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Assertiveness Clinical Practice Workbook

A clinically branded, function-preserving edition retaining the original exercises, psychoeducation, checklists, logs, planning tools, and response space.

DSM-5-TR · ICD-11 CLINICAL ALIGNMENT

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How to use this workbook

- Use this workbook selectively and collaboratively; it is educational and does not replace individualized assessment, diagnosis, treatment, medical care, or crisis services.
- Skip, pause, or modify any activity that increases distress, danger, shame, or loss of functioning. Adapt language for culture, disability, neurodivergence, health, resources, and lived context.
- Ratings in this workbook are reflection tools unless a named, validated measure and interpretation are explicitly provided.

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What Is Assertiveness?

There are four styles of communication: the *passive* style, the *aggressive* style, the *passive-aggressive* style, and the *assertive* style.

The assertive style is the most effective of the four.

Assertiveness is a communication skill that allows for an open and honest exchange in which each person's wishes and desires are respected.

To be assertive means being able to stand up for your own or other people's rights in a respectful and positive way.

Note: these styles are communication types and not types of people. You may find yourself using different communication styles depending on the situation you're dealing with.

What Assertiveness Is

- Assertiveness is an honest and open exchange in which everyone's wishes and desires are respected.
- Assertiveness involves recognizing that you are in charge of your own behavior and that you decide what you will and will not do.
- Assertiveness involves recognizing that each person is in charge of their own behavior and does not attempt to take that control from them.
- Assertiveness involves respecting other people's feelings and opinions without necessarily adopting their opinions or doing what they're expecting or demanding.
- Assertiveness allows you to express your preferences for the behavior of others. You may request that they do a favor for you or speak in a kinder way. But you also acknowledge that it's up to them to do it or not.

What Assertiveness Is Not

- Assertiveness is not a strategy for getting your own way or force others to take on your views or preferences or to do your bidding.
- Assertiveness is not a middle ground between passivity and aggressiveness. That is, you don't have to worry that you may "overshoot" when you try to become more assertive.

Passive Communication Style

The passive style is characterized by fear of rejection and feelings of helplessness.

Identify how often you use passive communication style by rating each statement on a scale from 0 to 5 (with 0 being 'never' and 5 being 'always')

Passive style	Rate
You tend to give in to unreasonable demands from others.	
You tend avoid criticizing or giving negative feedback.	
You tend to avoid doing or saying anything that might attract disapproval or conflict.	
You tend exhibit poor eye contact, use a soft voice, or speak apologetically.	
Score	/20

Passive Style Impact

If you scored high on passive style test, describe how this communication style has impacted your life. Read through the following common negative consequences and check off the ones you relate to or add ones of your own:

- ☐ You often feel anxious because life seems out of your control
- ☐ You often feel depressed because you feel stuck and helpless
- ☐ You often feel resentful because your needs are not being met
- ☐ You often feel numb because you ignore your own feelings

- ☐ Issues and problems often exacerbate because they're not addressed
- ☐ Many people in your life are manipulators and "users"
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Passive Style Negative Beliefs

If you scored high on passive style test, read through the following common negative beliefs and check off the ones you relate to or add ones of your own:

- ☐ "I'm weak and unable to stand up for my rights or take care of myself."
- ☐ "Other people's needs are more important than my own needs."
- ☐ "I can't have control over my life."
- ☐ "My role in life is to be the caretaker."
- ☐ "I can't handle rejection. I should absolutely avoid it."
- ☐ "I have to do everything I am asked to do."
- ☐ "Others can't handle my assertiveness."
- ☐ "It's more important to be nice."
- ☐ "My opinion doesn't matter."
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Aggressive Communication Style

The passive style is characterized by anger and excessive need for control.

Identify how often you use aggressive communication style by rating each statement on a scale from 0 to 5 (with 0 being 'never' and 5 being 'always')

Aggressive style	Rate
You believe your behavior is the product of situations rather than the cause.	
You have a profound fear of not being in control of situations and people in your life.	
You tend to use aggression to get others to submit to you.	
You tend to use aggression to cope with feelings of helplessness or unreasonable and excessive demands.	
Score	/20

Aggressive Style Behavior

If you scored high on aggressive style test, identify different ways you tend to display aggression. Read through the following are common aggression symptoms and check off the ones you relate to or add ones of your own:

- ☐ Attacking others
- ☐ Speaking in a loud and overbearing voice
- ☐ Adopting an overbearing or intimidating posture
- ☐ Trying to dominate others
- ☐ Using humiliation to control others

- ☐ Criticizing
- ☐ Blaming
- ☐ Having low frustration tolerance
- ☐ Interrupting frequently
- ☐ Acting threateningly
- ☐ Use “you” statements
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Aggressive Style Impact

If you scored high on aggressive style test, describe how this communication style has impacted your life. Read through the following common negative consequences and check off the ones you relate to or add ones of your own:

- ☐ You became alienated from others
- ☐ You often alienate others
- ☐ You often generate fear, hatred and resentment in others
- ☐ Feelings of powerfulness are often followed by feelings of frustration and helplessness
- ☐ Getting even eventually leaves you feeling worse off than you were before
- ☐ “Blowing off steam” makes you more angry—not less—in the long run
- ☐ Feelings of justification soon fades and in its place comes guilt and shame for hurting others and not being able to deal with situations more rationally
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Aggressive Style Negative Beliefs

If you scored high on aggressive style test, read through the following common negative beliefs and check off the ones you relate to or add ones of your own:

- ☐ “I have to act this way to act if I want to have something.”
- ☐ “I can’t deal with this situation unless I intimidate the other person into silence.”
- ☐ “I’m superior and right and they’re inferior and wrong.”
- ☐ “I’m loud and bossy.”
- ☐ “I have to get my way no matter what.”
- ☐ “I’m entitled to be angry.”
- ☐ “They owe me.”
- ☐ “I own them.”
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Passive-Aggressive Communication Style

The passive-aggressive style combines elements of both the passive and the aggressive styles. People use this style to disguise their aggression and avoid taking responsibility for it.

Identify how often you use passive-aggressive communication style by rating each statement on a scale from 0 to 5 (with 0 being 'never' and 5 being 'always')

Passive-Aggressive style	Rate
You fear and avoid conflict in relationships.	
You often feel resentful but never directly express your anger.	
You tend to use indirect ways to get what you want or relieve your frustration (sarcasm, excuses, back-handed compliments, silent treatment, procrastination, etc.)	
You feel emotionally close to no one.	
Score	/20

Aggressive Style Behavior

If you scored high on passive-aggressive style test, identify different ways you tend to display this communication style. Read through the following are common aggression symptoms and check off the ones you relate to or add ones of your own:

- ☐ Undermining coworkers by bad-mouthing them to the boss.
- ☐ Routinely showing up late or breaking promises, always with an excuse in hand.
- ☐ Doing a task badly enough that someone else takes over.

- ☐ Muttering to yourself rather than confront the person or addressing the issue
- ☐ Having difficulty acknowledging your anger
- ☐ Using facial expressions that don't match how you feel - i.e., smiling when angry
- ☐ Using sarcasm
- ☐ Denying there is a problem
- ☐ Appearing cooperative while purposely doing things to disrupt
- ☐ Making back-handed compliments. "I wish I was as chill as you about all this mess."
- ☐ Giving the silent treatment
- ☐ Procrastinating or deliberately failing to do things
- ☐ Refusing to move beyond conflict while insisting the conflict is resolved
- ☐ Deliberately doing things you know irritate the other person
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Passive-Aggressive Style Impact

If you scored high on passive-aggressive style test, describe how this communication style has impacted your life. Read through the following common negative consequences and check off the ones you relate to or add ones of your own:

- ☐ Others see you as unreliable, irresponsible, or inconsiderate.
- ☐ You feel anxious because you never know when someone will see through your passivity and confront you.

- ☐ Feelings of shame and guilt from constantly letting others down.
- ☐ Repressed feelings of anger and resentment.
- ☐ Unresolved problems.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Passive-Aggressive Style Negative Beliefs

If you scored high on passive-aggressive style test, read through the following common negative beliefs and check off the ones you relate to or add ones of your own:

- ☐ “If I behave helplessly enough, someone will come and help me.”
- ☐ “I’m weak and resentful, so I sabotage and disrupt.”
- ☐ “I’m powerless to deal with you head on so I must use indirect ways.”
- ☐ “I can’t handle conflict.”
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Assertive Communication Style

People with assertive communication style are strong advocates for their rights and needs while being very respectful of the rights of others.

Identify how often you use assertive communication style by rating each statement on a scale from 0 to 5 (with 0 being 'never' and 5 being 'always')

Assertive style	Rate
You tend to state your needs and wants clearly, appropriately, and respectfully.	
You usually feel competent and in control of yourself in relationships.	
You tend to speak in a calm and clear tone of voice and maintain a relaxed body posture.	
You stand up for your rights while respecting other people's feelings and opinions.	
Score	/20

The following is a list of positive beliefs assertive people tend to share. Read through the list and check off the beliefs you relate to:

- ☐ "I am confident about who I am."
- ☐ "I am responsible for getting my needs met in a respectful manner."
- ☐ "I'm responsible for my own happiness."
- ☐ "I can't control others but I can control myself."

- ☐ “I value myself and place a high priority on having my rights respected.”
- ☐ “I respect the rights of others.”
- ☐ “I realize I have choices in my life.”

Reflect on your answers. Which communication style do you tend to use more than the others? What areas do you need to work more on to attain assertiveness?

List a situation in your life you want to handle more assertively.

List people in your life that you find it hardest to be assertive with are:

Barriers to Being Assertive

The following are common barriers to assertiveness. Place a checkmark beside any that apply to you and add ones of your own:

- ☐ You are overly focused on other people's needs and are unaware of your own.
- ☐ You were raised to be nice.
- ☐ You feel responsible for other people's happiness
- ☐ You attach your worth to your relationship. Without it you are nothing.
- ☐ You are the junior employee or the intern
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

What is your biggest fear of being assertive? The following are common fears around assertiveness. Place a checkmark beside any that apply to you and add ones of your own:

- ☐ Fear of being disapproved of
- ☐ Fear of conflict
- ☐ Fear of abandonment
- ☐ Fear of coming off as selfish or inconsiderate
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Challenge Negative Beliefs

Review the negative beliefs you identified earlier related to your dominant communication style. Which one has the biggest effect on you?

What could you say to yourself to counter your negative beliefs? The following are some ideas:

- ☐ Being unassertive has hurt me and other people. Assertiveness will help my relationships become healthier.
- ☐ I will feel less resentful and more in control if I practice assertiveness.
- ☐ If I don't speak up for myself, no one would.
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

If you can't think of things to say to counter your negative beliefs, think about what you would say to a dear friend in the same situation, having the same beliefs. Say it to yourself!

Managing Stress

Stress can cause certain emotions to intensify and decrease creative thinking. When you don't feel in control of a situation, you're more likely to experience fear and act passively, aggressively, or in a passive-aggressive way.

Take a moment to think about a recent incident in which you felt yourself becoming stressed.

Can you remember wanting to escape the situation or attack the other person?

Stress doesn't just result from overly negative appraisals.

Think about your appraisal. What did it mean to you that this incident occurred? What did it tell you about yourself, the other person, the world, the past, the future?

Are you 100 percent certain that the incident really means what you believed it meant? Are there other possible explanations? What are they?

The following are some questions you can ask yourself to challenge and alter appraisals:

- Am I in danger?
- What's the worst thing that can happen? How can I cope with that?
- Overall, is there another way to look at this situation?
- How might someone else think about this situation?
- What might I say to someone else who is in this same situation?

If your stress response is too active, using a relaxation technique can help you think clearly.

Distance yourself from the triggering situation physically or mentally.

List down a few things you can do to help you take a step back from the triggering event. The following are some examples. Check off the ones you think can be helpful for you and add ones of your own:

- ☐ Going for a walk
- ☐ Thinking about something else
- ☐ Taking a few calming, deep breaths
- ☐ Engaging in an unrelated task
- ☐ Meditating
- ☐ Doing push-ups
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Check-in With Yourself

Become aware of your own feelings, thoughts, and needs by regularly checking in with yourself.

Questions like the following can help:

- “What am I reacting to here?”
- “What feelings am I experiencing in this moment?”
- “What is the need behind my urges here?”
- “What is the intention behind what I want to say now?”

To practice, take a few seconds to focus on your breath and answer the following questions:

1. What emotion are you experiencing right now? agitated, tranquil, bored, anxious, down,...?

Note: use the list of feelings at the end of these worksheets

2. Where do you feel it in your body? Are you holding tension in your face, shoulders,...?

Note: use the list of bodily sensations at the end of these worksheets

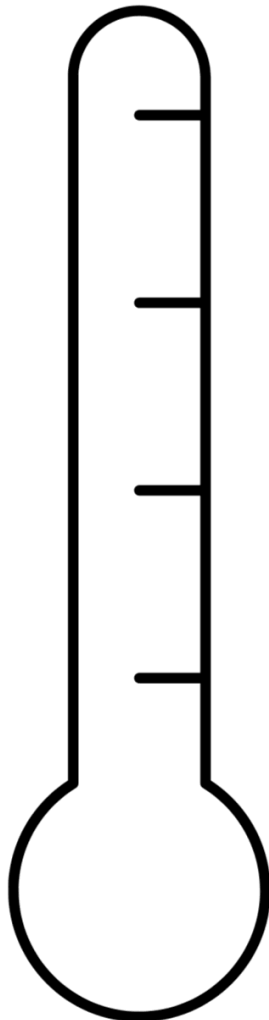
3. What thoughts are you experiencing right now?

4. What do you need right now?

Feelings Thermometer

Feelings thermometer helps you name your feelings and take action to shift your mood.

Circle the feelings that best describe your mood, reflect on what triggered this feeling and write down action steps you can take to shift your mood:



Feeling	Trigger (Why you're feeling this way?)	What can you do about it?
Furious Angry		
Annoyed Frustrated Irritable		
Anxious Afraid Guilty		
Inadequate Helpless Lost Vulnerable		
Sad Hurt Lonely Negative		
Indifferent Bored Tired		
Happy Calm Content Loving		

Using I-Statements

I-statements are an evidence-based tool that helps deescalate arguments.

They help us assertively communicate how we see things and shift quickly to an action request.

To formulate an I-statement, answer the following questions:

1. What is the problem behavior?

2. How did I feel when it happened? Why?

3. What would I like the person to do instead next time?

4. Using assertiveness formula, what would be an assertive way to communicate the problem to the other person?

Assertiveness formula:

(1) here's what happened, (2) here's how I feel about it, (3) here's why I feel that way, so (4) here's what I want.

Ask For What You Want and Need

1. Write about a time you wanted something but ask for it. What held you back from asking for it? Following are some common beliefs that often prevent people from asking for what they want. Check off the ones you relate to:

- ☐ "I don't want to inconvenience others."
- ☐ "If I ask, I might be seen as selfish or demanding."
- ☐ "They should already know what I want without me having to say it."
- ☐ "I'm afraid of rejection or being told 'no.'"
- ☐ "Asking for what I want makes me vulnerable and exposed."
- ☐ "Others' needs are more important than mine."
- ☐ "I don't deserve to have what I want."
- ☐ "I don't want to appear weak or needy."
- ☐ "Expressing my wants will create conflict or tension."
- ☐ "I should be able to figure things out on my own."
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

2. Challenge your beliefs by answering the following questions:

- Is it truly an inconvenience to others when I express my needs and desires?

- Do people really have the ability to mind-read and know what I want without me expressing it?

- What is the worst that can happen if I ask and someone says 'no'?

- Why should others' needs always take priority over mine?

- Is avoiding conflict or tension worth sacrificing my own happiness and fulfillment?

- What would I tell a friend with the same belief as mine?

Saying No

Many people, especially with passive style, find it difficult to say no and turn down requests from others. Even if it's inconvenient.

When do you get unreasonable or inconvenient requests the most? At work? In a romantic relationship? From friends?

2. Do they actually make a request or do they simply assume that you'll do things without their asking? Do they hint?

3. What kinds of things do they ask for?

4. How can you respond next time they make an inconvenient request?

Make sure you say no directly and don't apologize or make excuses when it's not necessary. Don't say, "I'm not sure.." or, "I really should but.." Instead, try saying, "No. I can't do that."

Choose A Role Model

Having a role model can make practicing assertiveness easier.

Whenever you find yourself unsure how you should respond, ask yourself, “How would [insert name] react in this situation?”

The goal here is not to become just like them, but to have resources and ideas of what you can do when you feel stuck.

1. Name someone you think they have an assertive communication style:

2. Think about a situation you need to handle more assertively.

3. How would your role model react in this situation?

Behavior Record

Use this template to record your behavior in challenging interactions:

Date: _____	Place: _____
Situation/person:	

Your response:	

Was your response assertive? Passive? Aggressive? Or passive-aggressive?	

Consequences:	

How did you feel afterward?	

What would a healthier, alternative response be?	

Relationship Boundaries Worksheet

Boundaries help you define what you are comfortable with and how you would like to be treated by others.

Type of boundary	Acceptable	Not acceptable
Physical boundaries		
Emotional boundaries		
Sexual boundaries		
Financial boundaries		
Spiritual boundaries		

Facing Disapproval

While assertiveness is meant to improve relationships, people around you may resist your efforts to become more assertive, especially if your usual style has been passive.

Name people in your life who might resist your change. What style of communication are they used to you using? How can you come up with a safe way of letting them know that you're changing your communication style?

Person: _____

Style of communication they expect: _____

What could you say?

How can you handle it if they weren't supportive?

Person: _____

Style of communication they expect: _____

What could you say?

How can you handle it if they weren't supportive?

Consider Your Personal Safety

Assertiveness may not be safe to use in every relationships. This is especially the case if you're in an abusive relationship.

Are there situations in your own life in which being assertive could lead to violence?

Note: Call 911 if you are threatened with physical violence. A restraining order may be possible. Always get legal advice.

List of Bodily Sensations

How Emotions Show Up In Our Bodies

Achy muscles	Numbness
Being easily startled	Pain
Blushing	Pounding heart
Chest pain	Pressure
Chills	Rapid breathing
Choking feeling	Rashes
Churning stomach	Ringing in your ears
Cold	Shakiness
Cramps	Shortness of breath
Decreased or increased appetite	Soreness
Digestion difficulties	Stomach “butterflies”
Discomfort	Stomach pain
Dizziness	Strange taste in your mouth
Faint	Sweating
Fatigue	Tears
Feeling detached	Tense muscles
Fogginess	Throat tightness
Headache	Tingling
Heat sensations	Trembling
Heaviness	Unsteady
Lightheadedness	Weakness
Nausea	

Feeling Word List

AFFECTIONATE
Attached - Attracted - Benevolent - Caring - Communicative - Connected - Considerate - Cuddly - Dedicated - Devoted - Empathetic - Friendly - Generous - Gracious - In tune - Loving - Loyal - Nurturing - Openhearted - Passionate - Responsible - Selfless - Sensitive - Sympathetic - Tender - Warm
ALERT
Centered – Clearheaded – Mindful - Steady
AWED
Amazed – Astonished – Bedazzled – Enchanted – Enthralled – Entranced – Inspired – Spellbound - Wonder
CONFIDENT
Able – Accomplished – Assertive – Assured – Authoritative – Brave – Capable – Certain – Clear – Competent – Courageous – Dynamic – Empowered – Expectant – Ethical – Feisty – Free – Graceful – Hardy - Hopeful – In control – Influential – Moral – Nervy – Optimistic – Outspoken – Persevering – Reliable – Resolute – Revitalized – Secure - Solid – Stable – Sure – Tenacious - Unique
CONTENT
Blissful – Bouncy – Buoyant – Cheerful – Comfortable – Delighted – Delirious – Ecstatic – Elated – Exuberant – Festive – Fortunate – Giddy – Glad – Gleeful – Great – Happy - Important – Joyous – Jubilant – Lucky – Merry – Mirthful – Overjoyed – Peachy – Perky – Pleased - Satisfied – Soaring – Sparkling – Sunny – Thankful
DELIGHTED
Amused – Awake – Carefree – Colorful – Electric - Enthusiastic – Free – Frisky – Glorious – Glowing – High – Lighthearted – Optimistic – Peppy – Playful – Spirited – Spunky – Thrilled – Wonderful
ENERGETIC
Adventurous – Alive – Animated – Buoyant – Creative – Courageous – Eager – Ebullient – Fervent - Free – Fresh – Healthy – Invigorated – Liberated – Reborn – Vigorous – Vital - Zestful
INTERESTED
Absorbed – Affected – Attentive – Aware – Concerned – Curious – Engrossed – Fascinated – Imaginative – Inquisitive – Intrigued – Nosy – Rapt - Snoopy – Stimulated
PEACEFUL
At ease – Breezy – Bright – Calm – Certain – Chill – Clean – Clever –

Comfortable – Composed – Content – Decent – Deserving – Encouraged – Extraordinary – Fabulous – Pleasant – Pleased – Quiet – Reassured – Relaxed – Serene - Tranquil
THANKFUL
Appreciative – Beholden – Expansive – Grateful – Obligated – Owing - Moved - Touched
AGONY
Anguish – Bereaved – Brokenhearted – Distress – Grief – Hurt – Miserable – Misery –Mournful – Pain – Sad – Sorrow – Woe - Wretched
ANGRY
Abrasive – Abusive – Aggravated – Aggressive – Annoyed – Appalled – Bitter – Bloodthirsty – Boiling – Bristling – Bugged – Confrontive – Contemptuous – Contentious – Cranky – Cross – Dangerous – Disgruntled – Disgusted – Dismayed – Enraged – Exasperated – Fiery – Frustrated – Fuming – Furious – Galled – Hateful – Horrified – Hostile – Incensed – Inflamed – Infuriated – Insulting – Irritated – Livid – Miffed – Misanthropic – Nauseated – Offensive – Outraged – Perturbed - Pissed off – Provoked – Repulsed – Resentful – Revolted – Riled – Seething – Sore – Spiteful – Steamed – Stewing – Surly - Ticked off – Troubled – Unpleasant – Upset – Vengeful - Vicious – Wary - Worked up
ANNOYED
Aggravated – Aroused – Displeased – Exasperated – Frustrated – Impatient –Irked – Irritated – Miffed – Peeved - Vexed
AVERSION
Alienated – Animosity – Bitter – Disgusted – Dislike – Hate – Hostile – Loathing – Repugnance – Repulsed - Resentful
DISAPPOINTED
Agitated – Alarmed – Discouraged – Disgruntled – Disheartened – Dismayed – Disquiet – Dissatisfied – Disturbed – Perturbed – Rattled – Startled – Surprised – Troubled – Turbulent – Turmoil – Uncomfortable – Uneasy – Unsettled - Upset
DISCONNECTED
Abandoned – Alienated – Aloof – Apart – Apathetic – Avoided – Bypassed – Cold – Contemptuous – Deserted – Desolate – Disliked – Dispossessed – Disregarded – Distant - Estranged – Excluded – Friendless – Ignored – Indifferent – Inhibited – Nonchalant – Numb – Passive – Pity – Reluctant – Remote –Removed – Reserved – Unconcerned – Unmoved - Withdrawn
EMBARRASSED

Ashamed – Awkward – Clumsy – Deflated – Disgraced – Foolish – Guilty – Humiliated – Insecure – Mortified – Regretful – Remorseful – Shy – Silly – Sorry – Uncomfortable – Unsure Of Self
INADEQUATE
Deficient – Enfeebled – Helpless – Incapable – Incompetent – Inept – Inferior – Insecure – Insufficient – Mediocre – Meek – One-down – Pathetic – Powerless – Second rate – Spineless – Unworthy – Useless – Weak – Worthless
ENVIOUS
Desirous – Longing – Nostalgic – Pining – Wistful – Yearning
FEARFUL
Alarmed – Anxious – Apprehensive – Daunted – Doubtful – Dread – Edgy – Foreboding – Frightened – Guarded – Horror – Insecure – Jittery – Jumpy – Leery – Menaced – Mistrustful – Nervous – Overwhelmed – Quaking – Panicky – Petrified – Shaken – Scared – Spooked – Suspicious – Terrified – Threatened – Uneasy – Wary – Worried
GLOOMY
Dejected – Depressed – Despairing – Despondent – Forlorn – Hopeless – Lonely – Melancholy – Mopey – Pessimistic – Resigned
TENSE
Burdened – Burnt Out – Constricted – Cranky – Depleted – Distracted – Distraught – Encumbered – Exhausted – Fidgety – Fragile – Frazzled – Intense – Irritable – Listless – Off-Centered – Overwhelmed – Restless – Sensitive – Stressed – Stretched – Ungrounded – Vulnerable
CONFUSED
Ambivalent – Befuddled – Conflicted – Discombobulated – Dizzy – Doubtful – Dubious – Hesitant – In A Daze – Indecisive – Lost – Mystified – Perplexed – Puzzled – Tentative – Torn – Uncertain – Unclear – Unsure
TIRED
Bored – Draggy – Enervated – Fatigued – Heavy – Lethargic – Lifeless – Sleepy – Weary
HELPLESS
Alone – Controlled – Despairing – Distressed – Dominated – Empty – Fatigued – Forced – Frustrated – Futile – Hesitant – Hindered – Immobile – Impotent – Incapable – Ineffective – Inferior – Lane – Micro-managed – Overwhelmed – Paralyzed – Pathetic – Stifled – Stonewalled – Straight-jacketed – Stuck – Tragic – Useless – Vulnerable – Woeful

2026 Clinical Alignment

DSM-5-TR (including Sept. 2025 update) · ICD-11 CDDR / 2026 MMS

Classification status

- DSM-5-TR: No standalone DSM-5-TR diagnosis under the workbook title · educational/contextual topic unless a separately assessed disorder applies
- ICD-11 CDDR: No dedicated ICD-11 CDDR mental-disorder code under the workbook title · educational/contextual topic unless another coded condition is established
- This workbook is non-diagnostic. A title, checklist, or completed activity never establishes a diagnosis.

Pages requiring the updated interpretation

- The audit identified source pages 2, 4, 6, 8, 11, 12, 14, 19, 20, 23, 30. The statements below supersede incompatible diagnostic, scoring, safety, or resource wording on those pages.

Diagnostic and differential limits

- Use Assertiveness material to support assessment or intervention planning, not to assign a diagnosis. Evaluate duration, severity, clinically significant distress or impairment, developmental and cultural context, medical/substance causes, exclusions, and relevant differentials.

Document-specific corrections

- Keep Assertiveness explicitly non-diagnostic; its exercises organize experience and goals but do not establish a mental disorder or causal explanation.
- Supersede diagnostic-sounding scoring on pages [2, 6, 8, 11, 14]: disclose whether each tool is validated or author-created, remove unsupported thresholds, and separate symptom monitoring from diagnosis.
- Replace crisis wording on pages [2] with the current U.S. 988 call/text/chat pathway, 911 or nearest emergency department for immediate danger/medical emergency, and a direction to use verified local services outside the United States.

Measures, scoring, and permissions

- Pages [2, 6, 8, 11, 14] contain named, implied, or author-created screening/rating content . These scores are not diagnostic unless the exact instrument, version, validation population, administration, and interpretation are established. Identify provenance for every item set and scoring rule. Obtain publisher permission/license when required; otherwise remove cutoffs and label it as a nonvalidated reflection checklist, or replace it with a properly licensed measure without altering its wording/scoring.

Intervention scope and contraindications

- Use Assertiveness activities as psychoeducation and structured reflection, not diagnosis or a stand-alone treatment plan. Adapt or stop any exercise that worsens distress, functioning, conflict, pain, or dissociation, and escalate care according to the actual presentation.

Crisis and current resources

- For Assertiveness, use: ·If there is immediate danger or a medical emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department. In the U.S., call or text 988 or use 988lifeline.org for 24/7 crisis support. Outside the U.S., use verified local emergency and crisis services.· Verify all topic-specific agencies and links at publication.

Authoritative references

- <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm/updates-to-dsm/updates-to-dsm-5-tr-criteria-text>
- <https://www.psychiatry.org/getmedia/b68a5776-f88c-45c7-9535-fd219d7aa5cb/APA-DSM5TR-Update-September-2025.pdf>
- <https://icd.who.int/browse/2026-01/mms/en>
- <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240077263>
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/988>
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/national-behavioral-health-crisis-care>
- <https://988lifeline.org/>