Rathus S A. A 30-item schedule for assessing assertive behavior.
Behav. Ther. 4:398-406, 1973.
[Montclair State College, NJ]

Studies of the reliability and validity of a schedule for measuring assertiveness are presented. Moderate to high test-retest reliability and split-half reliability are reported. Validity studies report moderate correlations between test scores and independent ratings of respondents' personality traits and assertive behavior. [The *Social Sciences Citation Index®* (*SSCI®*) indicates that this paper has been cited in over 285 publications since 1973.]

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"The apparent popularity of my assertiveness schedule and the frequent citation of the article in which it appeared have been two of the mysteries of my life. First, many of the items on the schedule were adapted from questions used by others, such as Joseph Wolpe and Arnold Lazarus.[1] In effect, I only quantified responses to these questions and validated their usefulness. Second, I put together the scale for use in my doctoral research on the efficacy of videotaped assertiveness-training models. To me, the videotaped treatment was the important feature of my research. The scale, by comparison, was an afterthought, and I submitted it for independent publication merely in hopes of building my *vita*.

"Yet I continue to receive dozens of requests each year for permission to use the scale from professionals and students in fields including psychology, psychiatry, social work, nursing, and sociology. I long ago lost track of the dissertations on, and other investigations of, the validity and reliability of the scale with this population and that population. It also turns out that there are a number of 'competing' scales and that investigators are infinitely concerned with the correlations among all these scales and what they might portend about assertiveness as it exists in the realm of forms. Whenever a study finds my scale lacking in some regard, there is sure to be a subsequent investigation that faults the faultfinder and reaffirms its essential validity.

"All this activity concerns a scale that I now recognize is confounded by the failure to differentiate between assertive behavior and aggressive behavior. (But, of course, others have by now used multivariate procedures to derive assertiveness and aggressiveness subscales, among many, many others.)

"All this activity concerns a scale for a field that lacks a single, definitive name and is now seen, by some, as a symptom of the excesses of the 'Me Decade.' As Richard M. McFall[2] aptly noted earlier in these pages, some have referred to the clinical art we have both researched as 'assertive training' while others, grammatical purists, have used the term 'assertion training.' Still other grammatical purists have prevailed on me and many others to join as a third force in nomenclature and use the term 'assertiveness training.' But do not be quick to place your cash on any of these; the focus of the field now seems to be shifting to something called 'social skills training'—which, in fact, I prefer. In assertive, er, assertion training, we usually encourage clients to speak their minds forcefully, to 'let it all hang out.' Social skills training is more complex and perhaps more socially appropriate. The socially skillful client sometimes keeps it in.

"In reviewing these paragraphs, I see that I have been assertive and not socially skillful about self-assertion. What can you expect from a PhD from the Me Decade? In recent years, I have managed to avoid all this empirical controversy by focusing on writing psychology textbooks. Now I stick to summarizing the controversies of others."

1. Wolpe J & Lazarus A A. *Behavior therapy techniques.* Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1966. 198 p.
2. McFall R M. Citation Classic. Commentary on *J. Abnormal Psychol.* 77:313-23, 1971.
Current Contents/Social & Behavioral Sciences 14(23):22, 7 June 1982.