

Guidelines for Objectives Effectiveness: Getting What You Want (DEAR MAN)

A way to remember these skills is to remember the term **DEAR MAN**:

Describe
Express
Assert
Reinforce
(Stay) Mindful
Appear Confident
Negotiate

Describe

Describe the current SITUATION (if necessary). Stick to the facts.
Tell the person exactly what you are reacting to.

"You told me you would be home by dinner but you didn't get here until 11."

Express

Express your FEELINGS and OPINIONS about the situation.
Don't assume that the other person knows how you feel.

"When you come home so late, I start worrying about you."

Use phrases such as "I want" instead of "You should," "I don't want" instead of "You shouldn't."

Assert

Assert yourself by ASKING for what you want or SAYING NO clearly.
Do not assume that others will figure out what you want.
Remember that others cannot read your mind.

"I would really like it if you would call me when you are going to be late."

Reinforce

Reinforce (reward) the person ahead of time (so to speak)
by explaining positive effects of getting what you want or need.
If necessary, also clarify the negative consequences of not getting
what you want or need.

"I would be so relieved, and a lot easier to live with, if you do that."

Remember also to reward desired behavior after the fact.

(continued on next page)

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 5 (p. 2 of 2)

(Stay)

Mindful

Keep your focus ON YOUR GOALS.

Maintain your position. Don't be distracted. Don't get off the topic.

"Broken record": Keep asking, saying no, or expressing your opinion over and over and over. Just keep replaying the same thing again and again.

Ignore attacks: If another person attacks, threatens, or tries to change the subject, ignore the threats, comments, or attempts to divert you. Do not respond to attacks. Ignore distractions. Just keep making your point.

"I would still like a call."

Appear confident

Appear EFFECTIVE and competent.

Use a confident voice tone and physical manner; make good eye contact.

No stammering, whispering, staring at the floor, retreating.

No saying, "I'm not sure," etc.

Negotiate

Be willing to GIVE TO GET.

Offer and ask for other solutions to the problem.

Reduce your request.

Say no, but offer to do something else or to solve the problem another way.

Focus on what will work.

"How about if you text me when you think you might be late?"

Turn the tables: Turn the problem over to the other person. Ask for other solutions.

"What do you think we should do? . . . I can't just stop worrying about you [or I'm not willing to]."

Other ideas:

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."



Guidelines for Relationship Effectiveness: Keeping the Relationship (GIVE)

A way to remember these skills is to remember the word **GIVE (DEAR MAN, GIVE)**:

(Be) Gentle

(Act) Interested

Validate

(Use an) Easy manner

(Be)

Gentle

BE NICE and respectful.

No attacks: No verbal or physical attacks. No hitting, clenching fists. No harassment of any kind. Express anger directly with words.

No threats: If you have to describe painful consequences for not getting what you want, describe them calmly and without exaggerating.
No "manipulative" statements, no hidden threats. No "I'll kill myself if you . . ."
Tolerate a "no." Stay in the discussion even if it gets painful. Exit gracefully.

No judging: No moralizing. No "If you were a good person, you would . . ."
No "You should . . ." or "You shouldn't . . ." Abandon blame.

No sneering: No smirking, eye rolling, sucking teeth. No cutting off or walking away.
No saying, "That's stupid, don't be sad," "I don't care what you say."

(Act)

Interested

LISTEN and APPEAR INTERESTED in the other person.

Listen to the other person's point of view.

Face the person; maintain eye contact; lean toward the person rather than away. Don't interrupt or talk over the person.

Be sensitive to the person's wish to have the discussion at a later time. Be patient.

Validate

With WORDS AND ACTIONS, show that you understand the other person's feelings and thoughts about the situation. See the world from the other person's point of view, and then say or act on what you see.

"I realize this is hard for you, and . . .", "I see that you are busy, and . . ."

Go to a private place when the person is uncomfortable talking in a public place.

(Use an)

Easy manner

Use a little humor.

SMILE. Ease the person along. Be light-hearted. Sweet-talk.

Use a "soft sell" over a "hard sell." Be "political."

Leave your attitude at the door.

Other ideas:

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 6A

Expanding the V in GIVE: Levels of Validation

1. ☐ **Pay Attention:** Look interested in the other person instead of bored (no multitasking).
2. ☐ **Reflect Back:** Say back what you heard the other person say or do, to be sure you understand exactly what the person is saying. No judgmental language or tone of voice!
3. ☐ **“Read Minds”:** Be sensitive to what is *not* being said by the other person. Pay attention to facial expressions, body language, what is happening, and what you know about the person already. Show you understand in words or by your actions. Check it out and make sure you are right. Let go if you are not.
4. ☐ **Understand:** Look for how what the other person is feeling, thinking, or doing makes sense, based on the person’s past experiences, present situation, and/or current state of mind or physical condition (i.e., the causes).
5. ☐ **Acknowledge the Valid:** Look for how the person’s feelings, thinking, or actions are valid responses because they fit current facts, or are understandable because they are a logical response to current facts.
6. ☐ **Show Equality:** Be yourself! Don’t “one-up” or “one-down” the other person. Treat the other as an equal, not as fragile or incompetent.



Guidelines for Self-Respect Effectiveness: Keeping Respect for Yourself (FAST)

A way to remember these skills is to remember the word **FAST (DEAR MAN, GIVE FAST)**.

(Be) Fair
(No) Apologies
Stick to Values
(Be) Truthful

(Be)
Fair

Be fair to YOURSELF and to the OTHER person.
Remember to VALIDATE YOUR OWN feelings and wishes,
as well as the other person's.

(No)
Apologies

Don't overapologize.
No apologizing for being alive or for making a request at all.
No apologies for having an opinion, for disagreeing.
No LOOKING ASHAMED, with eyes and head down or body slumped.
No invalidating the valid.

Stick to values

Stick to YOUR OWN values.
Don't sell out your values or integrity for reasons that aren't VERY important.
Be clear on what you believe is the moral or valued way of thinking and
acting, and "stick to your guns."

(Be)
Truthful

Don't lie. Don't act helpless when you are not.
Don't exaggerate or make up excuses.

Other ideas:

Validation

VALIDATION MEANS:

- Finding the kernel of truth in another person's perspective or situation; verifying the facts of a situation.
- Acknowledging that a person's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors have causes and are therefore understandable.
- *Not* necessarily agreeing with the other person.
- *Not* validating what is actually invalid.

WHY VALIDATE?

- It improves our relationships by showing we are listening and understand.
- It improves interpersonal effectiveness by reducing:
 1. Pressure to prove who is right
 2. Negative reactivity
 3. Anger
- It makes problem solving, closeness, and support possible.
- Invalidation hurts.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO VALIDATE

- The valid (and *only* the valid).
- The facts of a situation.
- A person's experiences, feelings/emotions, beliefs, opinions, or thoughts about something.
- Suffering and difficulties.

REMEMBER:

- Every invalid response makes sense in some way.
- Validation is not necessarily agreeing.
- Validation doesn't mean you like it.
- Only validate the valid!

Note. Adapted from Linehan, M. M. (1997). Validation and psychotherapy. In A. Bohart & L. Greenberg (Eds.), *Empathy reconsidered: New directions in psychotherapy* (pp. 353–392). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. Copyright 1997 by the American Psychological Association. Adapted by permission.

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A “How To” Guide to Validation

1. ☐ **Pay Attention:**

Look interested, listen, and observe. No multitasking. Make eye contact. Stay focused. Nod occasionally. Respond with your face (e.g., smile at happy statements; look concerned when hearing something painful).

2. ☐ **Reflect Back:**

Say back what you heard or observed to be sure you actually understand what the person is saying. No judgmental language or voice tone!

Try to really “get” what the person feels or thinks. Have an open mind. (No disagreeing, criticizing, or trying to change the person’s mind or goals.) Use a voice tone that allows the other person to correct you . . . and *check the facts!*

Example: *“So you are mad at me because you think I lied just to get back at you. Did I get it right?”*

3. ☐ **“Read Minds”:**

Be sensitive to what is *not* being said by the other person. Pay attention to facial expressions, body language, what is happening, and what you know about the person already. Show that you understand in words or by your actions. *Be open to correction.*

Example: *When you are asking a friend for a ride at the end of a long day and the person slumps down, say, “You look really tired. Let me look for someone else.”*

4. ☐ **Understand:**

Look for how the other person feels, is thinking, or if he or she is making sense, given the person’s history, state of mind or body, or current events (i.e. the causes)—even if you don’t approve of the person’s behavior, or if his or her belief is incorrect. Say *“It makes sense that you . . . because . . .”*

Example: *If you sent a party invitation to the wrong address, say, “I can see why you thought I might be excluding you on purpose.”*

5. ☐ **Acknowledge the valid:**

Show that you see that the person’s thoughts, feelings, or actions are valid, given current reality and facts. Act as if the person’s behavior is valid.

Example: *If you are criticized for not taking out the garbage on your day, admit that it is your day and take it out. If people present a problem, help them solve it (unless they just want to be heard). If people are hungry, give them food. Acknowledge the effort a person is making.*

6. ☐ **Show Equality:**

Be yourself! Don’t “one-up” or “one-down” the other person. Treat the other as an equal, not as fragile or incompetent.

Example: *Be willing to admit mistakes. If someone introduces him- or herself by first name, introduce yourself by your first name. Ask other people for their opinions. Give up being defensive. Be careful in giving advice or telling someone what to do if you are not asked or required to do so. Even then, remember you could be wrong.*

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INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 18A

Identifying Validation

For each A and B pair, check the more effective response.

- ☐ 1A. Think about your day when the other person is talking about his or her day.
- ☐ 1B. Throw yourself into listening about the other person's day.

- ☐ 5A. Remember that people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors don't always match. Check the facts.
- ☐ 5B. Assume that you can tell exactly what people are feeling and thinking.

- ☐ 2A. If you are uncertain of people's thoughts and feelings, ask them what they are thinking or feeling, or try to imagine yourself in their situation.
- ☐ 2B. Assume that if people want you to know what they are thinking or feeling, they will tell you.

- ☐ 6A. Evaluate other people's behaviors and thoughts, and tell them that they are wrong or that they should be different when you feel sure you are right.
- ☐ 6B. If you do not agree with what another person is doing or thinking, try to understand how it could make sense if you understood the causes.

- ☐ 3A. Observe the small clues that indicate what is going on in social situations.
- ☐ 3B. Observe only what people say, and ignore nonverbal signals.

- ☐ 7A. Assume that if you tell a person his or her request of you makes sense, that's all you have to do to validate the person.
- ☐ 7B. When a person asks you for something, giving the person what has been asked for is validation.

- ☐ 4A. Jump to conclusions about what people mean.
- ☐ 4B. Realize that the same behavior can mean many things.

- ☐ 8A. Assume that other people's reactions to you have nothing to do with yours to them.
- ☐ 8B. Treat each person with respect and as an equal.

Strategies for Increasing the Probability of Behaviors You Want

Describe behaviors for yourself or others that you would like to start or increase:

Reinforcer = A consequence that increases frequency of a behavior.

Positive reinforcement = positive consequences (i.e., reward).

Behavior is increased by consequences a person wants, likes, or will work to get.

Examples: _____

Negative reinforcement = removal of negative events (i.e., relief).

Behavior is increased by consequences that stop or reduce something negative.

Examples: _____

Shaping = Reinforcing small steps toward the behavior you want.

- Reinforce small steps that lead toward the goal.
- As new behavior stabilizes, require a little bit more before reinforcing.
- Continue until you reach the goal behavior.

Examples of steps to a goal behavior: _____

Timing counts.

- Reinforce behavior immediately after it occurs.
- When shaping new behavior, at first reinforce every instance of the behavior.
- Once behavior is established, gradually start to reinforce only some of the time.

CAUTION: When you vary reinforcement, behavior becomes very hard to stop.

Strategies for Decreasing or Stopping Unwanted Behaviors

Extinction = Stopping an ongoing reinforcement of behavior.

Extinction leads first to a burst of behavior, and then to a decrease in behavior.

Examples: _____

Satiation = Providing relief or what is wanted *before* the behavior occurs.

Satiation reduces motivation for behavior and thus decreases its frequency.

Examples: _____

Punishment = An aversive consequence that decreases a behavior.

Behavior is decreased by consequences the person dislikes or will work to avoid.

Examples: _____

Behavior is decreased by consequences that stop or reduce something positive.

Examples: _____

Behavior is decreased when something the person wants is withheld until harmful effects of problem behaviors are corrected and overcorrected.

Examples: _____

- Be sure that punishment is specific, is time-limited, and fits the “crime.”
- Avoid a punitive tone; let the consequence do the work.
- If a natural punishment occurs, don’t undo it. Don’t add arbitrary punishment.

Be sure to reinforce alternative behavior to replace behavior you want stopped.

- Extinction and punishment weaken or suppress behavior, but do not eliminate it.
- Extinction and punishment do not teach new behavior.
- To keep a behavior from resurfacing, reinforce an alternative behavior.
- Punishment works only when the punisher is (or is likely to be) present.
- Punishment leads to avoidance of the person punishing.

Tips for Using Behavior Change Strategies Effectively

Summary so far:

<u>Goal</u>		<u>Consequence</u>
Increase behavior	(Reinforce)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add positive consequence• Remove aversive consequence
Weaken behavior	(Extinguish)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove reinforcer• Provide relief <i>before</i> unwanted behavior
Suppress behavior	(Punish)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add aversive consequence• Remove positive consequence

Not all consequences are created equal.

“One person’s poison can be another person’s passion.”

Context counts. A reinforcer in one situation can be punishment in another.

Quantity counts. If a reinforcer is too little or too much, it will not work.

Natural consequences work best. Let them do the work when possible.

Ask what consequence the person would work to get (reinforcer) or work to avoid (punisher).

Observe changes in behavior when a consequence is applied.

Behavior learned in one situation may not happen in another situation.

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 22A

Identifying Effective Behavior Change Strategies

For each A and B pair, check the more effective response.

☐ **1A.** When you are trying to increase a behavior, it is most effective to wait for the full desired behavior before reinforcing, so the person does not think that halfway is good enough.

☐ **1B.** When you are trying to increase a behavior, it is most effective to reinforce small improvement in the right direction, or else the person may not continue to improve.

☐ **2A.** The most effective punishment is intense anger and swift verbal criticism.

☐ **2B.** The most effective punishment is to find one that fits the severity of the problem behavior.

☐ **3A.** It is most effective to reinforce behavior immediately after it occurs.

☐ **3B.** It is most effective to reward behavior after a delay so that the person does not expect that you will always provide a reward.

☐ **4A.** It is common that people reward others' problematic behaviors without even realizing it.

☐ **4B.** People do not reward others' problematic behaviors, because that would be stupid.

☐ **5A.** If a person's problem behaviors work to get things he or she wants, it is most effective to punish those behaviors to make them stop.

☐ **5B.** If a person's problem behaviors work to get things he or she wants, it is most effective to stop reinforcing those behaviors and instead give rewards when the person uses more skillful strategies to get what he or she wants or needs.

☐ **6A.** When you are punishing, figure that a nonspecific punishment will be a lot more effective, since it can't be avoided.

☐ **6B.** Use a specific and time-limited negative consequence to decrease behavior.

☐ **7A.** If a person's mean behavior makes you feel hurt, it is most effective to punish the behavior by taking away gifts that you previously gave the person.

☐ **7B.** If a person's mean behavior makes you feel hurt, it is most effective to punish the behavior by not doing favors for the person until his or her behavior improves.

☐ **8A.** After a punished behavior stops, it is most effective to reward an alternative behavior that you want.

☐ **8B.** After a punished behavior stops, it is most effective to continue the punishment, so that you send a very clear message that the problematic behavior is unacceptable.