

QUICK THERAPY SOLUTIONS PROVIDED BY COUNSELLING IN FRANCE

ASSERTIVENESS BECOMING ASSERTIVE

The package comprises:

1. Worksheet 1 – Understanding how you relate to others
2. Worksheet 2 – Analysing control anxiety
3. Worksheet 3 – Grounding techniques
4. Worksheet 4 - Homework
5. Relaxation and visualisation exercises

Please continue with the worksheets that you have printed from the package. These are designed to be completed at your own pace and, ideally, never more than one a day. The reason for this is that the worksheets are designed to help you process what is going on for you and you need time to think and work on the issues that the worksheets may bring up for you. Everyone is different and it is up to you what pace you set yourself. The control is always yours.

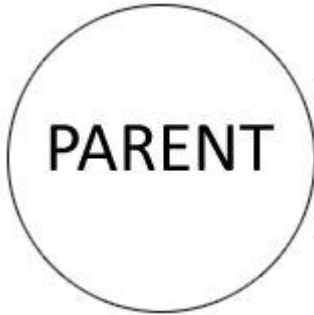
BECOMING ASSERTIVE

Worksheet 1

Helping you to understand how you may be relating to others

Below is an explanation of the PAC model which was interpreted by Eric Berne in the 1950s. He said that verbal communication, particularly face to face, is at the centre of human social relationships and psychoanalysis. Transactional Analysis became the method of examining the transaction wherein: 'I do something to you, and you do something back'.

Eric Berne said that each person is made up of three alter ego states and that we relate to each other from the position of one of these states, Parent, Adult or Child or a mixture of all three.



Parent is the ingrained voice of authority, the absorbed conditioning, learning and attitudes from when we were young. We were conditioned by our real parents, teachers, older people, next door neighbours, aunts and uncles, Father Christmas and Jack Frost. Our Parent is made up of a huge number of hidden and overt recorded playbacks. Typically embodied by phrases and attitudes starting with 'how to', 'under no circumstances', 'always' and 'never forget', 'don't lie, cheat, steal', etc, etc. Our parent is formed by external events and influences upon us as we grow through early childhood. We can change it, but this is easier said than done.



Adult remains as a single entity which can draw on the resources of both Parent and Child. The adult in us begins to form at around ten months old, and is the means by which we keep our Parent and Child under control. If we are to change our Parent or Child we must do so through our adult.



Child represents our internal reaction and feelings to external events. This is the seeing, hearing, feeling, and emotional body of data within each of us. When anger or despair dominates reason, the Child is in control. Like our Parent we can change it, but it is no easier.

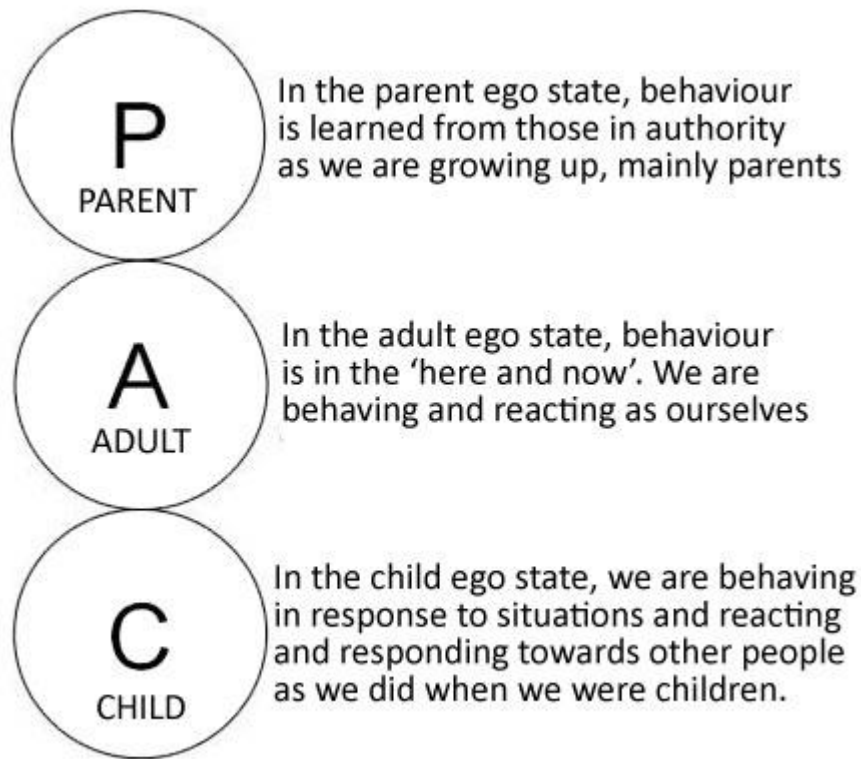
In other words:

Parent is our 'Taught' concept of life
Adult is our 'Thought' concept of life
Child is our 'Felt' concept of life

When we communicate we are doing so from one of our own alter ego states, our Parent, Adult or Child. Our feelings at the time determine which one we use, and at any time something can trigger a shift from one state to another.

If we can identify which ego state we are using, it may help to change the way we relate to others and the way that they may relate back to us.

The PAC diagram



LIFE SCRIPTS

The script is a life plan, which is made when we are growing up and is developed from our early decisions based upon our life experience. We may not realise that we have set ourselves a plan but we can often find this out if we ask ourselves what our favourite childhood story was, who was our favourite character in the story and who do we identify with, then we can often see who it is that fits into our life script and how we respond in relation to them.

Understanding our styles of behaviour helps us to make our behaviour conscious rather than subconsciously believing we have to do things a certain way to be okay. The importance of recognising styles in ourselves means that we can then work to the best of them rather than be driven by them. The styles are broadly:

- I must be perfect
- I must be strong
- I must try hard
- I must please others
- I must hurry up

The way we structure our time is also influenced by our script. Do you recognise your life script? Think about how you are as a person and how you relate to others and gradually the pattern will begin to emerge.

AN EXAMPLE

Jenny is an only child who has been brought up by strict parents who expect perfect behaviour. She is rewarded for this behaviour by being allowed to have treats but when she doesn't behave, approval is withheld. Her parents expect to decide what she will do with her life and as long as she is a 'good' girl, she feels okay. When she doesn't conform, she feels unloved and excluded from the family circle.

HER LIFE SCRIPT

Jenny's life script may include the need to give herself pleasure with foods or material things, often meaning that she over-eats because she can never fill the void inside herself. She is not assertive about her needs with others and will gravitate towards people who tell her what to do, often marrying a controlling man. She doesn't really want to be assertive but also feels unhappy about her choices. She is showing Child ego state behaviours which keep her from relating as an adult which would get her needs met.

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Worksheet 2

ANALYSING CONTROL ANXIETY

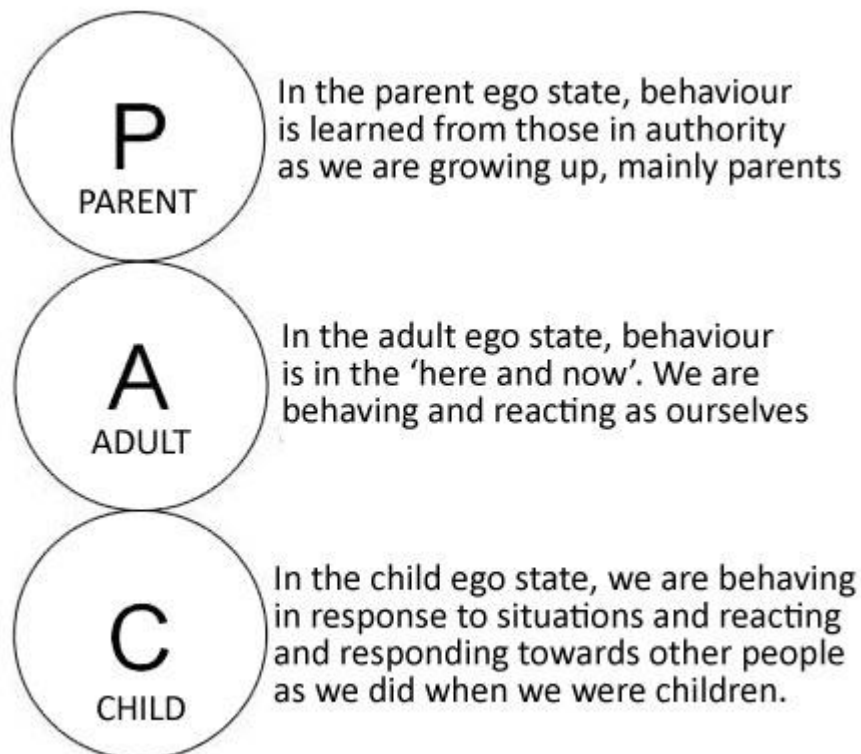
This worksheet is designed to help you look carefully at situations where you might be feel anxious and find it difficult to be assertive.

Find a comfortable chair and prepare to write these situations down. Take a moment to clear your mind of clutter. Now, think of a situation that you may have to face at some time, one that is extremely stress-inducing and that you dread. It could be a situation that has already happened and that you feel you could have coped with in a more positive way or it could be situations where you feel anxious and out of control.

Once you have written down as many as you can think of, more than 4 but less than 10, then apply the four questions to each situation each situation you have just visualised in mind.

THE QUESTIONS TO APPLY TO EACH SITUATION

1. What exactly are you/were you worried about?
2. What is/was the worst thing that could/did happen?
3. What thoughts would serve/would have served me better?
4. How would I like it/have liked it to turn out?
5. If you were confronting a person, apply the PAC model below to say how you both interacted. How did the person you were interacting act – like a Parent, an Adult or a Child? How did you react, like a Parent, an Adult or a Child?



QUICK THERAPY SOLUTIONS

GROUNDING TECHNIQUES WORKSHEET 3

This worksheet is designed to help you learn some techniques to distract yourself when you are feeling anxious. Part of learning to be assertive is learning to present a confident image and this can be difficult if you are feeling anxious. They are a way to help you stop behaviours that are unhelpful to you and although it sounds simplistic to say 'just stop thinking about it', it can often be easier than you think to learn how to distract yourself.

Use these when you are feeling anxious and out of control. When you find one that works, put it on your list.

AWARENESS TECHNIQUE

Sit on a chair, relax and close your eyes. Breathe quietly and slowly. Fold your hands in your lap and place your feet together side by side on the floor. Become aware of your body – be aware of the chair beneath you, on your bottom and your back, where you can feel the strongest pressure against your skin. Be aware of your hands and your nails, your wrists, your ankles touching each other. What can you hear? What thoughts are in your head? Think of blue. Now put an object in the blue. Drift your thoughts around this object sitting in the blue space and allow your mind to create pleasing images in this space. Relax and breathe. When you feel totally relaxed, open your eyes and take a few minutes to come back to yourself.

DISTRACTION TECHNIQUES

- Breathe slowly and steadily from your core. Imagine letting fear and worry go, evaporating along with each breath.
- If you are feeling 'stuck', change how you're positioned. Wiggle your fingers, tap your feet. Pay attention to the movement: you are in control of what your body is doing, right here and now.
- Meditate, if that's OK for you. Otherwise use distractions like television or music to help settle down.
- Use your voice. Say your name or pick up a book and read the first paragraph you find out loud.
- Look at yourself in the mirror. Smile, even if that's the last thing you feel like! How does that feel? What can you see? (If negative thoughts come to mind, write them down to look at later but let them go for now. You're anxious enough as it is.)
- Write out what's going on. Keep writing until you start to notice it makes a difference, lets some of the things you're anxious about out.
- Take a shower/bath. Notice the sensations of the water.
- Write an email to or phone somebody you care about.
- Take a look outside. Count the number of trees and street signs.
- Exercise. Jump up and down on the spot. Try some gentle yoga, go for a walk or ride a bike.
- Hold onto something comforting. Maybe a blanket or an old stuffed toy.
- Laugh, even if that's hard. Just the act of laughing about something, anything can break that spinning out of control feeling.
- When you're not too stressed, make a list of the things that provoke your anxiety.
- If you get PTSD flashbacks, when you're feeling OK, make a list of the furniture in your home and what room it's in.
- List 5 really positive things in your life. Put the list where you'll see it and remember that there's more to the world than just panic and fear.
- Think about the last week. Was there a day you didn't have so much anxiety? Remember how it felt to be less anxious than you are right now. What was different? What can change?
- Once you've found which techniques help, make a list to put on your wall or carry in your pocket.

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Worksheet 4

Homework

The very word 'homework' can strike fear or refusal into a lot of people. Many think that they are too old for homework and wonder how on earth homework can help. For homework, read practice. You will only get your new assertive behaviour techniques to be second nature if you practise them.

1. Select one person with whom you would like to be more assertive. Think about your past responses to that person and analyse whether you were an assertive adult or not.

Example: Your neighbour is someone who likes to be 'in charge' and who often manages to make you feel passive and unable to assert yourself. This neighbour knocks at your door and asks to borrow your lawnmower. You have a rule never to lend essential garden equipment as it so often gets damaged and you now have a golden rule never to borrow or lend essential equipment. Here are the responses that might take place, which should help you identify what your response would be.

SITUATION

Neighbour: Hi there, I'm really glad you're in as I need to ask you an urgent favour. My lawnmower has just broken down and I have to get the lawn done before my in-laws arrive. They are coming tomorrow morning so it's imperative I get it done this afternoon. Can I borrow yours please?

YOUR UNASSERTIVE RESPONSE

(Child) You: Well, I can't really as I will need it. Sorry.....

(Parent) Neighbour: That's OK, I won't be long, you won't even notice it's gone. Where is it and I'll get it?

(Child) You: Oh....well OK then. It's in the shed

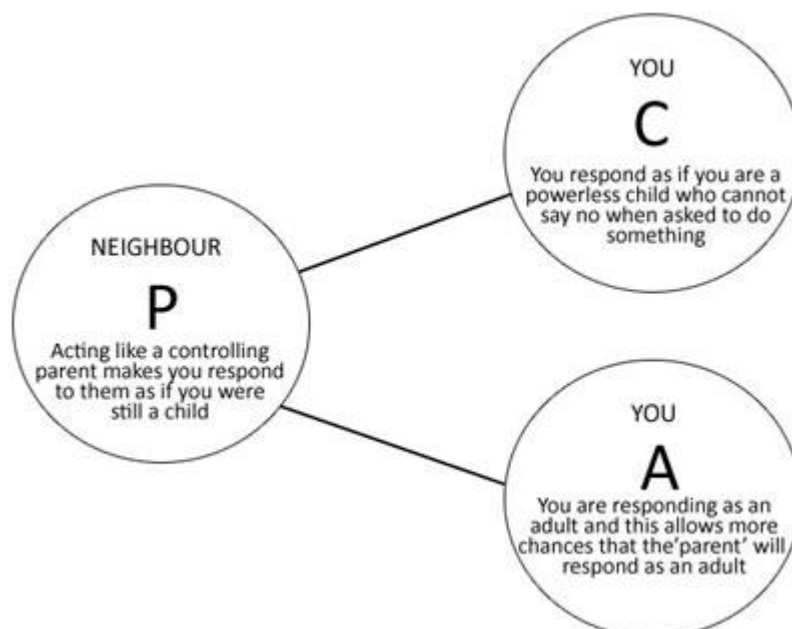
YOUR ASSERTIVE RESPONSE

(Adult) You: I'm sorry to hear that your lawnmower has broken. However, I have a rule never to lend any of my equipment. I have the number of a lawnmower repair company inside if you would like it?

(Parent) Neighbour: Well, that's a pain, but I really won't be long with it. I was sure that you would lend me yours as it's so urgent. They are going to be here tomorrow morning!

(Adult) You: I would like to be able to help you out but I can't on this occasion. Let me know if you need that number.

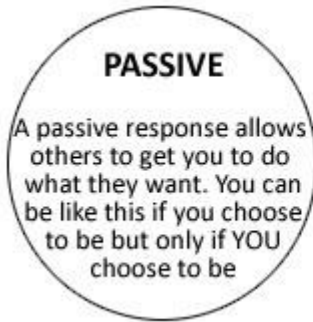
Now see where your responses came from:



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Worksheet 4 Page 2

Remember that the person you are learning to be assertive with won't necessarily like it if you become assertive but in time they will gradually shift their responses so that they either respond as an adult or they might flounce off in a mood like a child themselves.



If you can get your needs met as an assertive adult, you will find that you are much happier in yourself. Practice your responses to those people in your life who make you feel powerless and childlike and try to always stay in the adult.