

THE SUSTAINING POWER OF

ADVOCACY





OUR CHALLENGE



OUR ENDURANCE

Simply, thank you.

We have the task, or calling, of doing tough work that matters – work that both energizes and drains us. The work may break our hearts while inspiring us to tackle yet another day. You are champions. Heroes. Sometimes buffers against challenging systems, sometimes someone's only soft place to land.



**NOW,
MORE
THAN
EVER**



WHY
ADVOCACY
MATTERS

Risks to Wellbeing

FOR THOSE IN ADVOCACY ROLES



Sources:

- Bromley, Harriet, et al. "The professional quality of life of domestic and sexual violence advocates: a systematic review of possible risk and protective factors." *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 25.2 (2024): 1113-1128.
- Cayir, E., Spencer, M., Billings, D., Hilfinger Messias, D. K., Robillard, A., & Cunningham, T. (2020). "The Only Way We'll Be Successful": Organizational Factors That Influence Psychosocial Well-Being and Self-Care Among Advocates Working to Address Gender-Based Violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36(23-24), 11327-11355.
- Crivatu, I. M., Horvath, M. A. H., & Massey, K. (2021). The Impacts of Working With Victims of Sexual Violence: A Rapid Evidence Assessment. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 24(1), 56-71.

Perceptions of colleague stress level

After-hours work responsibilities

Hours per week spent in meetings

Insufficient resources/office supplies

Exposure to bullying, harassment, or microaggressions during work

Insufficient onboarding and lack of continuing training

Perception of physical safety during work

Workplaces that do not prioritize staff wellbeing

Inexperienced teams



Protective Factors

Key FINDINGS

Knowledge before starting work of likely job stressors and risk of vicarious trauma

High levels of belief in the concept of a just world

Employees with high communication competence

Strong, collaborative teams

Transparency and shared power

Sense of job security

Understanding and support of family & friends

Bromley, Harriet, et al. "The professional quality of life of domestic and sexual violence advocates: a systematic review of possible risk and protective factors." Trauma, Violence, & Abuse 25.2 (2024): 1113-1128.



EMBRACE

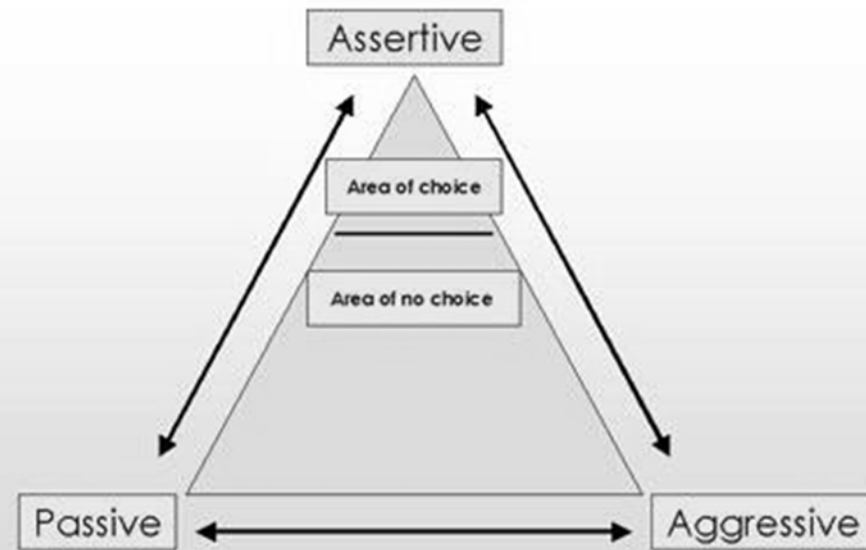
ASSERTIVENESS AS A DAILY WELL-BEING PRACTICE

To truly harness the power of assertive communication, we need to embrace assertiveness in our routine, daily lives. Cramming the night before a big meeting is not a best practice. That's not the best we can do.

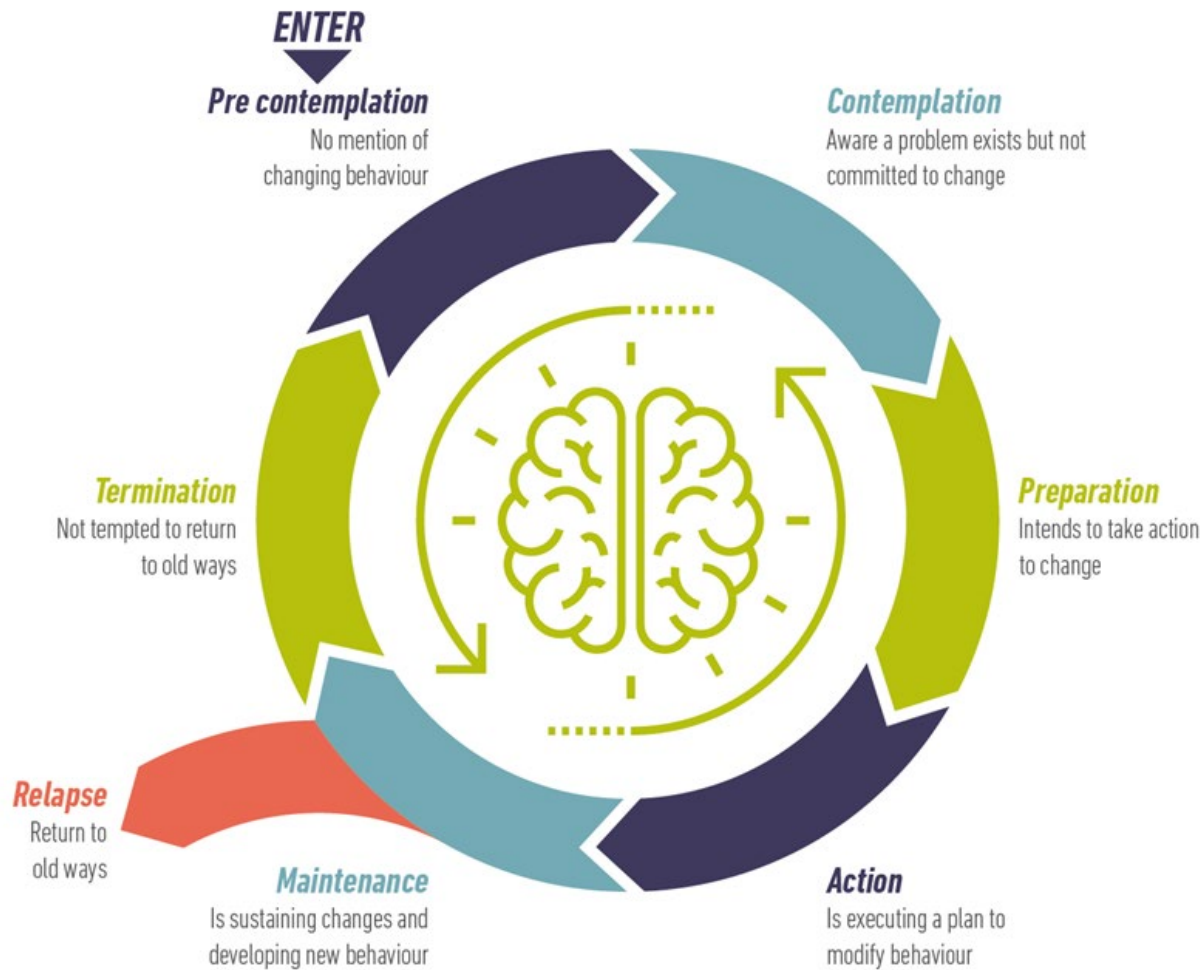
When we embrace assertiveness for daily living, we can develop and hone our advocacy muscles, for both ourselves and others, and engage in more efficient, effective, healthy communication in all of our relationships.

**THE
MODEL**

The assertiveness triangle

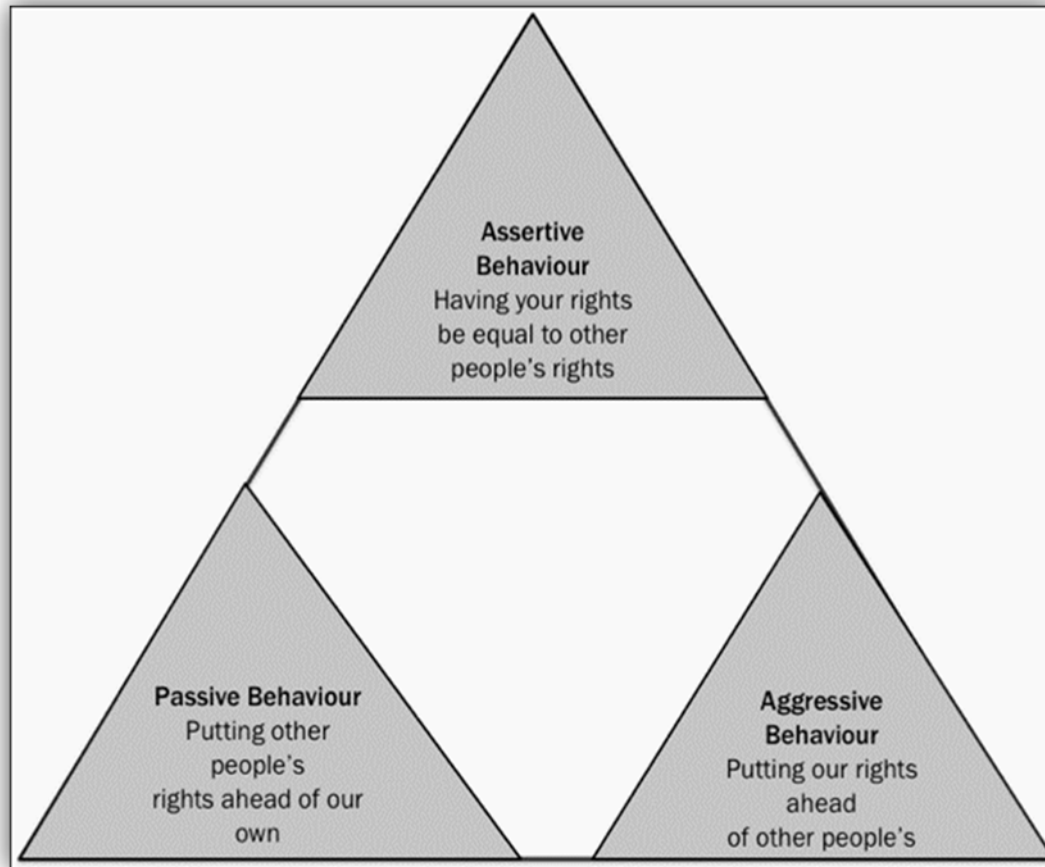


Stages of change

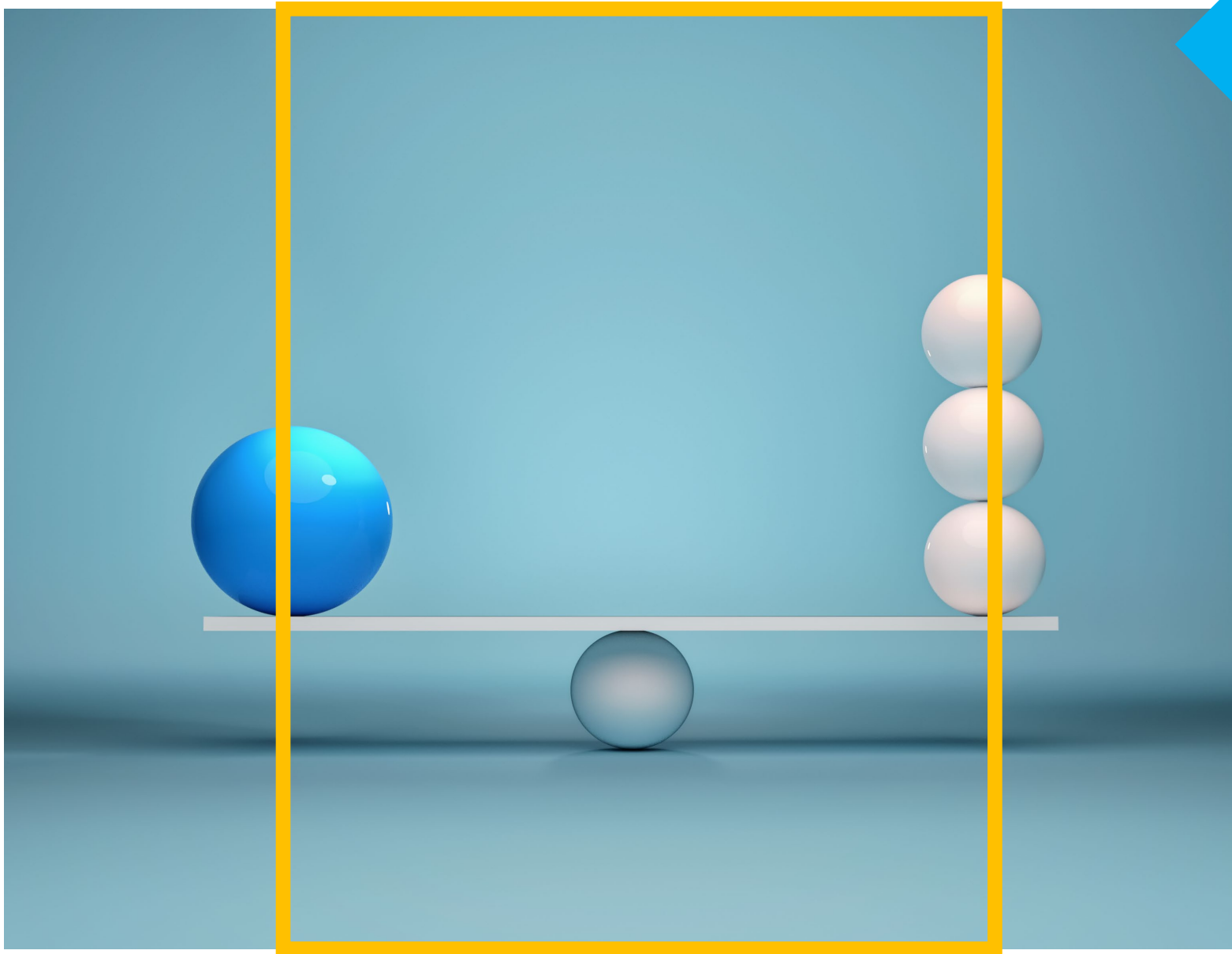


Adapted from Prochaska and DiClemente 1983

ARE YOU READY
TO ENGAGE
DIFFERENTLY?



**SOMETIMES
WE DON'T
KNOW WE'RE
DROWNING
WHILE TRYING
TO KEEP
EVERYONE ELSE
AFLOAT**



PRIORITIZE BALANCE

Choose Assertiveness Daily

Everyday won't feel balanced. Nor will every relationship. This isn't about communicating assertively in every meeting. But it is a call to aim for assertiveness more often than not. To strive for landing on assertiveness rather than passivity or aggression. To remember your own needs while advocating for others.

CONFIDENCE

BUILDING ASSERTIVENESS BUILDS YOU UP

Assertiveness training can unlock a more confident self by developing our self-awareness, enhancing communication, helping us better take in and respond to criticism, negotiate more effectively, and demonstrate better emotional regulation.

- Decrease stress
- Improve efficiency
- Strengthen decision-making skills
- Simplify conflict-resolution
- Set and maintain better boundaries
- Enjoy work (again)



STRENGTHENING OUR SPHERE OF PERSONAL CONTROL

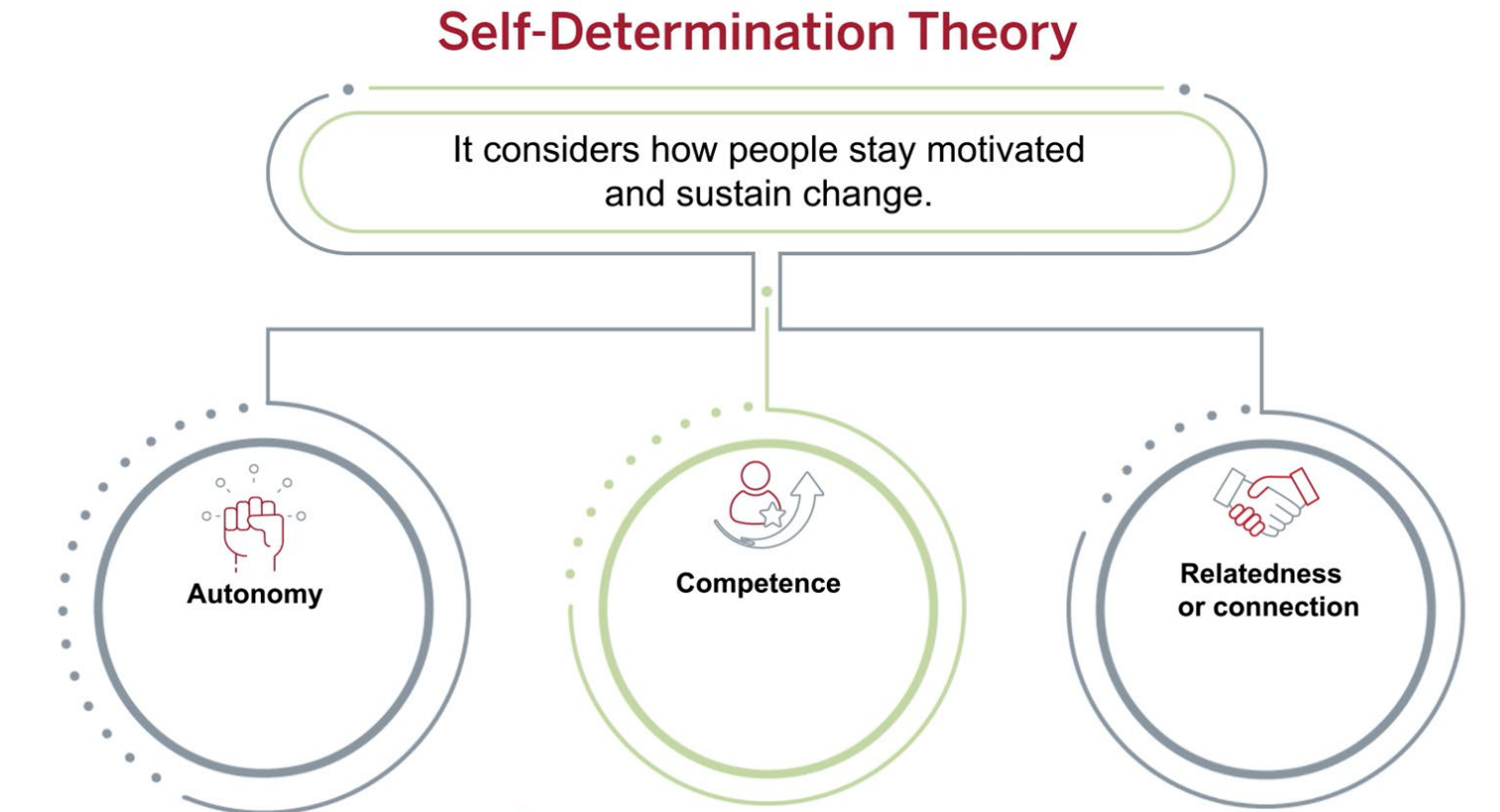
- Growing senses of competency and agency increases motivation
- Identifying “islands of competence” help replace feelings of hopeless with optimism
- This increases the likelihood of identifying possible solutions to problems
- Drives self and others toward a strengths-based resilience framework

SELF- DETERMINATION THEORY

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a motivation theory of behavior change that emphasizes the key role of choice for sustaining motivation.

Autonomous motivation, internal motivation stemming from a person's values and/or enjoyment, is shown to lead to stronger health outcomes and longer-lasting behavior changes.

Conversely, motivation driven by external pressures is shown to be less effective in the long run.

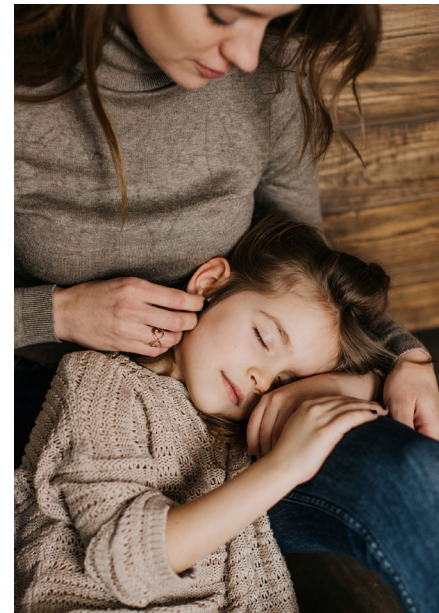


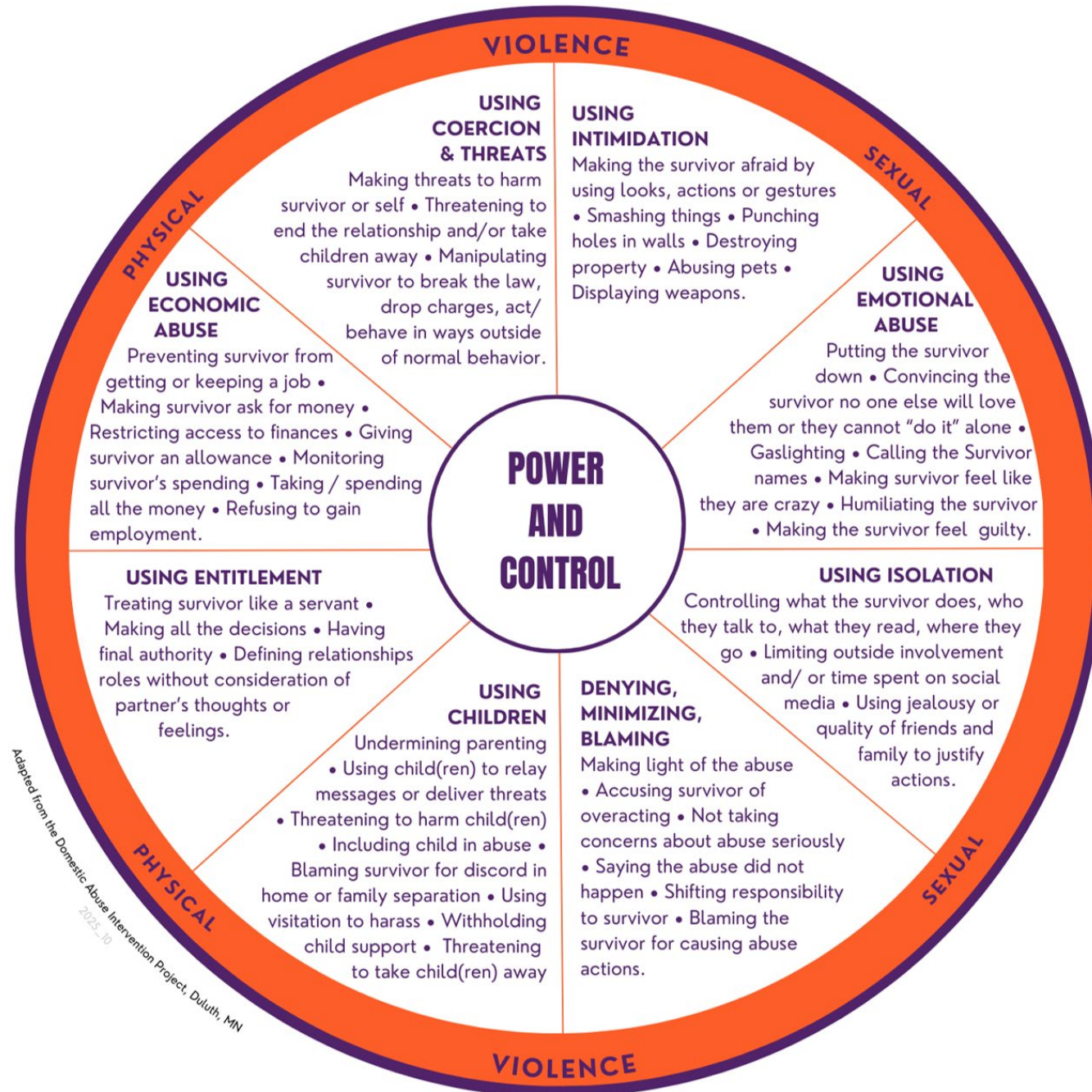
Ryan, Richard M., and Edward L. Deci. "Overview of self-determination theory: An organismic dialectical perspective." *Handbook of self-determination research* 2.3-33 (2002): 36.



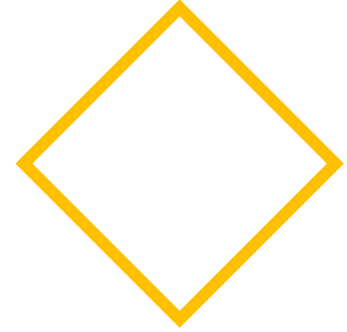
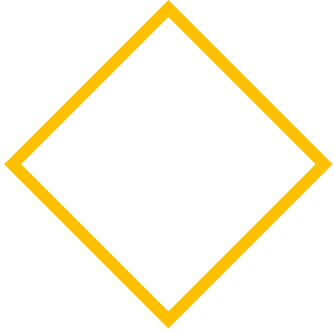
Assertive communication, because it is direct, clear, and fair, enhances our work. We listen, we engage in trauma-informed ways, we advocate.

PRIORITIZE
SAFETY





Adapted from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, MN
2023_10





CHOICES

What can be done?

Aspects of identity, role variation, and power differentials in our relationships mean we cannot all engage the same way, in similar situations and expect the same results.



**Passivity
(Do Not Engage)**



**Engage
Passive-Aggressively**



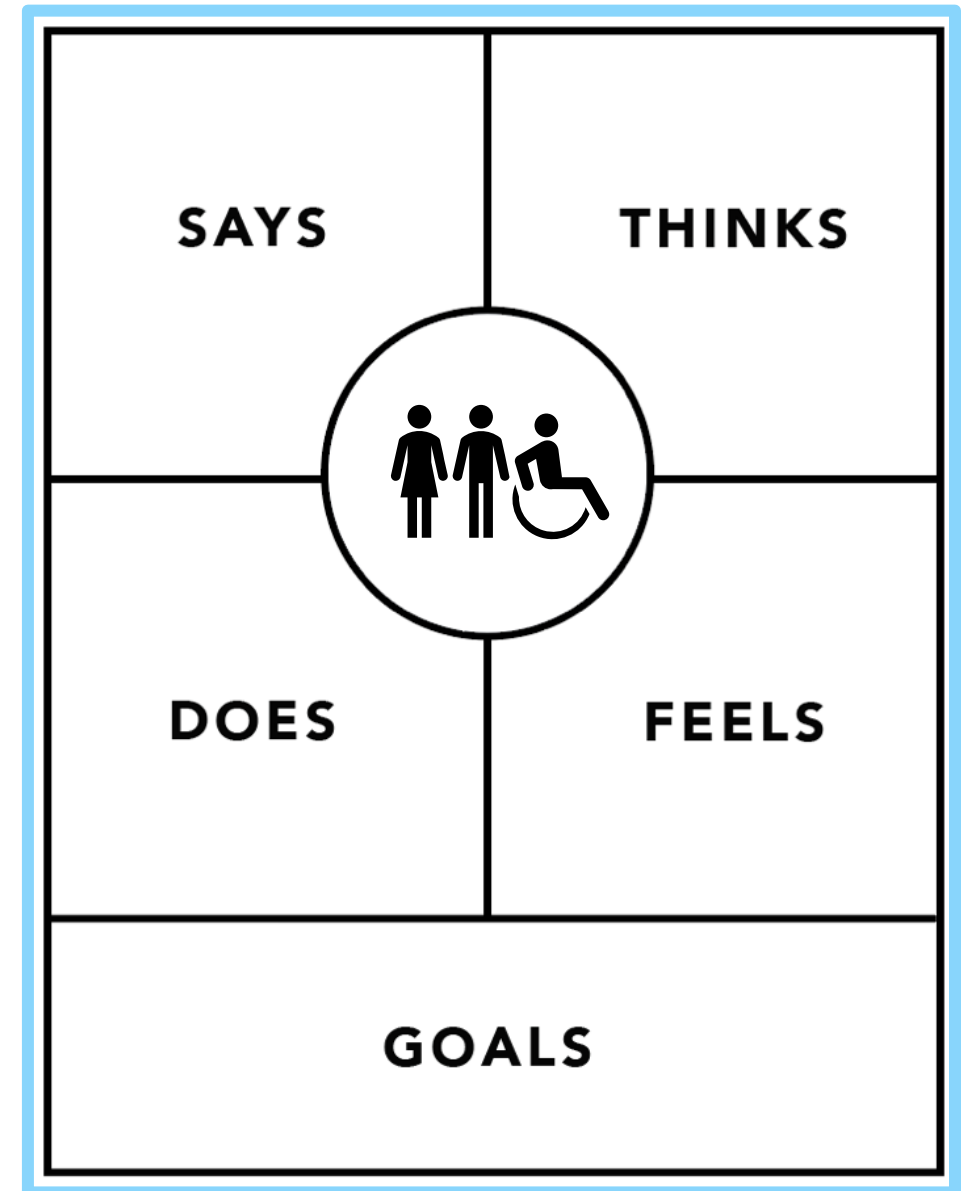
**Engage
Assertively**

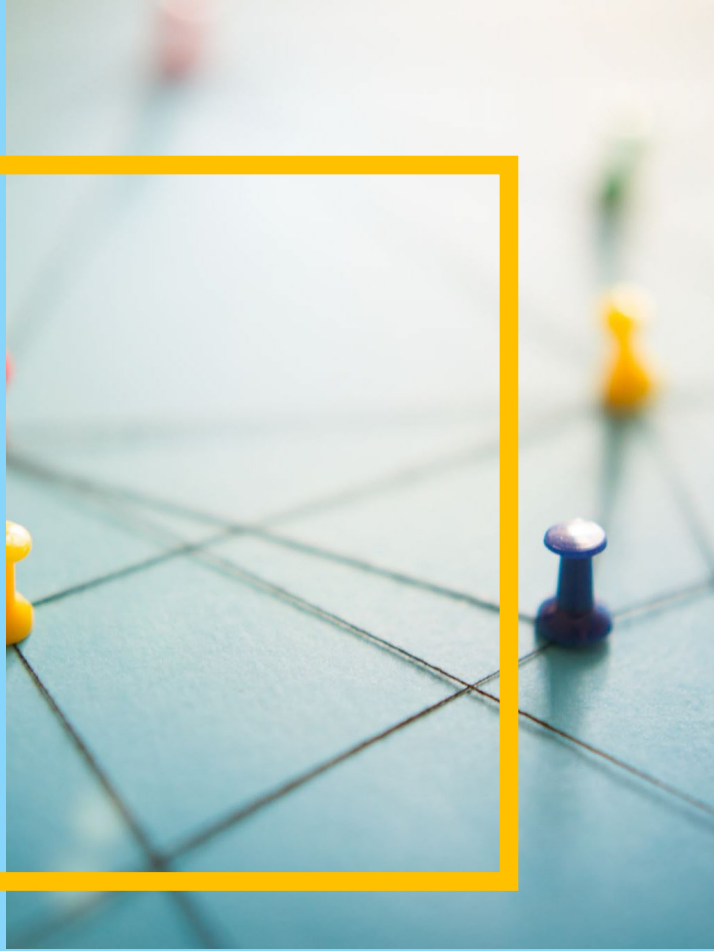
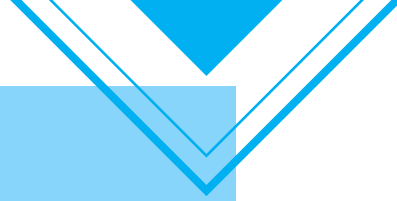


**Engage
Aggressively**

Effective Assertive Communication

An **empathy map** is a collaborative visualization used to articulate what we know about a person. It externalizes knowledge about others in order to 1) create a shared understanding of the needs of those involved, and 2) aid in our decision making.



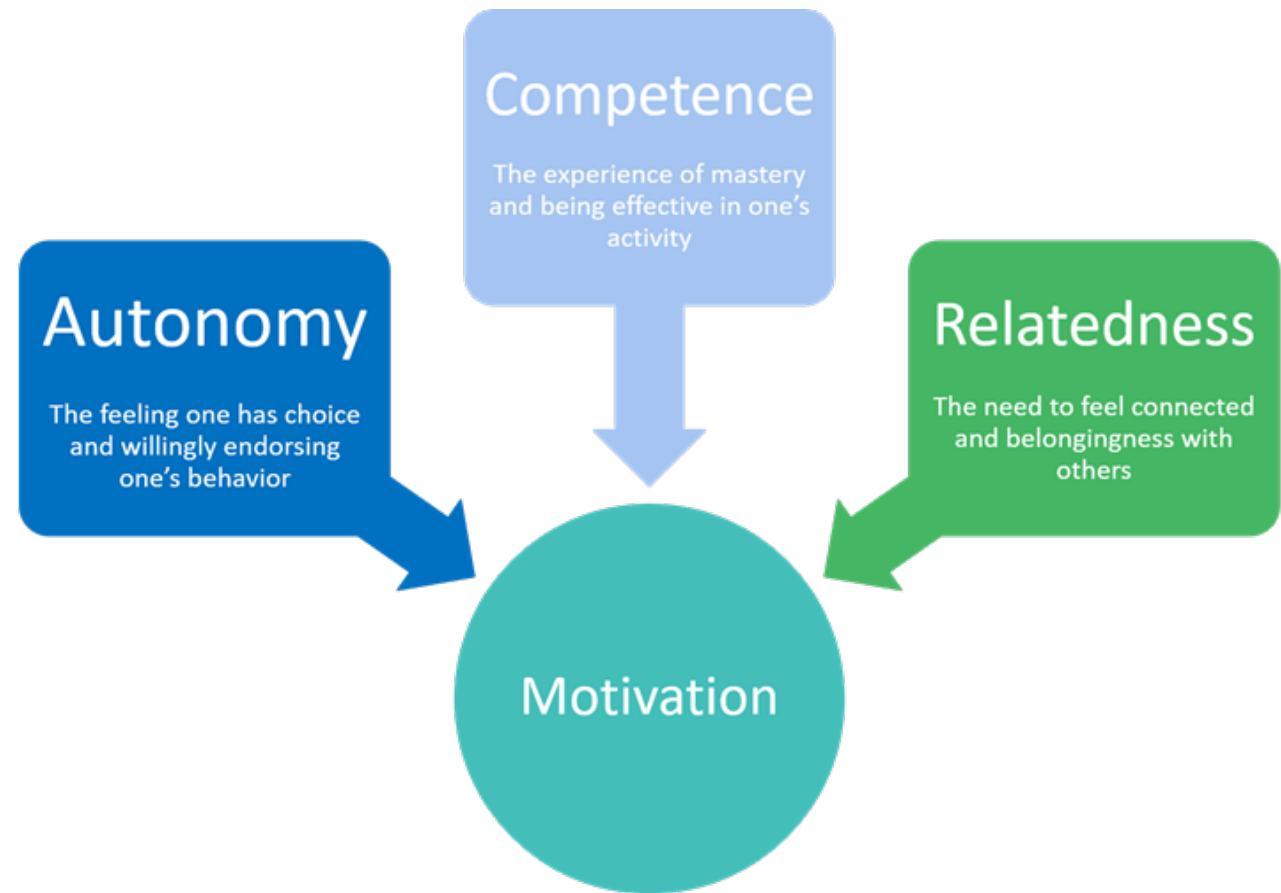


STRATEGIC ASSERTIVENESS

ADVOCATING FOR OTHERS & OURSELVES

The more we know, the more we plan, the more we can strategize. Often, we focus on our own insecurities and doing the most to prepare ourselves to project confidence and persuasion, when we need to do at least just as much thinking about who it is we are trying to persuade.

HOW OUR ADVOCACY SUSTAINS US

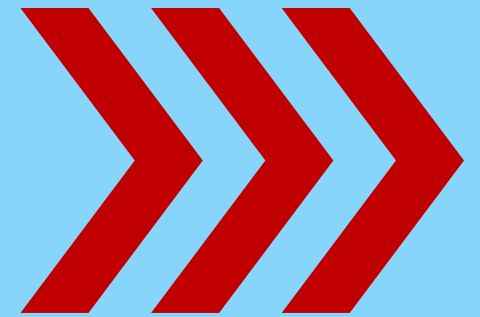


Ntoumanis N, Ng JYY, Prestwich A, Quested E, Hancox JE, Thøgersen-Ntoumani C, Deci EL, Ryan RM, Lonsdale C, Williams GC. A meta-analysis of self-determination theory-informed intervention studies in the health domain: effects on motivation, health behavior, physical, and psychological health. *Health Psychol Rev.* 2021 Jun;15(2):214-244.

*It is naive to think that self-assertiveness is easy.
To live self-assertively, which means to live
authentically, is an act of high **courage**.*

*That is why so many people spend the better part
of their lives in hiding from others and also from
themselves.*

– Nathaniel Branden



THANK YOU

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