

# Somerset Youth and Community Service

## Assertiveness – ask, don't assume



**Aim:** To encourage young people to ask questions rather than assume the worst!

**Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of the session the participants will:

- Have understood the danger of making assumptions
- Have practised phrasing and asking questions for clarity

**Group size:** 6 – 8 young people

**Time:** 45 mins to an hours

**Venue:** small group room or quiet corner

**Materials:**

- Flipchart paper and marker pens (optional)

Time	What	With
5 mins	Tell the group about the session and what you're going to be doing.	
10 mins	<p>Explain that some people make assumptions about things and this can cause difficulties in relationships. People make assumptions because they don't know how to ask questions without offending people, because they're shy or because they generally believe the worst. Sometimes they just don't know they should ask the question! So, we're going to practise.</p> <p>Say to the group – 'what would you think if your friends were due to meet you at 6pm but didn't turn up until 7pm?' Assumptions might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They couldn't get a lift on time</li> <li>• They were in an accident</li> <li>• They stood me up</li> <li>• They didn't care that they were keeping me waiting</li> </ul> <p>Some of these assumptions can cause bad feeling and arguments.</p> <p>Ask the group – 'So, what sort of question would you ask them when you saw them?' A good question would be 'Why were you late?' but young people may be more aggressive about and say 'where the hell were you?' etc. Explain that this just makes thing worse. This bit may need more practise.</p> <p>Ask the group what the response to 'why were you late?' might be? This could include things like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The car got a puncture</li> <li>• We got lost</li> <li>• We said 7pm, not 6pm!</li> </ul> <p>Point out how this makes dealing with the lateness easier.</p>	



Time	What	With
	Go over the process of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Acknowledge what the assumptions are</li> <li>2. Come up with an assertive question</li> <li>3. Listen to the responses</li> </ol> This can then be repeated if there's further information needed.	
20 mins	Go through the process again with the group, using the following scenarios: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You don't get invited to a party</li> <li>• Your mum won't lend you some money</li> <li>• Your sister breaks your iPod</li> <li>• You're stopped by the police</li> <li>• Someone tells you someone else had said something nasty about you</li> </ul> It will help to have a flipchart to record the scenarios, assumptions, assertive questions and given reasons.	
10 mins	After this, when the group is used to it, split them into pairs and do role plays. The 'audience' can help with suggestions. More scenarios for this could be (feel free to come up with your own): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You come home and your brother has left the washing up for you, when it's his job to do it</li> <li>• Your parents won't let you go to a gig</li> <li>• You see a friend wearing a T-shirt that you've lost</li> <li>• A friend doesn't give a birthday card and always has in the past</li> </ul>	
5 mins	Ask the group if they thought the session was useful and whether or not they'll do anything differently now. Remind them of the process and thank them for joining in.	