



**Handout 4C**

**Communication Styles—Being Aggressive, Non-Assertive, and Proactive**

	<b>Aggressive</b>	<b>Non-Assertive</b>	<b>Proactive</b>
<b>Definition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication style in which you stand up for yourself even at the expense of others</li> <li>▪ You use language that is threatening and/or punishing to others involved.</li> <li>▪ When you are aggressive, you fail to consider the other person's needs or feelings.</li> <li>▪ Aggression can be direct or indirect.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication style in which you feel you do not have the right to be heard.</li> <li>▪ You are uncomfortable expressing yourself and are willing to back down to avoid conflict.</li> <li>▪ You do not tell others how you feel so your needs are not going to be met.</li> <li>▪ Non-assertive people tend to have inconsistent eye contact, low or unsteady voice levels, and cautious body movements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication style in which you are able to think ahead and stand up for yourself and tell others how you feel without anger or attack.</li> <li>▪ Being able to express what you think, feel and want comfortably in a non-threatening manner.</li> <li>▪ Being proactive is a skill that can be learned.</li> <li>▪ The other person may not agree with your decision, that's OK.</li> <li>▪ You should strive to think ahead and express your concerns while considering the other person's feelings in the process.</li> </ul>
<b>What it Implies to Others</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Their feelings are not important.</li> <li>▪ They don't matter.</li> <li>▪ I think I'm superior.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ My feelings are not important.</li> <li>▪ I don't matter.</li> <li>▪ I think I'm inferior.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We are both important</li> <li>▪ We both matter</li> <li>▪ I think we are equal</li> </ul>
<b>Verbal Styles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "You" statements.</li> <li>▪ Loud voice.</li> <li>▪ Name calling and threats.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Apologetic, hesitant speech.</li> <li>▪ Overly soft or tentative voice level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "I" statements</li> <li>▪ Firm voice</li> </ul>
<b>Non-verbal styles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staring, narrowed eyes, glaring looks</li> <li>▪ Tense, clenched fists, rigid posture, pointed fingers.</li> <li>▪ Waving of arms or hands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stooped posture, excessive head nodding, nervous body movements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Higher self esteem</li> <li>▪ Self-respect</li> <li>▪ Respect from others</li> <li>▪ Autonomy and respect for others</li> </ul>
<b>Verbal Styles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staring, narrowed eyes, glaring looks</li> <li>▪ Tense, clenched fists, rigid posture, pointing fingers</li> <li>▪ Waving of arms and hands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stooped posture, excessive head nodding, nervous body movements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Speaking clearly</li> <li>▪ Relaxed posture, smooth and relaxed movements</li> </ul>
<b>Potential Consequence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Guilt</li> <li>▪ Anger from others</li> <li>▪ Lowered self esteem</li> <li>▪ Disrespect from others</li> <li>▪ Feared by others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lowered self-esteem</li> <li>▪ Anger at self</li> <li>▪ False feelings of inferiority</li> <li>▪ Disrespect from others</li> <li>▪ Pitied by others</li> <li>▪ Agreeing to have sex or use drugs when you prefer not to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Higher self-esteem</li> <li>▪ Self-respect</li> <li>▪ Respect from others</li> <li>▪ Respect of others.</li> </ul>

Examples of Aggressive, Non-Assertive, and Proactive Communication Styles

**Situation:** Alyssa and Robert have been together for two years. Robert has used Alyssa’s car in the past but got into a car accident the last time and did not give her the \$500 to get it fixed. Robert is late for work and asks to use Alyssa’s car.

	Aggressive	Non-Assertive	Proactive
Alyssa’s communication style and behavior could be:	(Very loudly) “ I don’t give a dam how you get to work! You still owe me for the damages from the last time you drove my car!”	(Very quietly) “Well (pause), umm, I guess you can use my car. “	“Robert, the last time I let you borrow my car you had an accident and you still owe me for repairs. I am not loaning you my car until you take responsibility and pay me the money you owe me.

**How Do I Handle This?****Situation A: Credit Card Debt**

You and your partner have been together for two years. During this time, your credit has been good and his less than perfect. During your relationship, you have seen “Financial Notices” regarding several bills lying around his house. It’s the holidays and he wants to buy presents for your families. He asks you to add him as a user on your credit card account. He promises to pay you back for any expenses, but his track record with bill paying is inconsistent. You love him, but you do not want your credit rating affected by his irresponsible behavior. What would you say?

**Situation B: Creative Nail Salon**

You are in town and decide to get acrylic nails at the local salon. You hear that the nail salon is clean, has reasonable prices, and no appointment is necessary. After your nails are finished, you notice the acrylic is way too thick and the French manicure has too much white on the tips. You are less than happy with the services. The nail technician says you owe her \$30. What do you say?

**Situation C: My Son’s Dad**

You and your son’s father, Adriel, have been together off and on for the past 10 years and your son is five. Lately, your relationship has been more on than off. You know he has three other children from two other women and still has a cordial “relationship” with them. One Friday, Adriel and you go to the movies and afterwards he wants to have sex. It has been two years since your last encounter and you are afraid that if you do not have sex, he will stop coming around. What do you do?

## NA SISTER Proactive Communication Model

<b>S</b>	I need to think about my <b>SELF</b> first. What do I value? <b>Being a Proud Native American Woman</b>
<b>I</b>	I need to use the <b>INFORMATION</b> I have about sex and STIs, including HIV/AIDS. What is safe for me to do? <b>HIV/AIDS Education</b>
<b>S</b>	I need to think about the <b>SITUATION</b> I am in. What trouble does it put me in?
<b>T</b>	I need to state the <b>TROUBLE</b> to my partner. What are my options? What are the consequences? <b>Sexual Communication</b>
<b>E</b>	I need to have an <b>EQUAL</b> voice and tell my partner in a proactive manner what I would like to do. <b>Sexual Negotiation</b>
<b>R</b>	I need to <b>RETHINK</b> situation and suggest an alternative. Can I live with the consequences of the alternative? <b>Sexual Negotiation</b>

**Situation: See You at the Casino**

You and your girls go to the local casino nightclub every Friday night. You have noticed one particular guy, named James, several times and have asked about him. There are rumors in the community that he goes to the casino to hook up with the young women. However, you still think he is attractive and would like to date him. A friend introduces the two of you and you eventually go on a date. After dinner and a few drinks, you end up back at James house. Although this is your first date, he is ready to have sex with you. What do you do?

### What Had Happened Was...

#### Part One:

Use handout 4E The NA SISTER Proactive Communication Model to complete this exercise.

Think about a time when you got into trouble. This may have been a time when friends pressured you into doing something you didn't want to do. A friend may have pressured you into smoking marijuana, drinking alcohol, having sex, or shoplifting at a store.

If you can't remember something that might have happened to you, then think about something that might have happened to a friend or relative.

In the spaces below, describe what happened and answer the questions.

Remember to use "I" statements.

DO NOT write your name on this worksheet.

1. Where were you? Who was there? What was said?
2. What was the trouble the situation put you in?
3. What did you do to try to get out of the situation? What seemed to work? What didn't work?
4. Looking back on the situation, what questions should you have been asked at the beginning to foresee trouble was coming?
5. Do you feel you were aggressive, non-assertive, or proactive? Why?
6. Were you able to suggest any alternatives to the situation? If so, what did you suggest? How did you feel about the consequences of these alternatives?

#### Part Two:

Have a conversation with your partner, a friend, or a relative about safer sex. During this conversation, you should try to use the proactive communication style.