

DBT DEAR MAN Skill Worksheet

Ask clearly, say no effectively and stay focused on your objective

Purpose of DEAR MAN

DEAR MAN is a DBT interpersonal-effectiveness structure for asking for something, declining a request or addressing a problem while staying focused on your objective. It is most useful after you identify what you want and whether the request is safe and realistic.

Prepare your objective

What outcome do I want? State one observable request or limit, not a demand that another person feel or think differently.

Step	Planning prompt
D - Describe	What facts can I state briefly and without judgement?
E - Express	What do I feel, think or need? Use clear first-person language.
A - Assert	What exactly am I asking for, or saying no to?
R - Reinforce	How could cooperation help the other person, the relationship or the situation?
M - Mindful	How will I return to my point if the conversation drifts, attacks or pressures me?
A - Appear confident	What posture, pace and tone will help me sound steady rather than aggressive?
N - Negotiate	What alternatives could still meet the core need? What is not negotiable?

Write your DEAR MAN script

Describe: The facts are...

Express: I feel / think / need...

Assert: I am asking... / I am not willing...

Reinforce: This would help because...

Mindful, confident and negotiable: My repeat phrase, tone plan, acceptable alternatives and non-negotiables are...

Practice and review

Practice round	What worked?	What will I adjust?
1		
2		

Use this worksheet safely

This worksheet is for education and skills practice. It does not replace assessment, diagnosis, crisis support, legal advice or individual treatment. In situations involving threats, coercive control, stalking or violence, prioritise safety and seek specialist help rather than relying only on communication skills.

Research basis: Interpersonal effectiveness is one of the four standard DBT skills modules. DEAR MAN targets objective effectiveness. This is an original practice worksheet, not an official DBT handout. Sources consulted: Behavioral Tech Institute; Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS DBT self-help programme; peer-reviewed DBT skills-training research.