

DBT DEAR MAN Worksheet

Introduction: Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) emphasizes effective interpersonal communication. The DEAR MAN skill helps individuals ask for what they need, set boundaries, and navigate difficult conversations while maintaining relationships and self-respect (Linehan, 2015). Use this worksheet to structure your approach.

Step 1: Identify the Situation

- Briefly describe the situation requiring assertive communication.
 - What is your goal in this interaction?
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Step 2: Apply DEAR MAN

D – Describe

- Objectively describe the facts of the situation.
- Example: "I noticed that my workload has increased by 20% over the past month."

E – Express

- Share your feelings and opinions clearly.
- Example: "I feel overwhelmed and stressed because of the additional tasks."

A – Assert

- Clearly state what you want or need.
- Example: "I would like to discuss redistributing some of these tasks."

R – Reinforce

- Explain the positive outcomes of meeting your request.
- Example: "If my workload is adjusted, I will be more productive and able to meet deadlines."

M – Mindful

- Stay focused on your goal; don't get sidetracked.
- Practice not reacting emotionally if the other person resists.

A – Appear Confident

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- Maintain eye contact, use a steady tone, and practice assertive body language.

N – Negotiate

- Be open to compromise while maintaining your key needs.
 - Example: "If some tasks cannot be reassigned, can we set realistic deadlines?"
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Step 3: Exercises

Exercise 1: Writing Practice

- Write a DEAR MAN script for a real or hypothetical situation in which you need to assert yourself.

Situation: _____

D: _____

E: _____

A: _____

R: _____

- Identify potential challenges in the conversation and how you would stay mindful and confident.

Exercise 2: Role-Playing

- Partner with a friend or therapist to practice your DEAR MAN approach.
- Reflect on how it felt to use the skill in a live interaction.
- Adjust your approach based on feedback.

Exercise 3: Self-Reflection Journal

- After using DEAR MAN in real life, write about the experience.
- What went well? What challenges did you face?
- How can you improve your use of this skill in future conversations?

Exercise 4: Confidence Building

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- Stand in front of a mirror and practice delivering your DEAR MAN request with a confident posture and tone.
 - Identify any areas where you feel hesitant and work on strengthening them.
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Step 4: Reflection & Practice

- How did you feel about using DEAR MAN?
 - What worked well, and what could be improved?
 - Continue practicing with different situations to build confidence.
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References:

Linehan, M. M. (2015). *DBT Skills Training Manual* (2nd ed.). Guilford Press.