

DEAR MAN: DBT Skill for Objective and Effective Communication

InsightTimer

Created in collaboration with DBT expert [Mary Waldon, PhD, LCSW, LICSW](#)



[Tools For DBT](#)

DEAR MAN is a skill that helps you get your needs met and achieve your goals in conversations. It guides you to express yourself assertively and clearly, making it easier to ask for what you want or say no, while staying respectful and focused.

D

Describe

the problem factually and without judgment.

E

Express

your feelings about the problem.
Emphasize “I feel” instead of “You make me feel” statements.

A

Assert

yourself by stating exactly what it is you want as simply and clearly as possible.

R

Reinforce

getting what you want by describing why the other person would benefit from helping you.

M

Mindful

attention to own biases, intense feelings, invalidating others/self & urges to engage in problematic actions.

A

Appear

confident by using eye contact skillfully, paying attention to body language, and tone of voice.

N

Negotiate

terms by being willing to make a compromise, having a plan B ready to offer as an alternative.

TIPS:

- Use “I” statements to avoid blame.
- Stay calm and respectful, even if the conversation is difficult.
- Practice in low-stakes situations first to build confidence.