

## ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR AS A NEOPLASM OF THE PROCESS OF FORMING RESOURCEFULNESS AND VITALITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL

**Introduction.** Psychological components are of great importance for the formation of a person's resourcefulness and resilience: psychological self-preservation, self-respect, self-confidence, responsibility, assertiveness, etc.

The phenomenon of assertiveness is currently a relatively new concept in psychology, which is used to characterise personality traits, and the meaning of this concept remains unclear in psychological science. The relevance of the study lies in the fact that the concepts proposed for consideration are important not only within the framework of psychological and pedagogical sciences, but also have a certain significance for each individual outside of science.

The phenomenon of human behaviour associated with assertiveness is the subject of research in a wide range of sciences, including philosophy, pedagogy, psychology, and ethics, which contributes to the emergence of relevant theories of behavioural models.

Assertive behaviour has been the subject of scientific research by thinkers and scientists at the philosophical level (Aristotle, Buddha, C. Helvetius, A. Dante, Confucius, V. Kremen, I. Ogienko, K. Salutati, G. Skovoroda, Socrates, L. Feuerbach, R. Steiner and others), in the socio-psychological aspect (R. Alberti, A. Bandura, S. Bishop, M. Emons, L. Michael, S. Medvedeva, I. Popova, N. Razhina, E. Robert, V. Romek, A. Salter, O. Khokhlova, V. Shamieva and others), in psychological and pedagogical terms (A. Aksenkin, G. Bandzeladze, O. Dukhnovych, J. Comenius, V. Sukhomlynskyi, S. Udovytska, R. Shakurov, etc.<sup>348</sup>

Conducting a theoretical analysis of the problem of assertiveness in domestic and foreign schools of developmental psychology, we inevitably encounter different views on the specifics of formation and the nature of its origin. In the works of foreign psychologists, assertiveness is usually associated with personal success, autonomy, independence, and purposefulness. L. Nikolayev notes that the concept we are considering can most often be seen in the context of such definitions as ethical conviction, responsibility, personal position, and the ability to resist group<sup>349</sup>.

The purpose of our research is to theoretically study and experimentally investigate the features of assertive behaviour as a new formation in the process of forming resourcefulness and resilience of a personality.

In accordance with the goal, the following research objectives were identified:

- to carry out a theoretical analysis of the problem of formation of assertive behaviour of a personality.

- to reveal the concept of assertiveness as a component of resourcefulness and resilience of a personality;

- experimentally investigate the peculiarities of assertive behaviour;

- to substantiate, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of assertive behaviour training.

In the ancient philosophical and religious ideas of Ancient India – the Vedas (II-I millennia BC), we find the belief that if spiritual interconnection stops, humanity stops in it<sup>350</sup>.

Socrates and Aristotle, ancient Greek philosophers, explained the meaning of assertive behaviour through the existence of philosophy and moral truth, equating knowledge and virtue. They saw the main purpose of human activity as cognition of oneself, virtuous behaviour and actions related to the education of the will<sup>351</sup>.

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<sup>348</sup> Гук О. І. (2012) Асертивність як складова культури демократичного врядування. Науковий вісник. Демократичне врядування. Вип. 9.

<sup>349</sup> Нагаєвська І. О. (2017) Психологічні умови розвитку асертивної поведінки в учнів професійно-технічних навчальних закладів: дис. ... канд. псих. наук: 159.9.019.4 / Київський університет імені Бориса Грінченка. Київ, 215 с.

<sup>350</sup> Марчук Л. М. Асертивність як комплексна інтегральна характеристика особистості. Вісник Національної академії Державної прикордонної служби України. Вип. 5.

<sup>351</sup> Тіунова О. В. Соціально-психологічний тренінг як засіб формування навичок асертивної поведінки у старшокласників.

The importance of such assertive components as freedom of will from others, respect for oneself and one's dignity, one's rights and interests, the need to recognise one's own value, confidence and perseverance in defending one's rights were emphasised in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the works of philosophers, political and cultural figures (N. Berdyaev, K. Helvetius, A. Herzen, M. Hrushevsky, I. Kant, V. Kremen, J. Locke, I. Ohienko, J. Sartre, G. Skovoroda, T. Shevchenko, I. Franko, K. Jaspers, etc.)<sup>352</sup>.

Instead, we find the thoughts of the prominent English philosopher and educator of the seventeenth century, J. Locke in his works *On the Management of the Mind* and *Two Treatises of Government*, who condemned self-doubt, "people who suppress their own spirit, despairing at the slightest difficulty and deciding that further thorough mastery of a certain science or knowledge is beyond their power"<sup>353</sup>.

Locke believed that the natural state in which all people live is a state of complete freedom from the will of others, and that obedience, in his opinion, is possible only to the laws of nature.

The French philosopher and enlightened materialist of the eighteenth century, K. Helvetius, reflecting on self-love, believed that it "makes us what we are". He points to the need for a person to be in an active state – "not when he is happy, as he goes, but as he should be" and to demand justice and respect for himself<sup>354</sup>.

In his treatise "Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone", the famous representative of German philosophy, Kant, saw the meaning of assertiveness for a person as something that "makes one achieve recognition of one's own value in the opinion of others, and initially only the value of one's equality with others."<sup>355</sup>

The Ukrainian scientist and teacher V. Sukhomlynskyi believed that an assertive personality is based on ideas: "a full-blooded and harmonious human personality is born by maternal and paternal wisdom, centuries of experience and culture of the people, embodied in knowledge, moral values, and enduring wealth that are passed down from generation to generation." The teacher advised his students to analyse their actions so as not to cause others harm or trouble, and instead to do good, following the most important moral standards. Sukhomlynsky noted that the spiritual life of the team is based on respect for work, people of work, and the establishment of respect for oneself on this basis...<sup>356</sup>

The term "assertiveness" gained a strong position in national psychology after the publication of the book by Czech authors V. Capponi and T. Novak<sup>357</sup>.

T. Fasolko understood this term to mean a certain personal autonomy, independence from external influences and assessments, the ability to regulate one's behaviour independently and the ability to constructively find a way out of problematic situations in communication<sup>358</sup>.

Various modern sources of psychological reference define the term "affirmation" as a person's ability to defend their rights with confidence and dignity without demeaning the rights of others. Assertive behaviour is open behaviour that does not detract from others and does not degrade their dignity or yours<sup>359</sup>.

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<sup>352</sup> Бутузова Л. П. (2010) Асертивність особистості як основа становлення безпечної поведінки в підлітковому віці. С. 33-40.

<sup>353</sup> Мельничук С. К. (2012) Асертивність як детермінанта розвитку психологічного потенціалу студентів. Вісник Одеського національного університету імені І. І. Мечникова. Психологія. Т. 17. Вип. 8. С. 407-413.

<sup>354</sup> Гук О. І. (2012) Асертивність як складова культури демократичного врядування. Науковий вісник. Демократичне врядування.

<sup>355</sup> Дріга Т. Г. (2015) Контент-аналіз поняття «Асертивність». Теоретичні і прикладні проблеми психології. № 3. С. 158-165.

<sup>356</sup> Подоляк Н. М. (2014) Індивідуально-психологічні особливості асертивності особистості.

<sup>357</sup> Козич І. В. (2014) Асертивна поведінка – як новоутворення процесу формування конфліктологічної компетентності майбутнього педагога вищої школи. С. 135-143.

<sup>358</sup> Кондратюк С. М. (2014) Впевненість у собі як один з аспектів життєвого успіху студентської молоді. Науковий вісник Херсонського державного університету. Психологічні науки. Вип. 2 (1). С. 76-80.

<sup>359</sup> Чулкова К. О. (2018) Аналіз досліджень проблеми асертивної поведінки особистості. Психологічний часопис. Т. 1. Вип. 11. С. 38-45.

Scientists have always been interested in the aspect of assertiveness that is related to the ability to overcome conflicts and prevent their occurrence. Therefore, the assertive behaviour problem is very closely related to personal responsibility. S. Stout Psychological Sciences 2012 Bulletin of the National Academy of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine 5/2012 provides a definition of an assertive personality: "an assertive person is one who is responsible for his / her own behaviour, demonstrates self-respect and respect for others, is positive, listens, understands and tries to find a working compromise."<sup>360</sup>

S. Stout believes that the main components of assertiveness are self-respect and respect for others, and the ability to take responsibility for one's behaviour. "At its core, assertiveness is a philosophy of personal responsibility. That is, we are responsible for our own behaviour and have no right to blame other people for our reaction to their behaviour". To solve problematic situations and conflicts that can happen to anyone, such components of assertiveness as confidence and a positive attitude, the ability to listen carefully and the desire to understand the other person's point of view are important<sup>361</sup>.

C. Medvedeva emphasises that an assertive person is characterised by "natural, honest behaviour towards oneself and others, skills and abilities of ethically acceptable communication in a particular situation", and identifies confidence, positive self-esteem, and respect for the rights of others as signs of assertiveness. She presents the model of assertiveness through such components as "motivational (assertive behaviour as a value), cognitive (positive perception of oneself, knowledge about the content and manifestations of assertive behaviour), behavioural (skills and abilities) and emotional (a set of experiences, etc.)"<sup>362</sup> Assertive behaviour implies direct, decisive, polite expression of one's emotions, feelings, thoughts in a way that takes into account the feelings, position, opinion, rights and desires of another person. Assertiveness is not a person's character trait, but a skill that is not innate.

The main sources on the psychology of assertiveness are the books translated from the Czech language by V. Capponi and T. Novak, and two more logically related to them – "A Psychologist to Yourself" and "An Adult, Child and Parent to Yourself".

In domestic and foreign psychology, the phenomenon of confidence, with which the concept of assertiveness resonates, has been sufficiently developed. Confidence implies the presence of a subjective attitude towards oneself, social readiness and the ability to adequately realise one's own aspirations. Confident behaviour does not mean the suppression of aggressive feelings, but rather a reduction in aggressive behaviour and the disappearance of reasons for aggression<sup>363</sup>.

According to the theory of A. Salter's theory, assertive behaviour is seen as the most constructive way of interpersonal interaction, as opposed to manipulation and aggression. Traditional mechanisms of socialisation can make adolescents vulnerable to various manipulations of other people. A person is too susceptible to external influences, and others often abuse this by manipulating them. When faced with unacceptable demands, they do not find ways to resist them. Then, forcing himself, he submits in spite of his own attitudes and desires. It is unwilling to voice its own claims and opinions<sup>364</sup>.

The formation of assertiveness as a personality trait implies that a person's behaviour will be determined by his or her own inclinations and motivations, rather than by imposing attitudes.

Adler noted that only an insecure person can become confident. Thanks to his theory, the concept of the "inferiority complex" became popular, and the basis of most personality disorders was recognised as a feeling of inferiority. A person who neglects himself or herself tends to act

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<sup>360</sup> Лучків В. З. (2017) Психологічні особливості розвитку асертивності в юнацькому віці.

<sup>361</sup> Amanatullah E. T., Tinsley C. H. (2013) Punishing women negotiators for asserting too much ... or not enough: Exploring why advocacy moderates backlash against assertive women negotiators. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*. Vol. 120. P. 110-122.

<sup>362</sup> Мойсеєнко В. В. (2017) Аналіз наукових підходів до дослідження поняття «асертивність». *Науковий вісник Херсонського державного університету*. Том 1. Вип. 5. С. 170-174.

<sup>363</sup> Шинкар М. І. (2020) Проблема асертивності в сучасному суспільстві. *Вісник Національного університету оборони України*. Питання психології. Т. 1. Вип. 54. С. 210-213.

<sup>364</sup> Potts C., Potts S. (2013) *Assertiveness: How to Be Strong in Every Situation*.

differently than someone who is proud of himself or herself. He forms a self-concept and evaluates himself. Currently, these ideas are gaining relevance in connection with the importance of valeology and tolerance of society at the state level<sup>365</sup>.

Assertiveness is a skill that can be acquired. An assertive person has a clear goal, knows how to control his or her emotions, and is not easily influenced by the emotional pressure of others. Assertiveness does not mean ignoring the emotions and aspirations of other people. It is the ability to achieve certain goals despite negative pressures from the environment, rational care for one's own interests while taking into account the interests of other people. Thus, assertiveness develops in society, in contact with other people. The inclusion of an individual in various socialisation conditions allows him or her to develop his or her own style of interaction, including in conflict.

The defining feature of a confident person is an adequate assessment of their responsibility. In uncertain behaviour, a shy person takes responsibility for himself, while an aggressive person shifts it to others. Self-doubt is most evident in situations related to communication<sup>366</sup>.

V. Romek emphasises the following manifestations of insecurity: fear of being rejected, low self-esteem, irrational beliefs, excessive desire to "observe decency", lack of skills in expressing<sup>367</sup>.

The formation of assertive behaviour in a person implies a certain quality of behaviour, thanks to which he or she can have spontaneous reactions, adequate manifestation of emotions, the ability to speak directly about his or her desires and demands, is able to express his or her own point of view, is not afraid to object, using arguments, insist on his or her own; have tactics for meeting fair demands and refusing to respond to unacceptable aspirations in such a way that the rights of other people are not violated<sup>368</sup>.

Assertiveness is a complex phenomenon; it also includes the concept of "confidence" and implies the presence of a subjective attitude towards oneself and social readiness to adequately realise one's own aspirations. Confident behaviour does not mean suppression of aggressive manifestations, but rather a reduction in aggressive behaviour and the disappearance of reasons for aggression. The development of assertiveness is impossible without the development of reflection (the ability to see and understand the situation), critical thinking (identifying risk situations, developing skills in working with information: its analysis, processing, and independent decision-making technologies)<sup>369</sup>.

It should be noted that the phenomenon of assertiveness is used in psychological literature as a synonym for confidence. Personality assertiveness is implemented in the cognitive-semantic, affective and behavioural components. Assertive behaviour means that a person defends his or her own rights, expresses his or her thoughts and feelings directly, honestly and openly in ways that respect the rights of other<sup>370</sup>. Assertive people show others how they would like to be treated, they are self-sufficient.

The formation of assertive, safe behaviour can be implemented on the basis of medical, educational, motivational, and educational models, etc.

The development of assertive behaviour involves developing the ability to have spontaneous reactions, reasonable expression of emotions, the ability to speak directly about one's desires and demands, the ability to express one's own point of view without fear of objection, using arguments, to insist on one's own in situations where any argumentation is superfluous; to master tactics

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<sup>365</sup> Kumar R., Fernandez D. (2017) An Empirical Study of Assertiveness Among Business Students: A Case Study of Nizwa College of Technology, Sultanate of Oman. *European Journal of Business and Management*. Vol. 9. № 2. P. 9-14.

<sup>366</sup> Лучків В. З. (2015) Онтогенетична динаміка асертивності в юнацькому віці. Теоретичні і прикладні проблеми психології. Т. 3. Вип. 38. С. 478-485.

<sup>367</sup> Murphy J. (2011) *Assertiveness: How to Stand Up for Yourself and Still Win the Respect of Others*.

<sup>368</sup> Гук О. І. (2012) Асертивність як складова культури демократичного врядування. *Науковий вісник. Демократичне врядування*.

<sup>369</sup> Саннікова О. П., Санніков О. І., Подоляк Н. М. (2013) Діагностика асертивності: результати апробації методики «ТОКАС». *Наука і освіта*. № 3. С. 140-144.

<sup>370</sup> Шинкар М. І. (2020) Проблема асертивності в сучасному суспільстві. *Вісник Національного університету оборони України. Питання психології*. Т. 1. Вип. 54. С. 210-213.

for meeting fair demands and refusing to respond to unacceptable aspirations in a way that does not violate the rights of others<sup>371</sup>.

Today, the relevance of developing assertiveness of a personality is due to social phenomena in society and the requirements for resilience.

In order to form a person's resourcefulness and resilience, psychological components are of great importance to them: psychological self-preservation, self-respect, self-confidence, responsibility, assertiveness, etc.

The main components of assertiveness are: perceptions of assertive behaviour, independence of judgement (cognitive component), self-satisfaction, communication orientation (affective component), maturity, social adaptability (value component), confident behaviour, and addictive independence (conative component).

The formation of assertive behaviour in a person implies a certain quality of behaviour, thanks to which he or she can have spontaneous reactions, adequate manifestation of emotions, the ability to speak directly about his or her desires and demands, is able to express his or her own point of view, is not afraid to object, using arguments, to insist on his or her own; have tactics to meet fair demands and refuse in response to unacceptable aspirations in such a way that the rights of other people are not violated<sup>372</sup>. Thus, assertive behaviour is the ability to act in such a way that a person is able to openly declare his or her plans and intentions, defend his or her interests, while respecting the interests of others<sup>373</sup>.

We can conclude that assertive behaviour is the behaviour of a self-confident person who respects the needs and rights of others when their rights are respected. A person who behaves assertively is able to clearly articulate what is being said, how he or she sees a certain situation, what he or she thinks and feels, and what he or she believes. Such a person is characterised by a positive attitude towards other people, the ability to listen and compromise. The main thing for assertive behaviour is calmness. Such a person is able to recognise manipulation and protect themselves from it, and is convinced that everyone has the right to decide for themselves and to be responsible for the consequences of their decisions<sup>374</sup>.

Thus, in our opinion, assertiveness is a set of psychological properties of an individual that shape his or her behaviour in society, based on adequate behaviour in critical situations, which is manifested in psychological balance and ethical attitude towards other individuals in social relations.

*Results of the study.* The purpose of our study was to consider assertiveness (assertive behaviour) as one of the most important components of the formation of the resourcefulness and resilience of the individual.

For the primary diagnosis of the study of manifestations of assertive behaviour, the Rydas test questionnaire was used.

Methodology for diagnosing the level of assertiveness. The Rydas Test Questionnaire is a psychodiagnostic tool aimed at identifying the level of self-confidence (assertiveness) using a set of closed questions designed to reveal a person's level of self-confidence and level of assertiveness.

A self-confident person has the following qualities that are manifested in their activities, manner of behaviour and speech:

- determination, perseverance, and willingness to take risks;

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<sup>371</sup> Amanatullah E. T., Tinsley C. H. (2013) Punishing women negotiators for asserting too much ... or not enough: Exploring why advocacy moderates backlash against assertive women negotiators. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*. Vol. 120. P. 110-122.

<sup>372</sup> Олійник Г. І. (2020) Особливості агресивності у осіб із різним рівнем асертивності.

<sup>373</sup> Мельничук С. К. (2012) Асертивність як детермінанта розвитку психологічного потенціалу студентів. *Вісник Одеського національного університету імені І. І. Мечникова. Психологія*. Т. 17. Вип. 8. С. 407-413.

<sup>374</sup> Мойсеєнко В. В. (2017) Аналіз наукових підходів до дослідження поняття «асертивність». *Науковий вісник Херсонського державного університету*. Том 1. Вип. 5. С. 170-174.

- awareness of being the master of one's own destiny, responsibility for everything that happens to him or her, and independence in decision-making;
- active and unbiased perception of reality, good orientation in it;
- acceptance of oneself and others as they are;
- openness and friendliness in expressing their feelings and opinions;
- emotional balance, delicacy in relationships with people combined with firmness in business;
- flexibility of behaviour in view of changed circumstances, individual approach to people;
- stimulating other people by encouraging, supporting, and sincerely admiring their successes;
- prompt and effective organisation of collective discussions of problems;
- stimulating and maintaining a favourable psychological climate in the team.

At the final stage of the methodology, we find that the person is: very insecure; rather unsure than confident; has an average level of confidence; confident or overconfident.

The experimental study was conducted on the basis of Melitopol Lyceum No. 5 in Zaporizhzhia region. The study involved 30 pupils: 18 girls and 12 boys. The ascertaining experiment was conducted in a group form, where all students were presented with the same conditions.

The study was conducted in 3 stages:

1. Investigation of the existing level of assertiveness using the Rydas Questionnaire.
2. Conducting a training session to optimise and increase the level of assertiveness.
3. Re-examination of the existing level of assertiveness using the Rydas Questionnaire.

Analysis of the average statistical results of the "Self-confidence" test (Rydas test), which aims to determine the level of assertiveness of a person. The results of this technique are presented in Table 1, Fig. 1.

*Table 1. Average scores of the assertiveness study (by Rydas), n = 30*

Levels of self-confidence	Number of participants, %.
I am very insecure	0
Not sure rather than confident	26%
Average value of confidence	56%
Confident in yourself	11%
Overconfident	7%

The results of the empirical study of the individual style of behaviour show that students have different levels of assertiveness. The average level of assertiveness was formed in 56% of respondents who are to some extent able to defend their rights and interests, which has a situational manifestation that is not fixed in the individual style of behaviour.

A high level of assertiveness – "self-confidence" – was found in 11% of children who objectively assess their own capabilities, taking into account the rights and interests of others. It is important for them to maintain and support their sense of self-esteem and self-respect (Fig. 1). It should be noted that the category "very insecure" has a zero value, which is good. The category "rather insecure than confident" includes 7 children, 26% of the total sample. And 2 adolescents are "too confident" – 7%.

Assertiveness implies a conscious attitude to making important decisions by an individual, the ability to defend one's own beliefs, independence and the ability to take responsibility when making decisions, and consistency of behaviour with internal motives and value orientations.

In order to develop the skills of confident behaviour, form a system of approaches to understanding one's needs, capabilities, desires; attitude to oneself, and develop skills of constructive interaction with others, which is a new formation of the personality's resourcefulness and resilience, the assertiveness training "Confidence is the Key to Success" was developed and implemented.

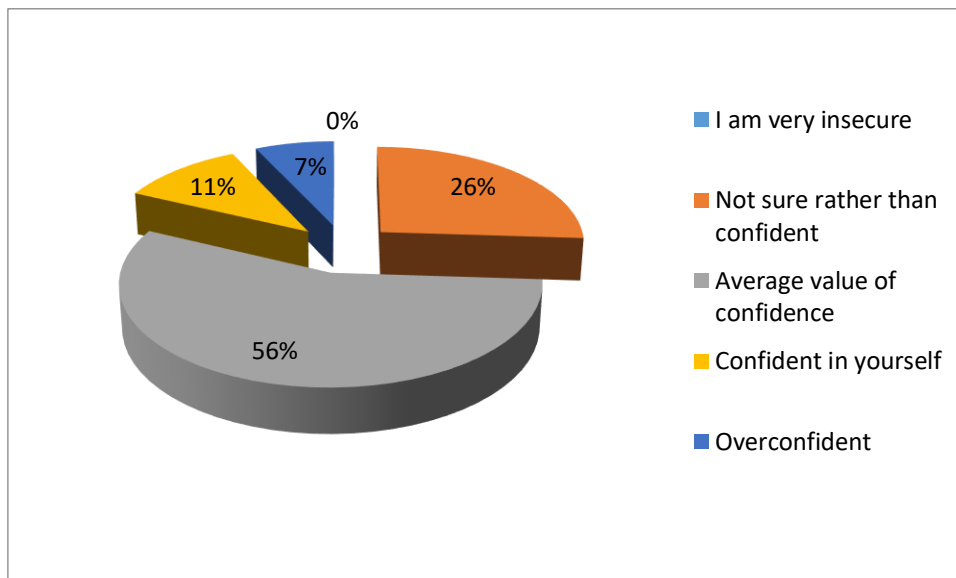


Fig. 1. Levels of assertiveness of the studied adolescents (according to the Rydas test),  $n = 30$

An important component is that the training is focused not only on the final result of the work, but also on the dynamics of the self-development process. It should become an event for the individual that would allow them to change their worldview and expand their life opportunities.

The assertiveness training "Confidence is the key to success" developed by us is designed to develop and improve assertive behaviour skills, which consists of a system of techniques and exercises designed to improve and develop the level of assertiveness, and as a result, assertive behaviour skills.

The main objective of assertiveness training is to increase self-confidence, learn constructive interpersonal skills, and understand the importance of and differences between different styles of behaviour in everyday life. The optimal conditions for this are created by psychological training (Table 2).

Table 2. Stages of the training

Stage	Procedure
Preparatory stage	Defining the purpose of the training (developmental work, psychological education)
	Developing a plan – an outline of a training session to develop the level of assertiveness and improve assertive behaviour skills.
	Search and analysis of educational and reference literature.
Planning stage	Selection of methods for completing the task (verbal, practical).
	Analysis of resources and preparation of materials.
	Drawing up a detailed training plan.
	Foreseeing problematic moments during the implementation of the plan.
The stage of self-analysis	Analysis of the completeness of the task, taking into account all the requirements for planning a training session.
	Analysis of the correctness of the task.
	Relevance of the purpose and objectives to the research topic.
	Making adjustments to the task plan.

Form of delivery: training with interactive methods of work.

Number of participants: 23.

Total duration of the training: 2 hours.

Methods used in the training: informational messages, role plays, "modelled" situations, tests, interviews, discussion of exercises, exercises to activate the elements in terms of content and structure.

Resources: whiteboard, chalk, pens, chairs, white A-4 paper, flipchart, markers, prepared lecture and stimulating material.

### **The course of the training**

1. Announce the topic and purpose of the training.

Welcome by the trainer: "Good afternoon, dear participants of the training!"

Confucius once said: "To have enough self-control to respect others as ourselves and to treat them as we wish to be treated is what may be called the doctrine of humanity." Only a confident person with an adequate sense of self-esteem can have self-control. We can call such a person assertive.

Today we have gathered to improve assertive behaviour skills, increase self-confidence and learn relaxation exercises that will help you in the future.

So, the topic of our class: "Confidence is the key to success".

**Exercise "Rules of work"**. Aim: to adopt rules for working in a group. As you already know, there are certain rules in every session, so we are going to do the "Rules" exercise. The psychologist invites the participants to adopt the rules of the group.

**Exercise "Mood screen"**. Goal: to create a friendly atmosphere, a positive mood in the team. How to do the exercise: cards with funny images of emotions are passed around the circle. Each participant memorises the number of the card with the emotion that corresponds to his or her mood and passes around a good wish to each other using facial expressions and gestures. The card chosen by the majority is placed on the Mood Screen. (There may be several images.) Questions for discussion: – Why is it so important to start a new business in a good mood? (A good mood is the key to success. When you are in a good mood, you can do anything quickly and get a lot of pleasure from it. There is a saying "once you've done your job, you can go out and have a good time", and when you're in a good mood, you can get things done).

**Exercise "Similarities and differences"**. Despite the fact that we are all different, we talk and communicate with each other. Let's find the differences and similarities with each other. Each of you should say a phrase to your neighbour on the right: "You and I are alike because ... (name any way we are alike), but unlike you I am ... (name any way we are different). For example: "You and I are similar in that we like animals, especially cats, but unlike you, I like to eat ice cream with pickles."

Information message: "Assertive behaviour and its features"

Assertiveness is a term that refers to a person's ability to assert their rights with confidence and dignity without impinging on the rights of others. A self-confident person is always a successful start to any business. To be self-confident, it is not enough to know your job well, but also to sincerely believe in its necessity.

Assertiveness has three components:

1. Ability to protect and defend one's own rights and interests.
2. The ability to formulate and defend one's own opinion, even if it is difficult.
3. Ability to express feelings and emotions.

An assertive person is a person who can express his or her thoughts clearly and calmly, without changing his or her position if someone disagrees with him or her. In addition, an assertive person can reiterate his or her opinion if necessary. If you introduce a scale with submissiveness at one pole and aggressiveness at the other, then assertive behaviour will be located in the middle of the scale.

Elbert and Emmons suggest that assertive behaviour includes the following components:

- Eye contact – an assertive person is able to maintain contact with the interlocutor with the help of eyes;
- The degree of assertiveness is manifested in a person's posture, in the way they stand, their position and stance towards another person;
- Distance – an assertive person feels and is sensitive to preserving their own "personal space" and the "personal space" of others;



- The appropriate use of gestures can make a message more expressive, open and heartfelt, and emphasise an assertive approach;

- It is important to be able to use your facial expressions and tone of voice appropriately. This means matching what a person says with the facial expression and intonation with which they say it;

- If a person can speak softly and smoothly, they have a better chance of being heard. People who use parasitic words in their speech are not considered assertive.

- An assertive person will not interrupt their interlocutor unnecessarily;

- A person who is a good listener and is confident in their ability to support the other person;

- The content of the remarks – it is important that the words spoken during the conversation are appropriate to the social and cultural situation in which the conversation is taking place.

An assertive way of expressing anger is when we focus on how we can change the undesirable situation in a way that does not violate the rights of others and relieves the emotional tension caused by the negative emotion. This can be done by using the method of staged expression of anger. Assertive expression of anger does not imply uncontrollability. It is the behaviour of an adult who wants to get what he or she wants. To achieve a change in your partner's behaviour, you need to prepare the ground so that he or she can do so without violating his or her own dignity. The other must have time to adapt to the new requirements.

**Exercise "Advantages and disadvantages of assertive behaviour".** Psychologist: "Now that you have learnt more about the characteristics of assertive behaviour, I suggest that we think about and identify the advantages and disadvantages of assertive behaviour. In which situations will assertiveness be a positive factor and a negative factor in the process of communication.

Discussion:

- How did you feel when you completed the task?

- What do you think the purpose of this exercise is?

Information message "Assertive behaviour techniques"

- A. Salter's technique, or how to assertively get your way. This technique can be used whenever we want to insist on our needs. It is important to know that we are talking about something to which we have a full right, and it is better when this right is defined by law or other documents. The principle of this technique is that we clearly and explicitly formulate our need – and do not allow the other side to move away from the problem. We agree with everything that is at least a little bit true or can be.

- Brainstorming exercise by A. Osborne. The essence of this exercise is that the participants, led by the trainer, freely discuss the problem, express hypotheses about ways to solve it, regardless of the literacy and feasibility of the ideas. The key is to offer as many options as possible. The conditions for the exercise are as follows:

- number of participants – 7-10 people;

- Participant engagement, relaxation for free expression of as many opinions as possible;

- recording all opinions expressed;

- lack of criticism of any idea;

- encouraging the boldest ideas,

- the possibility of any combination.

Participants are given the opportunity not to be judged for what they say, they say whatever comes to mind and thus become more confident. This feeling of confidence creates a need for self-expression, and when combined with assertive behaviour techniques, it creates a person with conviction.

The "broken record" technique – repeatedly and calmly repeating the request leads to the desired result. It is worth remembering that the use of this approach is limited by the following conditions:

- claims should be in the nature of specific demands that are relatively easy to satisfy;

- This technique should not be used if you do not want your opponent to feel defeated after such a dialogue;

- If there is no result after 5-10 repetitions, you should not repeat your demands, because your opponent will obviously not fulfil them;

- You should use this technique only if you are sure that you are right.

You need to be able to ask for a favour. At the same time, non-verbal manifestations should not demonstrate to the opponent that your request for help is, in fact, a courtesy on your part.

- You need to be able to say no. Not everyone has this skill. In this case, we are not talking about a bureaucratic refusal, but about an unwillingness to fulfil a request if it contradicts, for example, your ideas about morality, or there are circumstances that do not allow you to fulfil it. You can use the following types of refusal techniques:

a) the technique of simple assertiveness (confident refusal without explanation);

b) the technique of empathic assertiveness, when in case of refusal, sympathy is expressed, the reasons for refusal are communicated, and unwanted reactions are mitigated.

The refusal to use such techniques should be calm and clearly stated.

If the criticism is generally unfair, but there is some truth in it, use the "open door" technique: by agreeing without fear with the person who criticises us, we will sooner or later silence them.

Role play "Application of assertive behaviour techniques in different life situations"

Instructor: "You have listened to a message about assertive behaviour techniques. To improve our knowledge in practice, let's act out situations where each of you can show yourself in different roles." Discussion.

Modelling practical situations. Exercise "Say no". Instructor: I am going to ask us to put into practice the information we have just learned. So, choose one of the paper squares. Depending on the colour you choose, divide into 3 microgroups. Within 10 minutes, each group should come up with as many worthy options for refusing in a given situation as possible. Note: the situation for each group is given by the trainer in an envelope of the same colour as the coloured squares of the microgroup members (6 green squares, 6 yellow squares, 7 blue squares; 3 coloured envelopes with situations).

Note:

Situation 1: refusing to lend money to a friend, even though you have it and have other plans for it.

Situation 2: refuse a request to write off a test paper.

Situation 3 : refusing to give your favourite clothes to your friend for an important evening.

Discussion:

- Which of the above rejections were worthy and why?

- How did you feel during the task?

- What was the most difficult part of this exercise and why?

Psychologist. Very often we face incredible pressure from friends and acquaintances. Of course, we always hope that we will be able to resist this kind of negative influence, but it is often difficult to do so, as this position is not always popular in this environment. The truth is that you need to have real moral strength to resist influence.

**Exercise "Dilemma"**. The purpose of the exercise is to teach people to reflect on their emotions and feelings, to relieve feelings of misunderstanding and resentment. Exercise: the trainer invites one of the participants to take part in this exercise. Two chairs are placed in the middle of the room. The participant first sits on one chair and expresses his/her position in the conflict situation. The second empty chair is placed opposite the participant. The participant's task is to imagine on the chair the person with whom the participant is currently in a conflict situation. The participant tells (the empty chair) about his/her desires, resentments, feelings of evaluation and demands. Until he / she runs out of words. Then he/she moves to the second chair and addresses the empty chair from the position of the opponent, expressing his/her claims, feelings, resentments, plans. Note to the trainer: at the end of the exercise, discuss with the participant what feelings and experiences accompanied him during the exercise.

The participants' awareness of life values, goals, and plans based on the "event" is the key to constructive final and intermediate goals of human existence, which is the purpose of the training.

Tips on how to increase resource efficiency:

- Don't try to "embrace the immense", don't take on all the cases at once;
- Don't accumulate problems; eventually the situation will reach a point where you will no longer be able to deal with it, leading to conflict;
- Learn to control yourself, monitor and adjust your behaviour and feelings;
- Be able to "pull yourself together" in time and take control of the situation;
- Notice the reactions to your behaviour and individual actions of those around you;
- Study the behaviour of others, which will not only increase conflict competence but also help you to develop a range of effective knowledge, practical skills and abilities to effectively organise your own activities;
- Understanding of external and internal motivators of productive activity and how to manage them;
- Awareness of the purpose of the activity, its motives and determinants.

Based on the material learned, participants comprehend conflict, learn to predict, prevent, and overcome conflict situations, which contributes to the formation of their conflict competence.

**Scatter game** "Why is it worth being assertive?" Participants are asked to collect the words on different paper strips and read the statements:

- To keep everyone out of your head, and to keep yourself out of anyone else's head;
- Be less stressed, be able to protect your own boundaries and not allow yourself to be used;
- To make it better for us to live with others and for others to live with us;
- To better communicate with other people;
- To have peace of mind and good health;
- Be able to make their own decisions on their own responsibility;
- Have more time for yourself;
- Do what you like;
- Be able to resist problems and resolutely solve them;
- To be closer to yourself;
- Be confident, but in a mature way;
- Do not deceive yourself and love yourself more;
- Live in authentic relationships with other people;
- Honour yourself.

**Exercise "Time for reflection"**. Goal: development of self-awareness and self-knowledge of participants.

Resources: the Incomplete Sentences methodology, a box or basket. How to do it: Cut up the copies of the unfinished sentences and put them in a basket. The basket is placed in the centre of the circle. Each participant reads out a sentence in turn, completing it in his or her own words. After each answer, a discussion takes place, the duration of which is determined by the leader, who signals the passing of the turn to another participant.

Incomplete sentences:

- My biggest fear is...
- When others humiliate me, I...
- I don't trust people who...
- I get angry when someone...
- I really don't like anything about myself...
- I get sad when...
- I would like my parents to know...
- When I like someone who doesn't like me...
- Given the choice between "active" and "passive", I would call myself...
- I wear these clothes because...

- The main reason why I like being in this group...
- When other people behave towards me like my parents, I...
- My most unpleasant childhood experience...
- What I like most about my character is...
- When I don't like someone who likes me...
- I like...
- At school...
- I failed...
- I need to...
- I am at my best when...
- I hate...
- The only concern...
- I secretly...
- Dancing ...
- I can't understand why...
- I seem to understand what I want when...
- The best thing that could have happened to me...
- The hardest thing for me is...
- When I insist on what I want, people...
- If I could change one thing about myself, I would...
- What I like most about people is... because...
- The most I need from other people is...

Psychologist. As you can see, we are all different, we have different opinions, different fears or preferences, different considerations, and although we think differently, this does not give us the right to disrespect the opinions of other people.

People all over the world may look different, belong to different religions, have different education and be on different rungs of the social ladder, but they are all the same.

**Exercise "Magic Cup"**. Sit comfortably, put your hands loosely on your knees, close your eyes, breathe calmly, evenly and deeply. Relax. Imagine a white screen and focus on it. Imagine that you see your favourite mug on it. Colour it the way you want. Look at the cup again carefully, examine it. Fill it to the brim with your favourite drink.

Imagine and try to mentally draw another cup next to yours, someone else's. It is empty. Pour from your cup into the empty one. Next to it is another empty cup, and another and another... Pour from your cup into the empty cup and do not regret it. And now look again into your cup. O! It is full to the brim again!

What happened to it?

Why did this happen?

Your cup is special – magical. We can pour from it, and it will always be full. This cup is yours! It is filled with your kindness and confidence! Open your eyes. Calmly and confidently say: "It's me! I have this cup!" Reflection.

- How do you feel after doing the exercise?

**The movement "House, owner, earthquake"**. Participants stand in threes. Two of them (the "house") hold hands and raise them above the third participant (the "host").

On the coach's command: "House!" the "houses" change places.

On the coach's command: "Host!" the "hosts" change places.

On the coach's command: "Earthquake!" everyone changes places.

Psychologist. Self-confident people are characterised by independence and self-sufficiency, which manifests itself in various areas of life, but most obviously in the field of interpersonal relationships. External signs of confident behaviour are also most noticeable in communication situations.

A person with a sufficient level of assertive behaviour has the following characteristics:

1) a person freely expresses his or her thoughts and feelings;

2) communicates with people at all levels: with strangers, friends and family. This communication is always open, honest, direct and adequate;

3) active orientation to life: to achieve what one wants, to try to influence events;

4) actions are characterised by self-respect.

**Moving game "Find a mate".** Instruction: To improve your emotional and physical mood, I propose to play a game. All participants, sitting in a circle, look at each other for 20 seconds and silently choose a partner without telling him or her. At my command, everyone gets up and each participant has to run 3 circles around their partner as quickly as possible. As soon as they manage to do this, they sit down in their seat." Resources: chairs.

**Resource exercise "I am. I have. I can. I will."** The purpose of this exercise is to help you remind yourself of your resources, both external and internal. And to remind you that you can actively use them to support yourself in difficult times.

**"I am"**

Write down what you are proud of about yourself and what is good about you.

(I am alive. I am friendly. I am active...)

**"I have"**

List the people, places and different resources you can rely on.

(Work, parents, friend Nastya, colleagues, money in the account).

**"I can do it"**

Write down the skills, abilities, and activities you have.

(Taking responsibility, managing projects, learning, communicating in English, supporting people, meeting people).

**"I will"**

Indicate what you will do to support yourself in difficult times.

(I will go for a walk, go to bed on time, call my friend).

In the last paragraph, you can also write down the steps that are necessary to improve the situation and solve the problems.

We hope you found this useful.

**Self-disclosure exercise.** Goal: to study the level of psychological comfort of each participant and their readiness for interaction, their mood.

We all know how important the group atmosphere is in any activity, for children and adults alike. That's why I'd like to offer you the following exercise, which allows you to get data on this in a very simple way.

Instruction: It is important for me that we find out how comfortable and ready each of us is for active interaction during our meeting, what mood you are in now.

Close your eyes and listen: please imagine a scale from 1 to 10. One on this scale means that you are not yet ready to "open up" so to speak, and your mood level is low, and ten means that you can be active and open now and your mood level is high. Now decide how many points you would give yourself for your ability to open up and your mood right now. Once you have decided, raise the corresponding number of fingers without opening your eyes. Hold your fingers up until I ask you to open your eyes. I will do this when the last of you has shown your points on your fingers. Now open your eyes and see how many fingers each person is holding up. Thank you, everyone!

We are constantly interacting and having a certain influence on each other, thus creating a unique psychological atmosphere.

**Exercise "Tree of Power".** Goal: to enable each participant to realise their own expectations and value from the training, and to compare them with the expectations of other participants.

Instructions: Participants write down their expectations on post-it notes (in the form of palms), voice them and attach the post-it notes to the tree poster, creating a tree of strength.

The psychologist summarises the expectations of the participants and summarises the results of the exercise.

**Exercise "Let's pair up".** The aim is to pair up the participants.

**Instructions:** Now you need to get into pairs. To do this, please choose a candy in turn (*participants sit in a circle, the leader brings a bag of candy to each of them*).

Look at the colour of your wrapper and find the same colour among the others. Now you are paired up!

**Exercise "What did I notice?".** Objective: to develop observation skills, increase the level of attention to each other, establish a psychological microclimate, and create an energising exercise.

Instructions: Get into *pairs*. Take pens and paper and turn your backs to each other... I'm going to ask you questions about your partner, and you're going to write your answers. So let's get started...

- What colour shoes is your partner wearing?
- Does she / he have any jewellery on her / his hands, neck or clothes?
- Which hand is the watch on?
- What shape are the buttons on her / his clothes?
- What colour are her / his nails?
- What clothes is she / he wearing?
- What colour are her / his eyes?

Turn to face each other and check your answers.

Now, in turn, tell me if this exercise was difficult. What are the signs that often go unnoticed?

Throughout our lives, we encounter people who need our attention and support (especially children), and sometimes we need it ourselves. And this is perfectly normal.

**Exercise "My working days".** Aim: to enable participants to understand that our work can be both exhausting and rejuvenating.

Task: Imagine the landscape of your emotional state. Draw or write down your own feelings and thoughts about them:

- You wake up on Monday morning.
- You're meeting your lunch break.
- You think about the fact that now there will be many children around again.
- You are waiting to meet friends you haven't seen.
- You go to a meeting.
- Conduct classes.
- You are planning to visit a methodological association.
- You think that you need to fill out documentation.
- You are going to prepare a report.
- You are waiting for the weekend.

Discussion: These associations show how work affects your well-being. An indicator of quality of life is experiences. You cannot escape from experiences, nor can you escape from life itself. You can only face them and experience them...

**Avalanche exercise.** Imagine that your house is covered in snow over the weekend. You can't get out, contact anyone, or get help until Monday. You're on your own, you have no responsibilities, no homework. Think of ways you can use this critical situation to have fun. You have good food, wine, music, books, hot water, paper and pencils, but no TV or modern gadgets, and no internet.

Discussion:

- What have you learned for yourself?
- Should you wait until your house is covered in snow?

### **The parable of the Problem Solver**

The professor picked up a glass of water, held it forward and asked his students: How much do you think this glass weighs?

The audience began to whisper.

- About 200 grams! No, maybe 300 grams! Or maybe even all 500," came the answers.
- I really don't know for sure until I weigh it. But that's not necessary right now. My question is this: what happens if I hold the glass like this for a few minutes?

- Nothing!
- Indeed, nothing terrible will happen," the professor replied.
- What happens if I hold this glass at arm's length for, say, two hours?
- Your arm will start to hurt.
- And if it's all day?
- Your hand will feel numb and you will have severe muscle tension.
- We may even have to go to the hospital," said one of the students.
- How do you think the weight of the glass will change if I hold it all day?
- No!" the students answered in confusion.
- What should be done to fix it?
- Just put the glass on the table," said one student cheerfully.
- "Of course!" the professor replied happily, "That's what we do with all of life's difficulties. Just think about a problem for a few minutes and it will be right there with you. Think about it for a few hours and it will start to suck you in like a quagmire. If you think all day, it will paralyse you. You can think about the problem, but as a rule, this does not lead to anything, its weight will not decrease. Only action is the only way to deal with the problem. Solve it or put it aside!

**Exercise "Compliment in a circle"**. Instructions: Get into a circle and hold hands. Take turns giving each other a smile and a compliment. Thank you!

And so our training has come to an end. During today's meeting, you have had the opportunity to learn more about assertive behaviour techniques, learn to speak freely and be confident people. Discussion.

Be an eternal donor, give your heart to others. Don't stop drinking from the fountain of wisdom; sow the reasonable, the good, the eternal; collect pearls of experience, diamonds of spirituality, and fruits of creativity; don't lose your humanity, love, and faith; take care of a happy future by building a smart present.

**Exercise "Applause"**. The trainer invites 5 participants into a circle and the group applauds. When all the participants are in the circle, the trainer thanks the whole group for their work.

During the training, the students in the training group, with the assistance of the trainer, were involved in active communication and interpersonal interaction aimed at achieving the goals and objectives.

The use of interactive exercises during the training work allows the trainer to clarify the expectations of the participants from the training, achieve cohesion among the participants, diagnose the psychological state of the group in a certain period, promote interaction between the participants and prevent misunderstandings between them. An important point in conducting a training is to obtain feedback from participants, which analyses the results of the work, opinions, impressions of the participants, their knowledge and skills.

After the training, we conducted a re-diagnostic procedure of the level of assertiveness in order to determine the peculiarities of the formation of assertive behaviour in conflict in adolescents through the means of assertiveness training.

The formative experiment was based on the theoretical provisions and results of the previous stages of the study. The purpose of the formative experiment was to improve the level of assertiveness of individuals.

The analysis of the results of the ascertaining experiment by the methodology for determining the level of assertiveness is presented in Table 3 and Fig. 2.

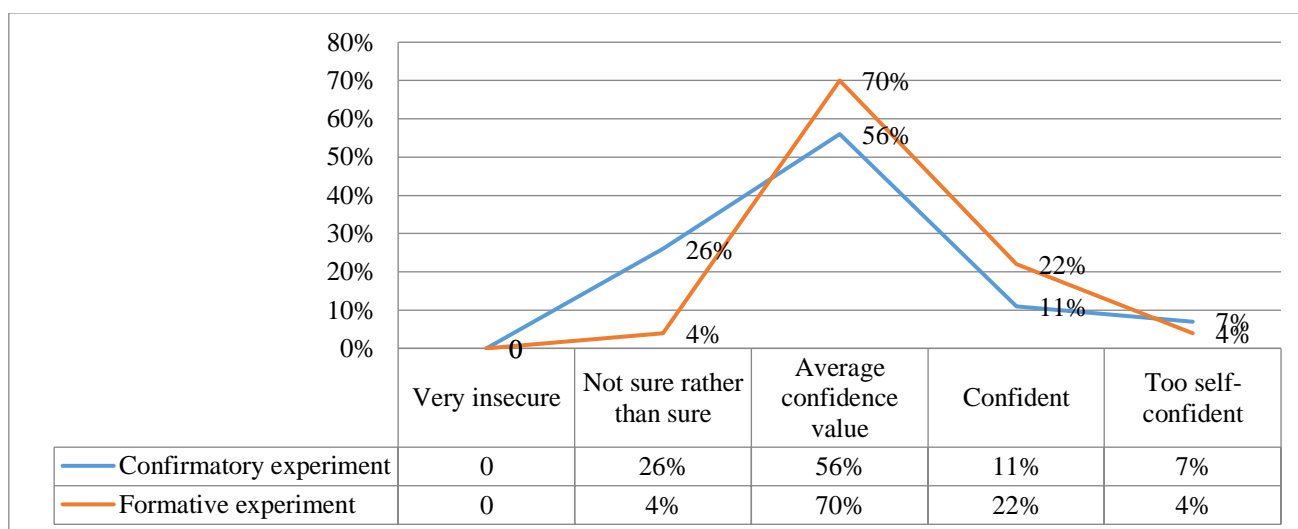
As can be seen from Table 3 and Fig. 2, in the "average confidence" category, the indicator changed by 14%; the "confident" indicator increased by 11%, which indicates that the subjects experienced an increase in their level of assertiveness after the training session; good dynamics were also observed in the "rather unsure than confident" category, which decreased by 22%. The category "very unsure of myself" remained at zero.

*Table 3. Post-training indicators of the assertiveness level study (Rydas test)*

Levels of self-confidence	Number of participants, %	
	A confirmatory experiment	A formative experiment
I am very insecure	0	0
Not sure rather than confident	26%	4%
Average value of confidence	56%	70%
Confident in yourself	11%	22%
Overconfident	7%	4%
n = 30		

It can be assumed that the assertiveness training had a positive impact on increasing the level of development of personality assertiveness.

Thus, the quantitative analysis of the study results allowed us to conclude that at the end of the formative experiment, there were progressive changes in the level of assertive behaviour.



*Fig. 2. Dynamics of the level of assertiveness in subjects, n = 30*

**Conclusions.** The generalised results of the study allowed us to draw general conclusions:

1. Preserving one's own resourcefulness and resilience in modern life situations is one of the most pressing issues of our time, as it affects interpersonal relationships, self-realisation and psychological well-being. In this context, the study of such a psychological phenomenon as assertiveness, which allows you to protect your rights and interests without violating the rights and interests of others, is of particular importance.

2. It is determined that the term assertiveness is used in psychological literature as a synonym for confidence. Assertive behaviour means that a person protects his or her own rights, expresses his or her thoughts and feelings directly, honestly and openly by means that respect the rights of other people. Such a person acts without unnecessary anxiety or guilt. The development of assertive behaviour is possible in the presence of certain individual psychological qualities of a person: the formation of moral principles, self-regulation of emotions and feelings, valuable attitude to others and to oneself, self-confidence, and initiative in social contacts.

3. The results of the empirical study of individual behavioural style show that students have different levels of assertiveness. The average level of assertiveness was formed in 56% of respondents who are to some extent able to defend their rights and interests, which has a situational manifestation that is not fixed in the individual style of behaviour. A high level of assertiveness – "self-confidence" – was found in 11% of children who objectively assess their own capabilities, taking into account the rights and interests of others. It should be noted that the category "very insecure" has a zero value, which is good. The category "rather unsure



than confident" includes 7 children, 26% of the total sample. And 2 adolescents are "too confident" – 7%.

4. The development of assertiveness involves the formation of the ability to have spontaneous reactions, reasonable expression of emotions, the ability to speak directly about one's desires and requirements, the ability to express one's own point of view without fear of objection, using arguments, to insist on one's own in situations where any argumentation is superfluous in such a way that the rights of other people are not violated.

After the assertiveness training, a formative experiment was conducted, based on the theoretical positions and results of the previous stages of the study. The methodology used before the training was applied. Quantitative analysis of the results allowed us to conclude that by the end of the formative experiment, progressive changes in assertiveness behaviour had occurred.

The effectiveness of the assertiveness training was analysed and the dynamics of indicators of the development of assertive behaviour using psychodiagnostic tools was revealed. The results of the study suggest that assertiveness training helped to increase the level of assertive behaviour.

5. Prospects for further research may include the study of peculiarities in the development of assertiveness and assertive behaviour in children of different age groups: the direction of specialised training, the use of advanced assertiveness training to develop the level of assertive behaviour; the use of other means and methods to improve and develop the level of assertive behaviour.

Based on the results of the work, we can recommend developing assertiveness and flexibility to increase the resourcefulness of the individual. To do this, it is worth using psychoeducation, expanding awareness of the components of assertiveness, conducting trainings where you can rehearse different ways of reacting to a situation, and learn new behavioural strategies that have not been used before. In psychodynamic therapy, with "avoidant" clients, one should work towards strengthening the ego in order to develop the ability to withstand the tension of direct confrontation, develop resilience under psychological pressure, the ability to be aware of their needs and express their opinions, pay attention to the tendency to dependence and subordination, and with "competitive" clients – work on reducing aggressiveness, develop the ability to understand and accept others, and strive for the integration of opposites on the path of individuation.

We believe that the formation of assertiveness and an individual approach to their development and implementation in the educational process is an important step towards the acquisition of the necessary assertive qualities by students.

Thus, assertive behaviour in the communicative pedagogical process is the best option for teacher-student and parent-child communication, which leads to the formation of an independent and responsible personality capable of successfully solving problems – psychological, educational and other, and this is the goal of modern humanistic education.

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