

Handout A – Assertive communication

Tips for assertive communication

What you say

- speak with confidence that the young people will follow your instruction; use 'when' not 'if', for example, 'when you are all sitting down, we will...'
- a countdown can be useful, to give young people chance to follow an instruction; this could be verbal (i.e. 5 4 3 2 1) and supported by signals, or using a timer
- use the words 'thank you' to show trust that the young people will follow the instruction, for example, 'quiet please, thank you'
- stop the activity and repeat the rules or instructions if necessary; break down the instruction rather than rephrasing, which can cause further confusion
- say what you mean; avoid jokes, sarcasm or sayings, as not everyone will understand these
- using young people's names can be useful to gain and maintain attention

How you say it

- project your voice, but do not shout. Where necessary, speak firmly without shouting
- pause if someone interrupts or starts to chat
- once you've got everyone's attention, speak more quietly, so young people will have to concentrate on listening

Body language

- use open, positive and confident body language, and facial expression
- use eye contact appropriately