

# The Bill of Assertive Rights

In 1975, Manuel J. Smith published a “Bill of Assertive Rights” with ten basic rights for assertiveness. These rights extend into all human interactions and provide a framework for what assertive behaviour can look like as you interact with others.

1. You have the right to judge your own behaviour, thoughts, and emotions, and to take the responsibility for their initiation and consequences upon yourself.
2. You have the right to offer no reasons or excuses for justifying your behaviour.
3. You have the right to judge if you are responsible for finding solutions to other people's problems.
4. You have the right to change your mind.
5. You have the right to make mistakes - and be responsible for them.
6. You have the right to say, 'I don't know'.
7. You have the right to choose to accept or not accept “help”.
8. You have the right to be illogical in making decisions.
9. You have the right to say, 'I don't understand'.
10. You have the right to say, 'I don't care'.

## How to facilitate the exercise

**Time:** 30 - 45 minutes, depending on group size

1. Have the group sit in a circle if in person.
2. Read the list of rights above out loud.
3. Ask the team to take turns discussing which one stood right out to them and why.
4. Start things off by being the first person to share and paving the way for others to follow.
5. Nominate who you would like to go next.
6. If you are having trouble getting the team to open up try asking the following questions:
  - a. Which right resonates with you the most and why?
  - b. Which right do you find most challenging to act on and why?
  - c. Which right is difficult for you to get your head around and why?
  - d. Which rights, if any, do you disagree with?