

# ASSERTIVENESS STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH CONFLICT

## THE FIRR TECHNIQUE

1. Facts—State the behavior at issue
2. Impact—Explain why the behavior doesn't work
3. Respect—Offer logical reasons for change
4. Request—Specify the target behavior you desire

## THE USA STRATEGY

1. Understand—Convey empathy towards the other
2. Situation—Explain your own situation
3. Alternative—Suggest other options or ask “what do you suggest?”

## THE LANGUAGE FORMULA

I feel (state your feeling) when you (describe specific behavior)  
because (describe specific effect or consequence to you). I'd prefer (offer compromise).

- Use “I” statements as much as possible.
- Avoid using the words “always” and “never.”
- Be as specific as possible when describing behaviors.

## SAYING “NO”

- State “no” directly.
- Be brief.
- Avoid making excuses and/or apologizing.
- Offer an alternative if appropriate.

## GRACEFUL EXIT LINES

- Can I get back to you on that?
- I'd like to check on a few things before I answer that.
- Replace “and” with “but”:  
I have to leave for class now, *but* I want to talk to you about this again soon.

## OTHER ASSERTIVENESS SKILLS

- Practice what you want to say ahead of time.
- Choose an appropriate time to talk, but don't wait for the “perfect” time.
- Make eye contact with the person.
- Sit or stand directly facing the person.
- Speak clearly with even volume.
- Match your facial expression to what you are saying (i.e., don't express anger while smiling).