
Interpersonal Effectiveness Handouts

*Handouts for Goals and Factors
That Interfere*



Goals of Interpersonal Effectiveness

BE SKILLFUL IN GETTING WHAT YOU WANT AND NEED FROM OTHERS

- ☐ Get others to do things you would like them to do.
- ☐ Get others to take your opinions seriously.
- ☐ Say no to unwanted requests effectively.
- ☐ Other: _____

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND END DESTRUCTIVE ONES

- ☐ Strengthen current relationships.
 - ☐ Don't let hurts and problems build up.
 - ☐ Use relationship skills to head off problems.
 - ☐ Repair relationships when needed.
 - ☐ Resolve conflicts before they get overwhelming.
- ☐ Find and build new relationships.
- ☐ End hopeless relationships.
- ☐ Other: _____

WALK THE MIDDLE PATH

- ☐ Create and maintain balance in relationships.
- ☐ Balance acceptance and change in relationships.
- ☐ Other: _____



Factors in the Way of Interpersonal Effectiveness

☐ YOU DON'T HAVE THE INTERPERSONAL SKILLS YOU NEED

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU WANT

- ☐ You have the skills, but can't decide what you really want from the other person.
- ☐ You can't figure out how to balance your needs versus the other person's needs:
 - ☐ Asking for too much versus not asking for anything.
 - ☐ Saying no to everything versus giving in to everything.

YOUR EMOTIONS ARE GETTING IN THE WAY

- ☐ You have the skills, but emotions (anger, pride, contempt, fear, shame, guilt) control what you do.

YOU FORGET YOUR LONG-TERM GOALS FOR SHORT-TERM GOALS

- ☐ You put your immediate urges and wants ahead of your long-term goals. The future vanishes from your mind.

OTHER PEOPLE ARE GETTING IN YOUR WAY

- ☐ You have the skills but other people get in the way.
- ☐ Other people are more powerful than you.
- ☐ Other people may be threatened or may not like you if you get what you want.
- ☐ Other people may not do what you want unless you sacrifice your self-respect, at least a little.

YOUR THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS ARE GETTING IN THE WAY

- ☐ Worries about negative consequences if you ask for what you want or say no to someone's request get in the way of acting effectively.
- ☐ Beliefs that you don't deserve what you want stop you in your tracks.
- ☐ Beliefs that others don't deserve what they want make you ineffective.



Clarifying Goals in Interpersonal Situations

OBJECTIVES EFFECTIVENESS: Getting What You Want from Another Person

- Obtaining your legitimate rights.
- Getting another person to do something you want that person to do.
- Saying no to an unwanted or unreasonable request.
- Resolving an interpersonal conflict.
- Getting your opinion or point of view taken seriously.

Questions

1. What specific **results or changes** do I want from this interaction?
2. What do I have to do to get the results? What will work?

RELATIONSHIP EFFECTIVENESS: Keeping and Improving the Relationship

- Acting in such a way that the other person keeps liking and respecting you.
- Balancing immediate goals with the good of the long-term relationship.
- Maintaining relationships that matter to you.

Questions

1. How do I want the **other person to feel about me** after the interaction is over (whether or not I get the results or changes I want)?
2. What do I have to do to get (or keep) this relationship?

SELF-RESPECT EFFECTIVENESS: Keeping or Improving Self-Respect

- Respecting your own values and beliefs.
- Acting in a way that makes you feel moral.
- Acting in a way that makes you feel capable and effective.

Questions

1. How do I want to **feel about myself** after the interaction is over (whether or not I get the results or changes I want)?
2. What do I have to do to feel that way about myself? What will work?



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.

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(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."

Apppear 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:

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."

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 6



([Interpersonal Effectiveness Worksheets 4, 5](#))

Guidelines for Relationship Effectiveness: Keeping the Relationship (GIVE)

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

(Be) **G**entle

(Act) **I**nterested

Validate

(Use an) **E**asy 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:

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)
F
air

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)
A
pologies

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.

S
tick 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)
T
ruthful

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

Other ideas:



Evaluating Options for Whether or How Intensely to Ask for Something or Say No

Before asking for something or saying no to a request, you have to decide how intensely you want to hold your ground.

Options range from **very low** intensity, where you are very flexible and accept the situation as it is, to **very high** intensity, where you try every skill you know to change the situation and get what you want.

OPTIONS

Low intensity (let go, give in)

Asking

Saying No

Don't ask; don't hint.	1	Do what the other person wants without being asked.
Hint indirectly; take no.	2	Don't complain; do it cheerfully.
Hint openly; take no.	3	Do it, even if you're not cheerful about it.
Ask tentatively; take no.	4	Do it, but show that you'd rather not.
Ask gracefully, but take no.	5	Say you'd rather not, but do it gracefully.
Ask confidently; take no.	6	Say no confidently, but reconsider.
Ask confidently; resist no.	7	Say no confidently; resist saying yes.
Ask firmly; resist no.	8	Say no firmly; resist saying yes.
Ask firmly; insist; negotiate; keep trying.	9	Say no firmly; resist; negotiate; keep trying.
Ask and don't take no for an answer.	10	Don't do it.

High intensity (stay firm)

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FACTORS TO CONSIDER

**When deciding how firm or intense
you want to be in asking or saying no, think about:**

1. The other person's or your own **capability**.
2. Your **priorities**.
3. The effect of your actions on your **self-respect**.
4. Your or the other's moral and legal **rights** in the situation.
5. Your **authority** over the person (or his or hers over you).
6. The type of **relationship** you have with the person.
7. The effect of your action on **long- versus short-term goals**.
8. The degree of **give and take** in your relationship.
9. Whether you have done your **homework** to prepare.
10. The **timing** of your request or refusal.

1. **CAPABILITY:**
 - Is the person able to give you what you want? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.
 - Do you have what the person wants? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.
2. **PRIORITIES:**
 - Are your GOALS very important? Increase intensity.
 - Is your RELATIONSHIP shaky? Consider reducing intensity.
 - Is your SELF-RESPECT on the line? Intensity should fit your values.
3. **SELF-RESPECT:**
 - Do you usually do things for yourself? Are you careful to avoid acting helpless when you are not? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.
 - Will saying no make you feel bad about yourself, even when you are thinking about it wisely? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.
4. **RIGHTS:**
 - Is the person required by law or moral code to give you what you want? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.
 - Are you required to give the person what he or she is asking for? Would saying no violate the other person's rights? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.
5. **AUTHORITY:**
 - Are you responsible for directing the person or telling the person what to do? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.
 - Does the person have authority over you (e.g., your boss, your teacher)? And is what the person is asking within his or her authority? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.

(continued on next page)

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 8 (p. 3 of 3)

- 6. RELATIONSHIP:**
- Is what you want appropriate to the current relationship? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.
 - Is what the person is asking for appropriate to your current relationship? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.
- 7. LONG-TERM VERSUS SHORT-TERM GOALS:**
- Will not asking for what you want keep the peace now but create problems in the long run? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.
 - Is giving in to keep the peace right now more important than the long-term welfare of the relationship? Will you eventually regret or resent saying no? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.
- 8. GIVE AND TAKE:**
- What have you done for the person? Are you giving at least as much as you ask for? Are you willing to give if the person says yes? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.
 - Do you owe this person a favor? Does he or she do a lot for you? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.
- 9. HOMEWORK:**
- Have you done your homework? Do you know all the facts you need to know to support your request? Are you clear about what you want? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.
 - Is the other person's request clear? Do you know what you are agreeing to? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.
- 10. TIMING:**
- Is this a good time to ask? Is the person "in the mood" for listening and paying attention to you? Are you catching the person when he or she is likely to say yes to your request? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.
 - Is this a bad time to say no? Should you hold off answering for a while? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.

Other factors: _____



Troubleshooting: When What You Are Doing Isn't Working

1

Do I have the skills I need? Check out the instructions.

Review what has already been tried.

- Do I know how to be skillful in getting what I want?
- Do I know how to say what I want to say?
- Do I follow the skill instructions to the letter?

2

Do I know what I really want in this interaction?

Ask:

- Am I undecided about what I really want in this interaction?
- Am I unsure of my priorities?
- Am I having trouble balancing:
 - Asking for too much versus too little?
 - Saying no to everything versus saying yes to everything?
- Is fear or shame getting in the way of knowing what I really want?

3

Are short-term goals getting in the way of long-term goals?

Ask:

- Is “NOW, NOW, NOW” winning out over getting what I really want in the future?
- Is emotion mind controlling what I say and do instead of WISE MIND?

(continued on next page)

4

Are my emotions getting in the way of using my skills?

Ask:

- Do I get too upset to use my skills?
- Are my emotions so HIGH that I am over my skills breakdown point?

5

Are worries, assumptions, and myths getting in my way?

Ask:

- Are THOUGHTS about bad consequences blocking my action?
“They won’t like me,” “She will think I am stupid.”
- Are THOUGHTS about not deserving things getting in my way?
“I am such a bad person I don’t deserve this.”
- Am I calling myself NAMES that stop me from doing anything?
“I won’t do it right,” “I’ll probably fall apart,” “I’m so stupid.”
- Do I believe MYTHS about interpersonal effectiveness?
“If I make a request, this will show that I am a weak person,”
“Only wimps have values.”

6

Is the environment more powerful than my skills?

Ask:

- Are the people who have what I want or need more powerful than I am?
- Are other people more in control of the situation than I am?
- Will others be threatened if I get what I want?
- Do others have reasons for not liking me if I get what I want?

7

Other ideas:

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 12

([Interpersonal Effectiveness Worksheet 9](#))

Mindfulness of Others

FRIENDSHIPS LAST LONGER WHEN WE ARE MINDFUL.

OBSERVE

- ☐ Pay attention with interest and curiosity to others around you.
- ☐ Stop multitasking; focus on the people you are with.
- ☐ Stay in the present rather than planning what to say next.
- ☐ Let go of a focus on self, and focus on others around you.
- ☐ Be open to new information about others.
- ☐ Notice judgmental thoughts about others, and let them go.
- ☐ Give up clinging to always being right.

DESCRIBE

- ☐ Replace judgmental words with descriptive words.
- ☐ Avoid assuming or interpreting what other people think about you without checking the facts. (Remember, *no one* has ever observed another person's thoughts, motives, intentions, feelings, emotions, desires, or experiences.)
- ☐ Avoid questioning other people's motives (unless you have very good reasons to do so).
- ☐ Give others the benefit of the doubt.

PARTICIPATE

- ☐ Throw yourself into interactions with others.
- ☐ Go with the flow, rather than trying to control the flow.
- ☐ Become one with group activities and conversations.

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 15

([Interpersonal Effectiveness Worksheets 11](#), [11a](#), [11b](#))

Dialectics

DIALECTICS REMINDS US THAT

1. The universe is filled with opposing sides/opposing forces.

There is always more than one way to see a situation, and more than one way to solve a problem.

Two things that seem like opposites can both be true.

2. Everything and every person is connected in some way.

The waves and the ocean are one.

The slightest move of the butterfly affects the furthest star.

3. Change is the only constant.

Meaning and truth evolve over time.

Each moment is new; reality itself changes with each moment.

4. Change is transactional.

What we do influences our environment and other people in it.

The environment and other people influence us.

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 16

([Interpersonal Effectiveness Worksheets 11](#), [11a](#), [11b](#))

How to Think and Act Dialectically

☐ 1. There is always more than one side to anything that exists. Look for both sides.

☐ **Ask Wise Mind: What am I missing?** Where is the kernel of truth in the other side?

☐ **Let go of extremes:** Change “either-or” to “both-and,” “always” or “never” to “sometimes.”

☐ **Balance opposites:** Validate both sides when you disagree, accept reality, and work to change.

☐ **Make lemonade out of lemons.**

☐ **Embrace confusion:** Enter the paradox of yes and no, or true and not true.

☐ **Play devil’s advocate:** Argue each side of your own position with equal passion.

☐ **Use metaphors and storytelling** to unstick and free the mind.

☐ Other ways to see all sides of a situation: _____

☐ 2. Be aware that you are connected.

☐ **Treat others as you want them to treat you.**

☐ **Look for similarities among people instead of differences.**

☐ **Notice the physical connections** among all things.

☐ Other ways to stay aware of connections: _____

☐ 3. Embrace change.

☐ **Throw yourself into change:** Allow it. Embrace it.

☐ **Practice radical acceptance of change** when rules, circumstances, people, and relationships change in ways you don’t like.

☐ **Practice getting used to change:** Make small changes to practice this (e.g., purposely change where you sit, who you talk with, what route you take when going to a familiar place).

☐ Other ways to embrace change: _____

☐ 4. Change is transactional: Remember that you affect your environment and your environment affects you.

☐ **Pay attention to your effect on others** and how they affect you.

☐ **Practice letting go of blame** by looking for how your own and others’ behaviors are caused by many interactions over time.

☐ **Remind yourself that all things, including all behaviors, are caused.**

☐ Other ways to see transactions: _____

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Examples of Opposite Sides That Can Both Be True

- ☐ 1. You can want to change and be doing the best you can, AND still need to do better, try harder, and be more motivated to change.
- ☐ 2. You are tough AND you are gentle.
- ☐ 3. You can be independent AND also want help. (You can allow somebody else to be independent AND also give them help.)
- ☐ 4. You can want to be alone AND also want to be connected to others.
- ☐ 5. You can share some things with others AND also keep some things private.
- ☐ 6. You can be by yourself AND still be connected to others.
- ☐ 7. You can be with others AND be lonely.
- ☐ 8. You can be a misfit in one group AND fit in perfectly in another group. (A tulip in a rose garden can also be a tulip in a tulip garden.)
- ☐ 9. You can accept yourself the way you are AND still want to change. (You can accept others as they are AND still want them to change.)
- ☐ 10. At times you need to both control AND tolerate your emotions.
- ☐ 11. You may have a valid reason for believing what you believe, AND you may still be wrong or incorrect.
- ☐ 12. Someone may have valid reasons for wanting something from you, AND you may have valid reasons for saying no.
- ☐ 13. The day can be sunny, AND it can rain.
- ☐ 14. You can be mad at somebody AND also love and respect the person.
- ☐ 15. (You can be mad at yourself AND also love and respect yourself.)
- ☐ 16. You can have a disagreement with somebody AND also be friends.
- ☐ 17. You can disagree with the rules AND also follow the rules.
- ☐ 18. You can understand why somebody is feeling or behaving in a certain way, AND also disagree with his or her behavior and ask that it be changed.
- ☐ 19. Others: _____

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Important Opposites to Balance

- ☐ 1. Accepting reality AND working to change it.
- ☐ 2. Validating yourself and others AND acknowledging errors.
- ☐ 3. Working AND resting.
- ☐ 4. Doing things you need to do AND doing things you want to do.
- ☐ 5. Working on improving yourself AND accepting yourself exactly as you are.
- ☐ 6. Problem solving AND problem acceptance.
- ☐ 7. Emotion regulation AND emotion acceptance.
- ☐ 8. Mastering something on your own AND asking for help.
- ☐ 9. Independence AND dependence.
- ☐ 10. Openness AND privacy.
- ☐ 11. Trust AND suspicion.
- ☐ 12. Watching and observing AND participating.
- ☐ 13. Taking from others AND giving to others.
- ☐ 14. Focusing on yourself AND focusing on others.
- ☐ 15. Others: _____

- ☐ 16. Others: _____

- ☐ 17. Others: _____

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 17

([Interpersonal Effectiveness Worksheet 12](#))

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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INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 18

([Interpersonal Effectiveness Worksheet 12](#))

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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Recovering from Invalidation

NOTICE THAT INVALIDATION CAN BE HELPFUL AND PAINFUL AT THE SAME TIME

**Remember:
Invalidation Is Helpful When**

1. It corrects important mistakes (your facts are wrong).
2. It stimulates intellectual and personal growth by listening to other views.
3. Other: _____

Invalidation Is Painful When

1. You are being ignored.
2. You are not being repeatedly misunderstood.
3. You are being misread.
4. You are being misinterpreted.
5. Important facts in your life are ignored or denied.
6. You are receiving unequal treatment.
7. You are being disbelieved when being truthful.
8. Your private experiences are trivialized or denied.
9. Other: _____

(continued on next page)

Be Nondefensive and Check the Facts

- ☐ Check ALL the facts to see if your responses are valid or invalid. Check them out with someone you can trust to validate the valid.
- ☐ Acknowledge when your responses don't make sense and are not valid.
- ☐ Work to change invalid thinking, comments, or actions. (Also, stop blaming. It rarely helps a situation.)
- ☐ Drop judgmental self-statements. (Practice opposite action.)
- ☐ Remind yourself that all behavior is caused and that you are doing your best.
- ☐ Be compassionate toward yourself. Practice self-soothing.
- ☐ Admit that it hurts to be invalidated by others, even if they are right.
- ☐ Acknowledge when your reactions make sense and are valid in a situation.
- ☐ Remember that being invalidated, even when your response is actually valid, is rarely a complete catastrophe.
- ☐ Describe your experiences and actions in a supportive environment.
- ☐ Grieve traumatic invalidation and the harm it created.
- ☐ Practice radical acceptance of the invalidating person.

**Validate Yourself Exactly the Way You Would
Validate Someone Else**

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS WORKSHEET 3

([Interpersonal Effectiveness Handout 4](#))

Clarifying Priorities in Interpersonal Situations

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

Use this sheet to figure out your goals and priorities in any situation that creates a problem for you. Examples include situations where (1) your rights or wishes are not being respected; (2) you want someone to do or change something or give you something; (3) you want or need to say no or resist pressure to do something; (4) you want to get your position or point of view taken seriously; (5) there is conflict with another person; or (6) you want to improve your relationship with someone.

Observe and describe in writing as close in time to the situation as possible. Write on the back of this sheet if you need more room.

Prompting event for my problem: Who did what to whom? What led up to what?
What is it about this situation that is a problem for me?
Remember to **check the facts!**

My wants and desires in this situation:

Objectives: What **specific results** do I want? What do I want this person to do, stop or accept?

Relationship: How do I want the other person to feel and think about me **because of how I handle the interaction** (whether or not I get what I want from the other person)?

Self-Respect: How do I want to feel or think about myself **because of how I handle the interaction** (whether or not I get what I want from the other person)?

My priorities in this situation: Rate priorities 1 (most important), 2 (second most important), or 3 (least important).

____ Objectives ____ Relationship ____ Self-respect

Imbalances and conflicts in priorities that make it hard to be effective in this situation:

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS WORKSHEET 4

([Interpersonal Effectiveness Handouts 5, 6, 7](#))

Writing Out Interpersonal Effectiveness Scripts

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

Fill out this sheet before you practice your DEAR MAN, GIVE FAST interpersonal skills. Practice saying your “lines” out loud, and also in your mind. Use the “cope ahead” skills (Emotion Regulation Handout 19). Write on the back of this sheet if you need more room.

PROMPTING EVENT for my problem: Who did what to whom? What led up to what?

OBJECTIVES IN SITUATION (What results I want):

RELATIONSHIP ISSUE (How I want the other person to feel about me):

SELF-RESPECT ISSUE (How I want to feel about myself):

SCRIPT IDEAS for DEAR MAN, GIVE FAST

1. **Describe** situation.
2. **Express** feelings/opinions.
3. **Assert** request (or say no) directly (circle the part you will use later in “broken record” to stay Mindful if you need it).
4. **Reinforcing** comments to make.
5. **Mindful and Appearing** confident comments to make (if needed).
6. **Negotiating** comments to make, plus turn-the-table comments (if needed).
7. **Validating** comments.
8. **Easy manner** comments.

Write on the back side all the things you want to *avoid* doing and saying.

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INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS WORKSHEET 5

([Interpersonal Effectiveness Handouts 5, 6, 7](#))

Tracking Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills Use

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

Fill out this sheet whenever you practice your interpersonal skills and whenever you have an opportunity to practice, even if you don't (or almost don't) do anything to practice. Write on the back of this sheet if you need more room.

PROMPTING EVENT for my problem: Who did what to whom? What led up to what?

OBJECTIVES IN SITUATION (What results I want):

RELATIONSHIP ISSUE (How I want the other person to feel about me):

SELF-RESPECT ISSUE (How I want to feel about myself):

My PRIORITIES in this situation: Rate priorities 1 (most important), 2 (second most important), or 3 (least important).

___ OBJECTIVES

___ RELATIONSHIP

___ SELF-RESPECT

Imbalances and CONFLICTS IN PRIORITIES that made it hard to be effective in this situation:

What I SAID OR DID in the situation: (Describe and check below.)

DEAR MAN (Getting what I want):

___ Described situation? _____

___ Expressed feelings/opinions? _____

___ Asserted? _____

___ Reinforced? _____

___ Mindful? _____

___ Broken record? _____

___ Ignored attacks? _____

___ Appeared confident? _____

___ Negotiated? _____

GIVE (Keeping the relationship):

___ Gentle? _____

___ No threats? _____

___ No attacks? _____

___ No judgments? _____

___ Interested? _____

___ Validated? _____

___ Easy manner? _____

FAST (Keeping my respect for myself):

___ Fair? _____

___ (No) Apologies? _____

___ Stuck to values? _____

___ Truthful? _____

How effective was the interaction? _____

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS WORKSHEET 9

([Interpersonal Effectiveness Handout 12](#))

Mindfulness of Others

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

Fill out this sheet whenever you practice mindfulness of others and whenever you have an opportunity to practice even if you don't (or almost don't) do anything to practice. Write on the back of this sheet if you need more room.

Check off any of the following that you practiced:

- ☐ Paid attention with interest and curiosity to others around me.
- ☐ Let go of a focus on myself, and focused on the people I was with.
- ☐ Noticed judgmental thoughts about others and let them go.
- ☐ Stayed in the present (instead of planning what I would say next) and listened.
- ☐ Put my entire attention on the other person and did not multitask.
- ☐ Gave up clinging to being right.
- ☐ Other: _____

- ☐ Described in a matter-of-fact way what I observed.
- ☐ Replaced judgmental descriptions with descriptive words.
- ☐ Described what I observed, instead of making assumptions and interpretations of others.
- ☐ Avoided questioning others' motives.
- ☐ Other: _____

- ☐ Threw myself into interactions with others.
- ☐ Went with the flow, rather than trying to control everything.
- ☐ Became one with the conversation I was in.
- ☐ Other: _____

Describe a situation where you practiced mindfulness of others in the last week. _____

Who was the person you were with? _____

How exactly did you practice mindfulness? _____

What was the outcome? _____

How did you feel afterward? _____

Did being mindful make a difference? If so, what? _____

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS WORKSHEET 11

([Interpersonal Effectiveness Handouts 15, 16](#))

Practicing Dialectics

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

Describe two situations that prompted you to practice dialectics.

SITUATION 1

Situation (who, what, when, where):

- ☐ Looked at both sides
- ☐ Stayed aware of my connection
- ☐ Embraced change
- ☐ Remembered that I affect others and others affect me

At left, check the skills you used, and describe here.

Describe experience of using the skill:

Check if practicing this dialectical skill has influenced any of the following, *even a little bit*:

____ Reduced suffering ____ Increased happiness ____ Reduced friction with others
____ Decreased reactivity ____ Increased wisdom ____ Improved relationship
____ Increased connection ____ Increased sense of personal validity
____ Other outcome: _____

SITUATION 2

Situation (who, what, when, where):

- ☐ Looked at both sides
- ☐ Stayed aware of my connection
- ☐ Embraced change
- ☐ Remembered that I affect others and others affect me

At left, check the skills you used, and describe here.

Describe experience of using the skill:

Check if practicing this dialectical skill has influenced any of the following, *even a little bit*:

____ Reduced suffering ____ Increased happiness ____ Reduced friction with others
____ Decreased reactivity ____ Increased wisdom ____ Improved relationship
____ Increased connection ____ Increased sense of personal validity
____ Other outcome: _____

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS WORKSHEET 11B

([Interpersonal Effectiveness Handouts 15, 16](#))

Noticing When You're Not Dialectical

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

Identify a time this week when you *did not use* your dialectical skills. Briefly describe the situation (who, what, when).

SITUATION 1

Situation (who, what, when, where):

- ☐ Looked at both sides
- ☐ Stayed aware of my connection
- ☐ Embraced change
- ☐ Remembered that I affect others and others affect me

At left, check the skills you needed but did not use, and describe here the experience of not using the skill.

What would you do differently next time?

Check if *not* practicing dialectical skills has influenced any of the following, *even a little bit*:

____ Increased suffering ____ Decreased happiness ____ Increased friction with others
____ Increased reactivity ____ Decreased wisdom ____ Harmed relationship
____ Decreased connection ____ Other outcome: _____

SITUATION 2

Situation (who, what, when, where):

- ☐ Looked at both sides
- ☐ Stayed aware of my connection
- ☐ Embraced change
- ☐ Remembered that I affect others and others affect me

At left, check the skills you needed but did not use, and describe here the experience of not using the skill.

What would you do differently next time?

Check if *not* practicing dialectical skills has influenced any of the following, *even a little bit*:

____ Increased suffering ____ Decreased happiness ____ Increased friction with others
____ Increased reactivity ____ Decreased wisdom ____ Harmed relationship
____ Decreased connection ____ Other outcome: _____

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS WORKSHEET 12

([Interpersonal Effectiveness Handouts 17, 18](#))

Validating Others

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

Fill out this sheet whenever you practice your validation skills and whenever you have an opportunity to practice even if you don't (or almost don't) do anything to practice. Write on the back of this sheet if you need more room.

Check off types of validation that you practiced (on purpose) with others:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Paid attention. | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Expressed how what was felt, done, or said made sense, given the causes. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Reflected back what was said or done, remaining open to correction. | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Acknowledged and acted on what was valid. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Was sensitive to what was unsaid. | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Acted authentically and as an equal. |

List one invalidating and two validating statements made to others.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Describe a situation where you were nonjudgmental of someone in the past week.

Describe a situation where you used validation in the past week.

Who was the person you validated? _____

What exactly did you do or say to validate the person? _____

What was the outcome? _____

How did you feel afterward? _____

Would you say or do something differently next time? If so, what? _____

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS WORKSHEET 13

([Interpersonal Effectiveness Handout 19](#))

Self-Validation and Self-Respect

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

Fill out this sheet whenever you practice your self-validation skills and whenever you have an opportunity to practice even if you don't (or almost don't) do anything to practice. Write on the back of this sheet if you need more room.

List one self-invalidating and two self-validating statements you made.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Describe a situation where you felt invalidated in the past week: _____

Check each strategy you used during the week:

- ☐ Checked *all* the facts to see if my responses are valid or invalid.
- ☐ Checked it out with someone I could trust to validate the valid.
- ☐ Acknowledged when my responses didn't make sense and were not valid.
- ☐ Worked to change invalid thinking, comments, or actions. (Stopped blaming.)
- ☐ Dropped judgmental self-statements. (Practiced opposite action.)
- ☐ Reminded myself that all behavior is caused and that I am doing my best.
- ☐ Was compassionate toward myself. Practiced self-soothing.
- ☐ Admitted that it hurts to be invalidated by others, even if they are right.
- ☐ Acknowledged when my reactions make sense and are valid in a situation.
- ☐ Remembered that being invalidated, even when my response is actually valid, is rarely a complete catastrophe.
- ☐ Described my experiences and actions in a supportive environment.
- ☐ Grieved traumatic invalidation in my life and the harm it has created.
- ☐ Practiced radical acceptance of the invalidating person(s) in my life.
- ☐ **What was the outcome?** _____
