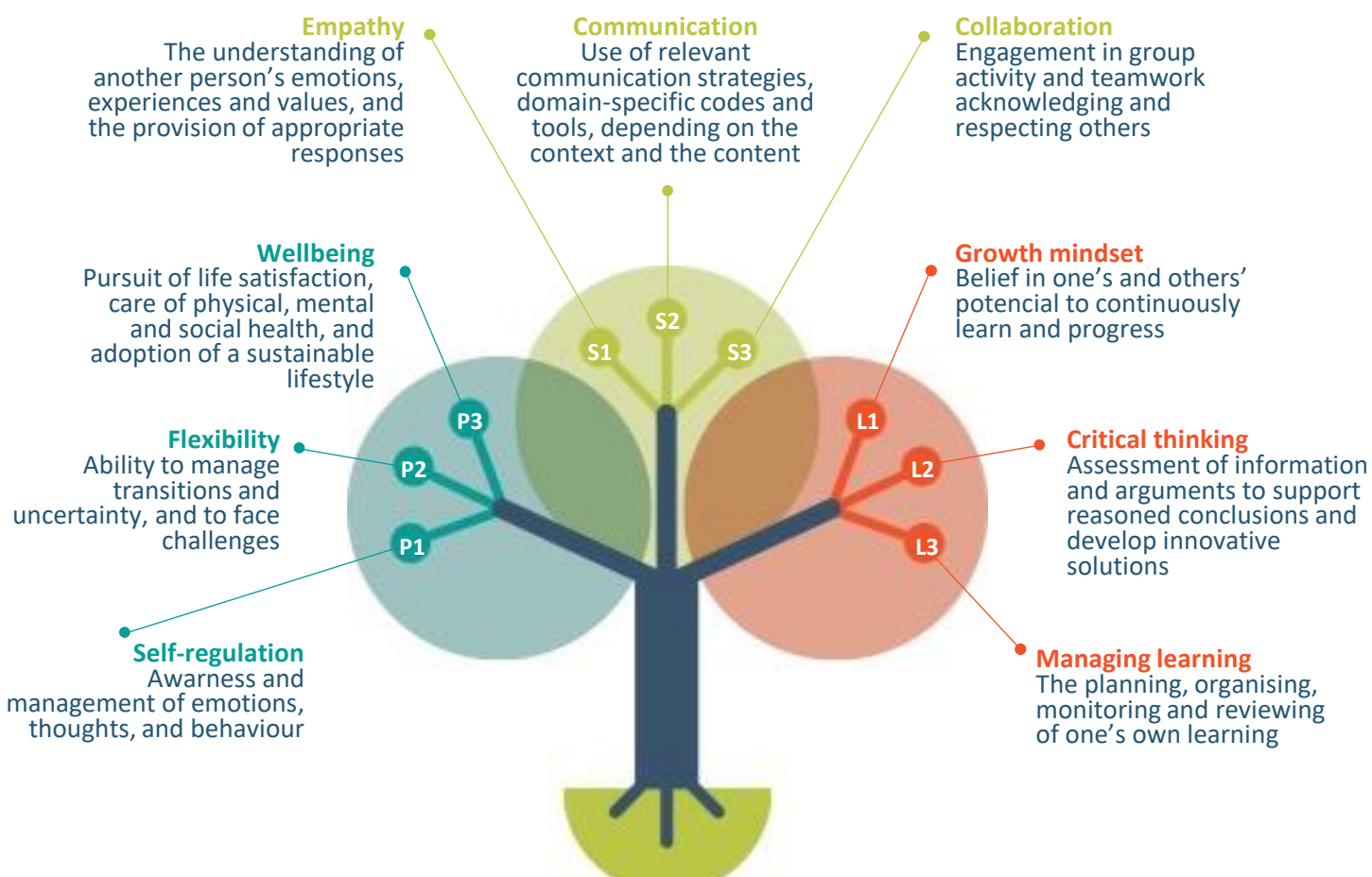


Figure 1: LifeComp Tree of competences describes nine competences, organised in three areas: The “personal” area (P1, P2, P3), the “social” area (S1, S2, S3) and the “learning to learn” area (L1, L2, L3)  
© EU 2020, creative commons (CC BY 4.0)

LifeComp can be used as a basis for the development of curricula and learning activities fostering personal, and social development, and learning to learn.

# 02

## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- 2.1 Attentive Listening
- 2.2 Verbal & Non-verbal Behaviour
- 2.3 Assertive Skills to Reduce Vulnerability







## Effective Communication

Effective communication is about more than just exchanging information. It's about understanding the emotion and intentions behind the information. As well as being able to clearly convey a message, you need to also listen in a way that gains the full meaning of what's being said and makes the other person feel heard and understood.

We communicate with people every day, whether in person or on the countless digital platforms available to us. But how much of our communication is received by our audience the way we hoped?

Effective communication means we have to be clear and complete in what we are trying to express.

Effective communication in our professional and personal lives involves learning the skills to exchange information with clarity, empathy, and understanding. When we communicate effectively, both the communicator and the receiver feel satisfied, heard and understood. We communicate many ways, including verbal and non-verbal, written, visual, and listening. It can happen face to face, online, over the telephone or by mail. For communication to be effective, it must be **clear, correct, complete, concise, and compassionate.**

# 2.1

## Attentive Listening

### Aim

- To illustrate in practice what active listening skills are and how they make us feel



### Activities

- 15 minutes - Warm-up Activity: **Practice through introductions**
- 40 minutes - Body Activity: **T-chart ASK or SHARE**
- 15 minutes - Body Activity: **Difficult Customer Role Play**
- 10 minutes - Follow-up Activity: **Telling vs. Showing:**



### Resources

- Flip-chart or white board



### Lifecomp Competencies Covered

- Validation
- Emotional Intelligence
- Courtesy
- Professionalism
- Humility
- Confidence
- Empathy
- Compassion
- Understanding
- Observation
- Self-Awareness
- Situational Awareness
- Interpretation
- Reaching Consensus
- Collaboration



### Tools that can be used in the lesson. Available in the annexes to this course manual

- Annex 2: listening-skills-infographic.pdf.



### Keywords

- Eye contact, body language, observation, empathy, listening, paraphrase, clarify, summarize, question, focus, interrupt, actions, tone



# Warm-up activity

## Practice through Introductions

**Digital or non-digital tool: Non-digital**  
**Suggested level of difficulty: Beginner**



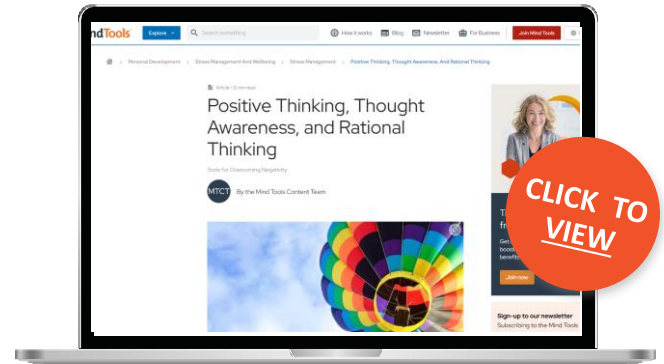
Active listening is the process by which an individual secures information from another individual or group.

It involves paying attention to the conversation, not interrupting, and taking the time to understand what the speaker is discussing. The “active” element involves taking steps to draw out details that might not otherwise be shared.<sup>1</sup>

Active listeners avoid interrupting at all costs, summarise and repeat back what they have heard, and observe body language to give them an extra level of understanding.

Like critical thinking and problem-solving skills, active listening is a soft skill that’s held in high regard by employers. When interviewing for jobs, using active listening techniques can show the interviewer how your interpersonal skills can draw people out.

Active listening redirects your focus from what is going on inside of your head to the needs of your prospective employer or interviewer. This technique can help reduce your nervousness during an interview.



### Practice through introductions

1. Pair up;
2. Have Person 1 introduce themselves to Person 2 for 2-minutes;
3. Have the team reverse roles for the second two minutes;
4. Then have each pair introduce one another to the rest of the group.

DEBRIEF: discuss what made the exercise hard or easy. Explore the experience from each person’s perspective as both the introducER and introducEE.



# Body activity

## T-chart ASK or SHARE

15 min

### Suggested LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Intermediate

Have the group write down characteristics of good and bad listening skills. Record these on a chart for all to see and fill in any omissions, as needed:

- Poor listening skills might include: look at your watch, interrupt, avoid eye contact, look bored or impatient, tap your foot or fidget, finish the their sentences.
- Good listening skills might be communicated with a nod, smile, eye contact, show concern, or encouragement.
- Active listeners will:
  - Focus
  - Question
  - “Listen” to the speaker’s body language
  - Paraphrase, clarify and summarize
  - Express Empathy

Remind the group that just because they making the motions, doesn’t mean they’re retaining the information.

#### ASK or SHARE: 15 min

Ask one person to share a short story of their past — a major turning point in their life; a time they went to the hospital; a hard choice you had to make; a stressful experience you lived through.

Divide your listeners into “askers” and “tellers.” Instruct “Askers” to ONLY ask questions. Invite “Tellers” to share their own similar experiences. Switch roles and repeat.

DEBRIEF: Ask story tellers when they felt best heard—when listeners were asking questions or sharing their own experiences?



# Follow-Up

---

## Telling vs. Showing: 10 min

### Suggested level of difficulty: Intermediate



#### Difficult Customer Role Play: 15 min

Have participants pair up with a partner for a role play. One person can be the difficult customer and the other the customer service rep, then they can switch roles. The best way to diffuse a tense situation is to use active listening – let the customer know you hear what they are saying. But it's important not to make any promises at that stage of the exchange because that costs money. But acknowledge the customer's frustration and let them vent. Then move on to problem-solving – get the customer to help in solving the problem and then work on solving it together.

#### Telling vs. Showing:

This quick exercise can be used as a “closer” or as a listening exercise, to reinforce the message that “actions speak louder than words.” I say: “Please follow my words. Raise your right hand over your head. Keep following my words. Make a fist. Please make sure to follow my words. Round your fist three times and then put your fist on your forehead! (just before this moment, you put your own fist on your jaw!) You would find most participants would follow your action and put their fists on their jaws! Someone would find their mistakes and put their fists on their forehead, Then you can say: What happened? I've asked you to follow my words for three times, but you follow my actions! Why?

## 2.2

# Verbal & Non-Verbal Behaviour

## Aim

- To identify and practice different methods of non-verbal communication



## Activities

- 10 minutes - Warm-up Activity: **Gestures List**
- Body Activity:  
**Stack the Deck: 15 min**  
**Silent Movie: 20 min**
- 10 minutes - Follow-up Activity: **Nonverbal Picture Prompt**



## Average duration

- 55 minutes



## Lifecomp Competencies Covered

- To understand the rules and codes of human communication as well as possess the skills to receive, produce, and share meaningful messages non verbally



## Tools that can be used in the lesson. Available in the annexes to this course manual

- Warm-up – Annex 3: Non Verbal communication
- Follow-up- Annex 1: Non formal picture prompt



## Keywords

- Facial expressions, body movement and posture, gestures, eye contact, touch, space inconsistencies



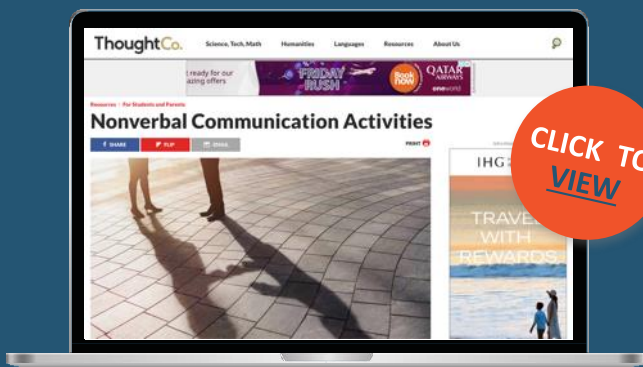
## Warm-up activity:

Gestures List: 10 min

Digital or non-digital tool:

Non-digital

Suggested level of difficulty: Intermediate



## Gestures list:

Everything we do communicates. Speaking, of course, is the most obvious way to get a message across. But even without speaking we can send countless messages. Rolling our eyes means we are annoyed. Yawning means we are tired. And sometimes, whether we mean for someone to see these actions or not, they do, and the message is received.

Nonverbal communication refers to the way we communicate without speaking. There are many ways to communicate nonverbally, and understanding what each method implies is crucial when sending and interpreting information.

## Description:

Ask students: *How do we communicate without words? What are some common gestures?* Divide students into groups and ask each group to come up with as many ways of nonverbal communicate as they can in 1 minute (eg: *shrug, hands on hips, finger to lips, shake head, nod head, make a face, smile, wink*).

## Non Verbal Communication: Body Activity

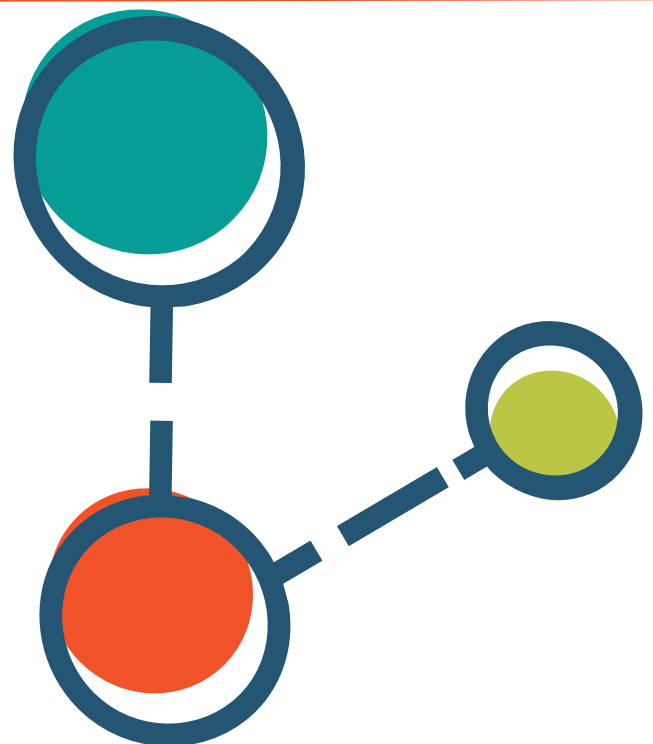
### Supplies needed:

- A regular pack of playing cards
- a lot of space to move around.
- Blindfolds are optional, and the task takes a bit longer if blindfolds are used.

## Stack the Deck: 15 min

### Instructions:

1. Shuffle the deck of cards thoroughly and walk around the room to give each student a card.
2. Instruct the students to keep their card a secret. No one can see the type or colour of another's card.
3. Make it clear to students that they will not be able to speak during this exercise.
4. Instruct students to assemble into 4 groups according to suits (hearts, clubs, diamonds, spades) using nonverbal communication.
5. Once students get into their groups, they must line up in order of rank, from ace to king.
6. The group that lines up in correct order first wins!





## Non Verbal Communication: Body Activity

Suggested level of  
difficulty:  
Intermediate

## RELATION TO Sustainable Life Skills Competence Framework

### Silent Movie: 20 min

Divide students into two or more groups. For the first half of the class, some students will be screenwriters and other students will be actors. Roles will switch for the second half.

The screenwriter students will write a silent movie scene, with the following directions in mind:

- Silent movies tell a story without words. It is important to start the scene with a person doing an obvious task, like cleaning the house or rowing a boat.
- This scene is interrupted when a second actor (or several actors) enters the scene. The appearance of the new actor/s has a big impact. Remember that the new characters could be animals, burglars, children, salesmen, etc.
- A physical commotion takes place.
- The problem is resolved.
- The acting groups will perform the script(s) while the rest of the class sits back and enjoys the show. Popcorn is a good addition to this activity.
- After each silent movie, the audience should guess the story, including the conflict and resolution.

This exercise gives students a great opportunity to act out and read nonverbal messages.

## Non Verbal Communication: Follow-Up Activity

**Follow-up activity:**  
Nonverbal Picture Prompt:  
10 min

**Suggested level of  
difficulty:**  
Intermediate

**RELATION TO  
Sustainable Life Skills  
Competence  
Framework**



### Annex 1

Show students a picture of a person. What is their body language communicating?  
Take turns in creating an inner monologue for this character.

## 2.3

# Assertive Skills to Reduce Vulnerability

## Aim

- To identify and practice different methods of non-verbal communication



## Activities

- 10 minutes - Warm-up – Activity: **Two ways to enter a circle**
- Body Activity: **"It's not you, it's me.": 20 minutes**  
**Fists: 10 min**  
**Sample Situations for Assertiveness Exercises and Training: 15 min**
- 15 minutes - Follow-up- Activity: **Ask Line . . . "NO" Line**



## Average duration

- 70 minutes



## Lifecomp Competencies Covered

- Validation
- Emotional Intelligence
- Courtesy
- Professionalism
- Humility
- Confidence
- Empathy
- Compassion
- Understanding
- Observation
- Self-Awareness
- Situational Awareness
- Interpretation
- Reaching Consensus
- Collaboration



## Tools that can be used in the lesson. Available in the annexes to this course manual

- Annex 4 Different Communication styles.pdf



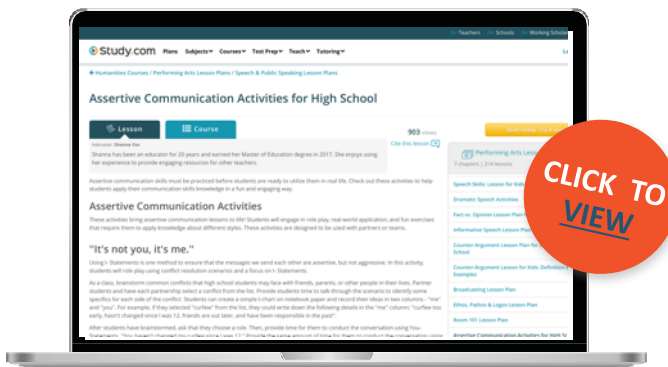
# Warm-Up

## Two Ways to Enter a Circle

### Digital or non-digital tool: Non-digital

Assertive communication is the ability to express positive and negative ideas and feelings in an open, honest and direct way. It recognises our rights whilst still respecting the rights of others. It allows us to take responsibility for ourselves and our actions without judging or blaming other people. And it allows us to constructively confront and find a mutually satisfying solution where conflict exists. All of us use assertive behaviour at times... quite often when we feel vulnerable or unsure of ourselves we may resort to submissive, manipulative or aggressive behaviour.

By adept use of the Assertive Communication Skills, you will be able to raise your voice for your rights (and other's rights) without being aggressive. Such a form of communication is quite useful in reducing stress, drama, and conflicts.



## Warm-up activity:

# Assertive Communication

Suggested level of difficulty: **Advanced**

### Description:

**Two ways to enter a circle: 10 min**

Right off the bat, before sharing names or “stats”, have your group stand in a circle for two “meetings.” The first time, ask them to go to the centre of the circle as if they were getting onto an elevator. Of course, they will all be reserved and full of “excuse me” and keeping our bodies, eyes, and voices mostly to ourselves.

After a quick “What was that like?” (2 min max), have them enter the circle as if they were arriving at a reunion or a party where they were happy seeing folks we hadn’t seen in a long time. Suddenly, you will see eye contact, handshakes, hugs, happy greetings with inviting questions. This is a great discussion starter — seeing how drastically different behaviour is for the different settings, and how each of us actually felt more comfortable with the group, even though we still didn’t know each other’s names.

**What is assertive communication: Look at Annex 3 and Annex 4**



## Body activity:

“It’s not you, it’s me”:

20 min

**Suggested level of difficulty: Advanced**

### Description:

Using I-Statements is one method to ensure that the messages we send each other are assertive, but not aggressive. In this activity, students will role play using conflict resolution scenarios and a focus on I- Statements.

As a group, brainstorm common conflicts that students may face with the people in their lives. Partner students and have each partnership select a conflict from the list. Provide students time to talk through the scenario to identify some specifics for each side of the conflict. Students can create a simple t-chart on notebook paper and record their ideas in two columns - "me" and "you". For example, if they selected "wages" from the list, they could write down the following details in the "me" column: "wage is too low, hasn't changed since I started work here and I have increased my skills, It is below the national standard".

After students have brainstormed, ask that they choose a role. Then, provide time for them to conduct the conversation using You-Statements. "You haven't given me a raise in many years." Provide the same amount of time for them to conduct the conversation using I-Statements. "I have had the same wage for years now." Debrief by asking the class to reflect on the results of each conversation style. Which style would more likely get them to a resolution satisfactory to both sides?

## Body activity:

Fists: 10 min

Suggested level of difficulty: **Advanced**

### Description:

Discuss with the students how the directions influenced their actions. Did they consider a peaceful way of asking? Why or why not? What communication role-models do movies and media offer?

### Divide the group into pairs. The pair will get two different sets of instructions.

Person 1 instructions will read: Person 2 will make a fist. You **MUST** get that fist open. Person 2 instructions will read: Person 1 is going to attempt to get you to open your fist. You must **NOT** open your fist unless he/she asks you politely and assertively.

Most people will try to pry the fist open. It is an opportunity to efficiently explain assertive communication. Knowing the power of good communication skills is important in building them properly.

Discuss with the students how the directions influenced their actions. Did they consider a peaceful way of asking? Why or why not? What communication role-models do movies and media offer?

## Body activity :

# Sample Situations for Assertiveness Exercises and Trainings: 15 min

## Suggested level of difficulty: Intermediate

Here are a handful of examples of situations, (some sound threatening and some not), together with one or more possible responses.

During these assertiveness group therapy activities, ask your group to identify whether the response is assertive, passive, or aggressive. Alternatively, ask if they can think of a better way to respond. For example:

# Sample Situations for Assertiveness Exercises and Trainings: 15 min

**Situation #1:** The barmaid serves you the wrong drink in the pub.

Response: "What do you call this? I asked for a shandy, not lager – get your act together, love."

**Situation #2:** A new colleague, with whom you share an office, smokes continuously. You dislike the smell of smoke.

Response: "Gosh, I've really got a headache, but then smoky atmospheres always bring on my migraine."

**Situation #3:** You are feeling put upon at work and decide to ask for a higher grade.

Response: "I'd like to talk about my grade with you. Please could we meet next week to discuss it further?"

**Situation #4:** You are waiting to pay for some shopping but the two sales assistants at the till are deep in conversation and appear to be ignoring you.

**Situation #5:** Your employer expects you to take on extra work but your existing workload is already very heavy.

**Situation #6:** You make a mistake at work and your supervisor tells you off in a very abrupt and angry manner.

## Assertive Communication: Follow-Up Activity

### Follow-up activity:

Ask Line ... “No” Line:  
15 min

Suggested level of  
difficulty:

Intermediate

**RELATION TO  
Sustainable Life  
Skills Competence  
Framework**

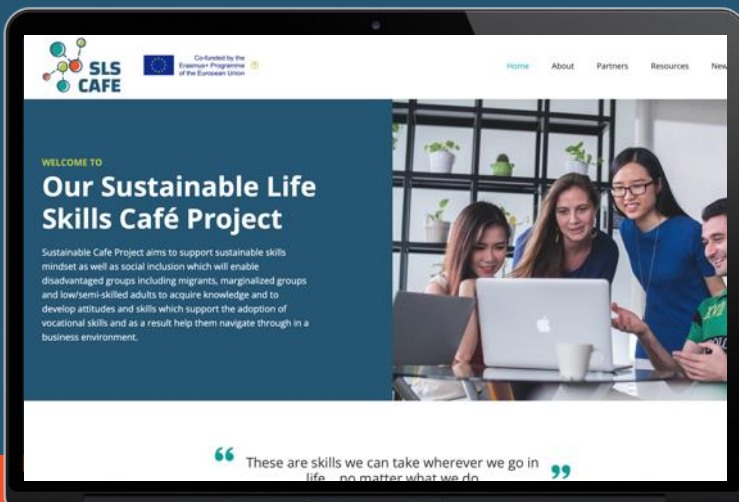
Assertiveness exercises can teach important skills like negotiation. Often assertiveness is hard when you face a challenge or need to ask for something.

The participants form two lines. One line is the “Asking Line.” They ask for anything from a pay raise, extra resources, time off, etc. The other line is the “No Line.” Their job is to say no.

Encourage them to be realistic in their delivery but to find a reason to say no. The Ask Line is then forced to ASK a what, how, or why ONLY question that forces the No Line to elaborate. In this assertive vs aggressive communication exercise, no “yes/no answers” are allowed!

The Ask Line then reformat their ask with the new information from the No Line. The No Line then offers the honest reconsideration of the request. The facilitator coaches participants one at a time, but each pair goes fairly quickly. This really helped us overcome the anxiety of the No and cultivated our ability to bounce back and be assertive by asking probing questions and re-stating the Ask. The lines then switch.





[www.SLSCAFE.eu](http://www.SLSCAFE.eu)

follow your journey

