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## A study to evaluate the effectiveness of assertiveness skill training program on level of assertiveness among primary health workers in a rural private hospital, Coimbatore

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### Abstract

**Background:** Assertiveness has the potential to help individuals to demonstrate constructive social behaviors and suitable social interactions with others and improve their problem solving ability and self-awareness.

**Methods:** Pre experimental (One group pre-test post-test design).

**Results and Discussion:** In pre-test 9 (90%) of primary health workers were found to be Non-assertive whereas, in post-test 8 (80%) were found to be Assertive. The calculated value of assertiveness skill training program was 4.58 is more than the table value 2.26 at  $p < 0.05$ . Hence, it shows the effectiveness of assertiveness skill training program on level of assertiveness among primary health workers in a rural private hospital.

**Conclusion:** Nurse educators have a crucial role within the development and implementation of assertiveness training/education programs for primary health workers.

**Keywords:** Effectiveness, assertiveness, assertiveness skill, training program, primary health workers

### Introduction

Assertiveness is a vital interpersonal skill that facilitates the imbalance of power among individuals and is identified as the capacity possessed by the individuals to recognize and respect their own beliefs and those of others. It can also be defined as the ability possessed by individuals to fulfill their desires, defend one's rights, and express one's beliefs, feelings, and thoughts while concurrently recognizing and respecting the rights of others. Assertiveness has the potential to help individuals to demonstrate constructive social behaviors and suitable social interactions with others and improve their problem solving ability and self-awareness<sup>[1]</sup>.

Factors Affecting Assertiveness Assertive behavior is developed with the influence of numerous factors The general classification of factors that influence the assertiveness of an individual is two-fold, namely intrinsic factors or attributes that are within the person. These include intrinsic factors such as gender, inheritance, disposition, sense of self-respect and self-assurance, level of knowledge and skill in practice, defiance, and psychological factors such as anxiety, style of coping. On the other hand, extrinsic factors that remaining external to an individual such as his/her country, culture, religion, type of family to which he/she belongs, socio-economic status, educational status, profession, exposure to mass media, the child-rearing pattern of the parents, nature of parent-child interaction during his/her childhood, determined to keep up-to-date, peer group, and role models may also have an impact on the assertive behavior of a person<sup>[2]</sup>.

Professional dissatisfaction occurs due to stress, frustration. Psychological aggression has a significant relationship with depersonalization and burnout among nurses<sup>[3]</sup>.

People demonstrate four communication styles, including passive, assertive, aggressive and passive-aggressive. Individuals with the passive style may not show any resistance when accepting other people<sup>[4]</sup>.

In general, considers the passive style as weak and vulnerable, and negatively evaluate those who demonstrate this communication style as fearful and futile<sup>[7]</sup>.

Assertiveness in the Nursing Profession Individuals who demonstrate behaviors associated with assertiveness have higher feelings of self-esteem and tend to achieve success in their lives efficiently. In addition, assertiveness has the potential to help individuals to demonstrate constructive social behaviors and suitable social interactions with others and improve their problem-solving ability and self-awareness [1].

When people demonstrate behaviors that demarcate positive assertiveness, it helps them in building close relationships. Furthermore, it facilitates the maintenance of healthy human relationships with no harm being caused to others.

### Need for the study

Assertiveness promotes open and honest communication which builds up interdisciplinary collaboration and cohesion, improving staff performance and eventually standards of patient care.

Nurses are working with a multidisciplinary team and are undertaking collaborative research with other disciplines. Assertiveness is an essential skill the nurse requires to be competent in decision-making and function efficiently in these varied settings.

Assertiveness enables nurses to reduce interpersonal conflicts in personal and professional lives, thus removing a major source of stress for many. Direct communication, openness and honesty during assertive communication allow nurses to receive messages without distortion, which help to maintain relations with others. By using assertive skills, job satisfaction of nursing personnel as well as patients' satisfaction and level of services can be improved.

Assertiveness is considered a valuable nursing skill since it brings numerous benefits for nurses [5].

A quantitative research conducted on assertiveness training programs has shown significant impacts on improving assertiveness among nurses and nursing students worldwide [6].

In current health care environments, professional nurses need to become more aware about the use of assertive techniques in their workplaces to manage the challenges they face when dealing with human resources. So, it is important to develop some assertive training program in order to improve assertive behavior.

Moreover, nurse's assertiveness facilitates them when they are unsure or concerned about medical procedures, patient treatment, or patients' symptoms, which, in turn, contributes to reducing risk and pre-venting significant medical errors.

The potential benefits of assertive behavior to nurses are enormous where it enhanced self-awareness, improved staff performance, patient care and interdisciplinary collaboration and cohesiveness [1].

Internationally, assertiveness training programs have been introduced to improve health care professional's communication skills, while the results of a recent systematic review indicated that these types of training programs are generally effective.

Several studies have indicated that nurses lack assertiveness skills which results in diminished effectiveness of communication and compromise patient care. Assertiveness behavior can be encouraged through development and implementation of assertiveness training for nurses [2].

The role of nursing involves interaction with clients, peers, other health professionals. This role is enhanced when nurses have an honest command of communication skills. Assertiveness is considered to be an essential skill for nurses. It is a key attribute for nurses without it true

autonomy and personal empowerment cannot be achieved. Assertive behavior demands control over outbursts of anger, crying or other behavior patterns that exhibit lack of professionalism. Assertive behavior allows expressing ideas and conveying value in organization which boosts self-confidence of nurses. It helps to establish and project the image of a poised and polished professional [2].

Improving Assertiveness among Nurses Improving assertiveness skills among nurses and nursing students is an excellent investment for the future, which can be done through both pre-registration and post-registration education programs. The teaching-learning strategy of role-play could be used during particular teaching sessions to ensure that evocative, practically applicable learning occurs [1].

Assertive behavior could also be encouraged through educational methods. It is preferable that nurses receive this educational preparation during undergraduate programs. Nurse educators have a crucial role within the development and implementation of assertiveness training/education programs for undergraduate nursing students.

### Statement of problem

A study to evaluate the effectiveness of assertiveness skill training program on level of assertiveness among primary health workers in a rural private hospital, Coimbatore.

### Objectives

- To assess the level of assertiveness among primary health workers in a rural private hospital.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of assertiveness skill training program on level of assertiveness among primary health workers in a rural private hospital.

### Hypothesis

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There will be a significant difference on level of assertiveness after assertiveness skill training program among primary health workers in a rural private hospital.

### Methodology

The research design which is adopted for the study is Pre experimental (One group pre-test post-test design).



Fig 1: Research Design

### Criteria for selection of participants

**Inclusion criteria:** Primary health care workers including staff nurses and nursing assistants.

### Exclusion criteria:

- Nurses
- Who are not available at the time of data collection.
- Who are not willing to participate in the study.

### Tools for data collection

**Section A:** Demographic variables include Age, Education, Cadre of work, Years of experience, Work schedule, marital status, Type of family, Number of children.

**Section B:** Rathus self-assertiveness assessment tool is a standardized tool includes with 30 items scored from very characteristic of me to very uncharacteristic. Scores are calculated as follows:

For items 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 18, 20, 21, 22, 25, 27, 28 and 29.

Very much like me = 3  
 Rather like me = 2  
 Slightly like me = 1  
 Slightly unlike me = -1  
 Rather unlike me = -2  
 Very much unlike me = -3

For items 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 23, 24, 26 and 30 (which are reversed in valence):

Very much like me = -3  
 Rather like me = -2  
 Slightly like me = -1  
 Slightly unlike me = 1  
 Rather unlike me = 2  
 Very much unlike me = 3

**Table 1:** Scoring Interpretation

S. No	Score	Interpretation
1.	-90 to +20	Non-Assertive
2.	+20 to 90	Assertive

**Data collection procedure**

After getting permission from setting and obtained consent for the study. Data collection started on the first day with the pretest questionnaire consists of demographic variables and Rathus self-assertiveness assessment tool. Assertiveness skill training program includes self-esteem, respect from others, win-win solution, anxiety, stress and adaptation and managerial skills. Training methods comprised of focused group activity, role play, critical thinking exercises, videos Assertiveness style scale, simulation and storytelling was organized for the next two days with four sessions each two hours. Post-test was done on seventh day with the same questionnaire.

**Results and Discussion**

**Table 2:** Frequency and percentage distribution of Demographic Variables, n=10

Demographic Variables	f	%
<b>Age</b>		
a) < 25 yrs	4	40
b) 25-35 yrs	3	30
c) > 35 yrs	3	30
<b>Education</b>		
a) Diploma	7	70
b) UG Degree	3	30
<b>Cadre of work</b>		
a) Senior staff nurse	4	40
b) Staff nurse	6	60
<b>Years of experience</b>		
a) < 3 yrs	8	80
b) > 3 yrs	2	20
<b>Work schedule</b>		
a) Day shift	6	60
b) Night shift	4	40
<b>Marital status</b>		
a) Married	4	40
b) Single	6	60
<b>Type of family</b>		
a) Nuclear	4	40
b) Joint	6	60

**Table 3:** Frequency and percentage distribution on level of assertiveness among primary health workers in a rural private hospital, n=10

Pre test				Post test			
Assertive		Non Assertive		Assertive		Non Assertive	
f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	10	9	90	8	80	2	20

Table 3 shows that, in pre-test 9 (90%) of primary health workers were found to be Non-assertive whereas, in post-test 8 (80%) were found to be Assertive.

**Table 4:** Paired t test to evaluate the effectiveness of assertiveness skill training program on level of assertiveness among primary health workers in a rural private hospital, n=10

Test	Mean ± S.D	Calculated value	Table value
Pre test	0.23± 2.1	4.58	2.26
Post test	0.7± 0.15	*S	

\*Significance at 0.05

Table 3 depicts that, the calculated value of assertiveness skill training program was 4.58 is more than the table value 2.26 at  $p < 0.05$ . Hence it shows the effectiveness of assertiveness skill training program on level of assertiveness among primary health workers in a rural private hospital.

**Conclusion**

Nurses should take the opportunity to become subjects of their own history by using their new found assertiveness, knowledge and competence to engage in the health care debate and able to take their own decisions without fear and with the use of proper assertion.

It is motivating to see the fact that assertiveness skill training program among primary health workers and recommends further research works in this area.

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**Conflict of Interest:** Nil

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