

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 5A

Applying DEAR MAN Skills to a Difficult Current Interaction

To turn around really difficult situations, focus the skills on the other person's behavior right now. When other people have really good skills themselves, and keep refusing your legitimate requests or pestering you to do something you don't want to do.

Apply DEAR MAN Skills

1. **Describe the current interaction.** If the "broken record" and ignoring don't work, make a statement about what is happening between you and the person now, *but without imputing motives*.

Example: "You keep asking me over and over, even though I have already said no several times," or "It is hard to keep asking you to empty the dishwasher when it is your month to do it."

Not: "You obviously don't want to hear what I am saying," "You obviously don't care about me," "Well, it's obvious that what I have to say doesn't matter to you," "Obviously you think I'm stupid."

2. **Express feelings or opinions about the interaction.** For instance, in the middle of an interaction that is not going well, you can express your feelings of discomfort in the situation.

Example: "I am sorry I cannot do what you want, but I'm finding it hard to keep discussing it," or "It's becoming very uncomfortable for me to keep talking about this, since I can't help it. I am starting to feel angry about it," or "I'm not sure you think this is important for you to do."

Not: "I hate you!", "Every time we talk about this, you get defensive," "Stop patronizing me!"

3. **Assert wishes in the situation.** When another person is pestering you, you can ask him or her to stop it. When a person is refusing a request, you can suggest that you put the conversation off until another time. Give the other person a chance to think about it.

Example: "Please don't ask me again. My answer won't change," or "OK, let's stop discussing this now and pick it up again sometime tomorrow," or "Let's cool down for a while and then get together to figure out a solution."

Not: "Would you shut up?" "You should do this!", "You should really calm down and do what's right here."

4. **Reinforce.** When you are saying no to someone who keeps asking, or when someone won't take your opinion seriously, suggest ending the conversation, since you aren't going to change your mind anyway. When trying to get someone to do something for you, you can suggest that you will come up with a better offer later.

Example: "Let's stop talking about this now. I'm not going to change my mind, and I think this is just going to get frustrating for both of us," or "OK, I can see you don't want to do this, so let's see if we can come up with something that will make you more willing to do it."

Not: "If you don't do this for me, I'll never do anything for you ever again," "If you keep asking me, I'll get a restraining order against you," "Gosh, you must be a terrible person for not doing this/for asking me to do this."

Getting Someone to Do What You Want: DEAR MAN Skills

Remember **DEAR MAN**:

<u>D</u> escribe	<u>M</u> indful
<u>E</u> xpress	<u>A</u> ppear Confident
<u>A</u> ssert	<u>N</u> egotiate
<u>R</u> einforce	

Describe: Describe the situation. Stick to the facts. "The last three weekends, I have noticed you coming home after curfew."

Express: Express your feelings using "I" statements ("I feel . . .," "I would like . . ."). Stay away from "you should . . ."; instead, say, "When you come home late, *I feel* worried about you."

Assert: Ask for what you want or say "no" clearly. Remember, the other person cannot read your mind. "*I would like* you to come home by curfew."

Reinforce: Reward (reinforce) the person ahead of time by explaining the positive effects of getting what you want. "I would be able to trust you more and give you more privileges if you stuck to our curfew agreement."

Mindful: Keep your focus on what you want, avoiding distractions. Come back to your assertion over and over, like a "broken record." Ignore attacks. "I know the other kids stay out later than you, *and* I would still like you to do your best to meet your curfew."

Appear Confident: Make (and maintain) eye contact. Use a confident tone of voice—do not whisper, mumble, or give up and say "Whatever."

Negotiate: Be willing to **GIVE TO GET**. Ask for the other person's input. Offer alternative solutions to the problem. Know when to "agree to disagree" and walk away. "If you can do this for the next 2 weeks, then I will feel comfortable letting you stay out later for the party."

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Practice Exercise: DEAR MAN Skills

Due Date _____

Choose one situation during the week in which you used your DEAR MAN skills and describe below.

What happened? (Who did what? What led up to what? What is the problem?) _____

What did you want (e.g., asking for something, saying "no," being taken seriously)?

Be specific: _____

DEAR MAN Skills used (write down *exactly* how you used each one):

Describe (describe the situation; just the facts): _____

Express (feelings): _____

Assert: _____

Reward: _____

Mindful: _____

Appear confident: _____

Negotiate: _____

What was the result of using your DEAR MAN skills? _____

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Interpersonal Effectiveness:

Learning how to talk to other people so they want to listen to me

DEAR MAN

- Describe** Use my words to tell others what I am thinking and feeling, use my words to list the facts about a problem or situation
- Express**..... Observe, identify, and then describe my emotions and thoughts
- Assert**..... Speak up for myself to other kids and accept help from adults. Use willingness to express my thoughts and feelings to other people.
- Reinforce**..... Reward myself for using my DEAR MAN skills, feel proud of myself. Tell others what good thing you will do for listening to you, agreeing with you, and accepting what you say is true.
- Mindfulness** Use your "HOW" skills to say in this moment, being nonjudgmental, and being effective.
- Appear Confident** Talk in a voice people want to listen to, use gentle eye contact, speak clearly so everyone can understand your words, use a gentle voice. Trust yourself and trust in others to listen to what you want to say.
- Negotiate**..... Be willing to discuss choices and other ideas. Be willing to listen to what others are saying. Accept the answer with a good attitude. Be willing to share your own thoughts and ideas.

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Interpersonal Effectiveness:

Learning how to talk to other people so they want to listen to me

DEAR MAN Bill of Rights

- I have the right to be treated with respect.
- I have the right to my own opinions.
- I have the right to express my feelings.
- I have the right to stand up for my values.
- I have the right to disagree with others.
- I have the right to understand a request before agreeing.
- I have the right to ask for more information.
- I have the right to take time to think about a request, using a care break or a mindful moment.
- I have the right to say no without guilt.
- I have the right to ask for my wants and needs.
- I have the right to set healthy boundaries with others for myself.
- I have the right to be in Wise Mind before I get into a discussion.
- I have the right to step away from a conflict or a problem.
- I have the right to...
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