

DBT Interpersonal Effectiveness: DEAR MAN

A structure for making requests, saying no, and staying focused during difficult conversations.

DEAR

- Describe the situation using facts.
- Express your feelings or opinions.
- Assert what you want or state your boundary clearly.
- Reinforce why cooperation may help the relationship or situation.

MAN

- Mindful: stay on the main point instead of chasing every side argument.
- Appear confident: use a steady tone and clear posture even if you feel nervous.
- Negotiate: consider alternatives when flexibility is appropriate.

Remember

Effectiveness is not the same as getting everything you ask for. A clear request can still be successful communication even when the answer is no.

Try this reflection

Write one request in DEAR MAN form using one or two sentences for each step.

Using this resource: For education and skill-building only; not diagnosis, medical advice, or crisis care. If you feel overwhelmed, pause and seek appropriate professional support. In the U.S., call or text 988 for crisis support; call 911 for an immediate emergency.