

FM-PTS-11

SESSION 11

HOW WE LIVE — BEHAVIOR TYPES

12 Weeks to a Stronger You | Post Traumatic Strength

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"Once you identify, rationalize, and organize your Core Beliefs, you move them from the limbic system — where your feelings control your actions — to the Cerebral Cortex, where your rational mind leads."

THE FOUNDATION: WE ARE RESPONSIBLE AND WE HAVE CHOICES

Before diving into the three behavior types, it's worth grounding the conversation in two foundational principles:

- Individuals are responsible for their own actions. This is not about blame — it is about power. When you accept that you are responsible for your behavior, you claim the power to change it. You are not a passive recipient of circumstances. You have a mind and a spirit that are capable of choosing a response.
- Individuals continually make choices. Even when it doesn't feel like it, you are always choosing. Some choices are obvious — what to eat, what to wear. Others are subtle — whether to speak up or stay silent, whether to engage or withdraw. Recognizing that you are always choosing is the beginning of real freedom.

"Assertive behavior honors the self while honoring others. The assertive person authentically cares for others and at the same time engages in self-care."

PASSIVE BEHAVIOR

The word passive comes from a Latin root meaning "to suffer" — and that is often what passive behavior produces. Passive behavior is characterized by withdrawal, avoidance, and the abdication of your own needs in order to avoid conflict or discomfort.

Types of passive behavior include:

- Physical passivity: withdrawing from situations, sleeping excessively, avoiding engagement.
- Verbal passivity: staying silent when you need to speak, agreeing when you disagree.
- Emotional passivity: shutting down your feelings rather than processing them.

PASSIVE BEHAVIOR (CONTINUED)

- Passive-aggressive behavior: saying yes while meaning no; indirect resistance.

Passivity often feels like the peaceful option — but it is not. It is the option that allows internal pressure to build. Over time, passive behavior leads to resentment, diminished self-worth, and the kind of suffering that comes from never advocating for yourself.

AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

Aggressive behavior moves against others. At its core, it communicates: "I have the right to dominate, patronize, or humiliate you in order to get what I want." Aggressive behavior damages relationships, destroys trust, and deepens isolation — the opposite of what trauma recovery requires.

Types of aggressive behavior include:

- Physical aggression: overt acts of force or intimidation.
- Nonverbal aggression: the tone of voice, facial expressions, and gestures that communicate threat or contempt.
- Verbal aggression: insults, threats, sarcasm used as a weapon.

AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR (CONTINUED)

- Passive-aggressive: indirect aggression — the silent treatment, sabotage, subtle undermining.

BUILDING AN ASSERTIVE LIFE

Assertiveness is a skill, not a personality trait. It grows with practice, self-awareness, and the courage to act according to your values even when it's uncomfortable. Here are the attitudes and behaviors that support an assertive life:

- Believe that you have options — because you do.
- Be proactive — anticipate difficult situations and plan your response in advance.
- Value yourself and others equally — your needs matter as much as anyone else's.
- Practice saying what you mean, calmly and clearly.

BUILDING AN ASSERTIVE LIFE (CONTINUED)

- Set and maintain healthy boundaries, not as punishment but as self-respect.

This is the behavioral expression of Post Traumatic Strength: not the absence of difficulty, but the presence of agency. You have the right to advocate for yourself. You have the right to be heard. And you have the capacity to do it in a way that honors both yourself and the people around you.