

Practical skills for Helping clients:

DBT inspired techniques for
working with clients – IE skills

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Objectives

- Review homework
- Re- introduce 5 options for responding to a problem
- Introduce goals and objectives for relationships
- Introduce Interpersonal Effectiveness skills
- Introduce Personal Bill of Rights



Homework review

- Partner share out
- Discuss one of the skills that you tried so far on your own.
- What felt challenging about using the skills, what felt easy or less challenging?
- Have you tried any skills with your clients?

Skill #1: The Problem Solving Framework

1. Solve the Problem

- be able to identify the actual problem

2. Feel better about the Problem

- use emotion regulation skills

3. Tolerate the Problem

- use distress tolerance skills

4. Stay Miserable

- use no skills

5. Make things worse!


- use ineffective skills



Poll # 1

In which situation are DBT interpersonal effectiveness skills considered ineffective or inappropriate?

- A. When a client is trying to get their child to follow a rule.
- B. When the client wants to express a difficult and overwhelming emotion to a partner.
- C. When a client is experiencing abuse in a relationship.
- D. When a client needs to apologize or take responsibility for something.



Only make decisions
that support your
self-image, self-
esteem, and self-
worth.”

- *Oprah*



The Problem

- Many clients learned ineffective or unhelpful ways of relating to others.
- Many clients have trouble with relationships because they lack communication skills, may not know what they want, or they have trouble controlling urges when they are emotionally dysregulated.
- Client relationship patterns may have been significantly impacted by past trauma experiences.
- Clients may lack clarity regarding their goals and desires in interpersonal situations and therefore not know which skills to use.
- Clients may have trouble identifying, setting and maintaining boundaries in relationships.
- Clients may feel challenged by natural power dynamics in relationships and therefore may have trouble balancing power.

Solution: Clarifying client goals and providing skills

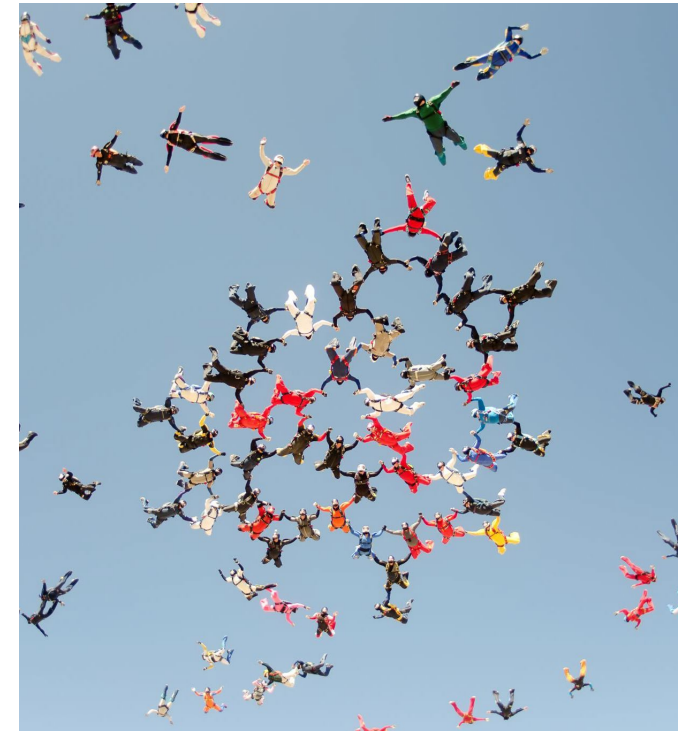
Therapists need to help clients increase their interpersonal effectiveness skills because:

- Relationships and social support are essential to psychological well being.
- Having a healthy support system is a protective factor against psychological distress.
- Interpersonal relationships often maintain and reinforce behaviors. (We would like clients to foster relationships that nurture healthy behaviors for them).
- Interpersonal relationships are great places to practice emotion regulation skills as relating to others can trigger dysregulation.
- Interpersonal relationships can serve as corrective experiences for those with a history of trauma or disrupted relationships.
- Interpersonal relationships are cornerstones of fulfilling and meaningful lives.



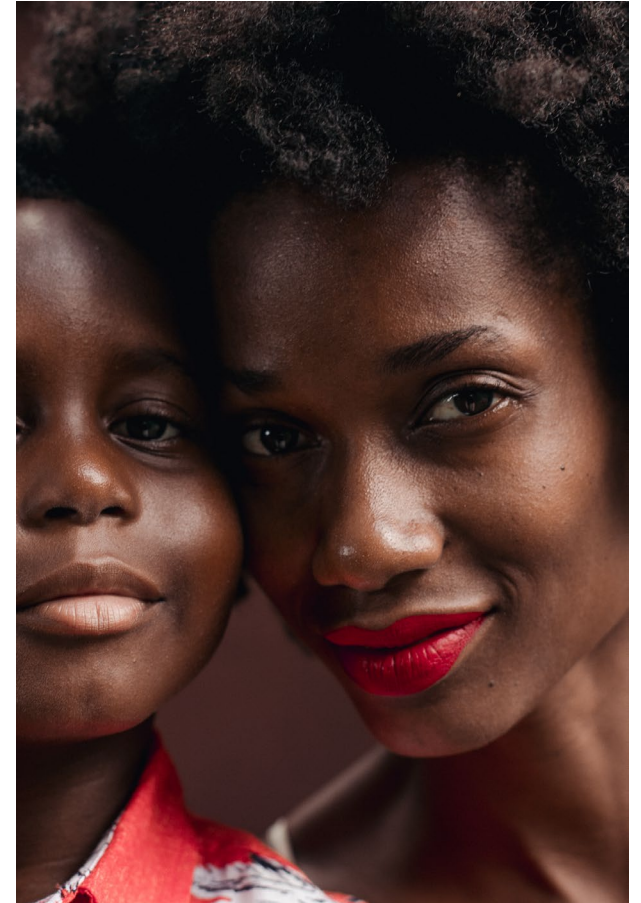
What clients gain from better relationship skills

- Effective relationships may mean ***lower stress overall*** as healthy partnerships has been linked to a less production of cortisol in the brain
- The quality of our interpersonal relationships has been shown to have ***significant impacts on physical health factors***
- Effective communication skills can ***improve work relationships***
- Research has shown that healthy relationships have been defined as inclusive of: qualities such as trust, satisfaction, love, intimacy, commitment, social support, and boundaries
- So often our clients come to see us due to relationship dynamics:
 - o Isolation
 - o High conflict
 - o Communication difficulties
 - o Confusion about appropriate boundaries



Goals of Interpersonal Effectiveness skills

- Use skills to get needs met from self and others
- Build healthy relationships and end destructive ones
- Reduce confusion in relationships
- Engage in assertiveness training
- Orient towards healthy boundaries
- Walk the Middle Path



What are our personal “rights?”

Basic Personal Rights

Everyone has or deserves basic personal rights. The following are some examples that can help steer you in the right direction. Some of these may evoke a reaction in you. It's important to notice any surprise you may feel in reading this list. It can be helpful to speak with your coach, therapist, or friend. If you want, you can even say them out loud as you read them here. That can make them feel more powerful.

- I have the right to say “no.”
 - I have the right to feel and express my feelings, both positive and negative.
 - I have the right to make mistakes.
 - I have the right to have my own opinions and convictions.
 - I have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
 - I have the right to change my mind or decide on a different course of action.
 - I have the right to protest unfair treatment or criticism.
 - I have the right to expect honesty from others.
 - I have the right to my own values and standards.
 - I have the right to be angry at someone I love.
 - I have the right to say, “I don't know.”
 - I have the right to negotiate for change.
 - I have the right to be in a non-abusive environment.
 - I have the right to ask for help or emotional support.
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“But many of us seek community solely to escape the fear of being alone. Knowing how to be solitary is central to the art of loving. When we can be alone, we can be with others without using them as a means of escape.”

— Bell Hooks, [All About Love: New Visions](#).”

What interrupts Interpersonal Effectiveness?



NOT HAVING
LEARNED EFFECTIVE
SKILLS



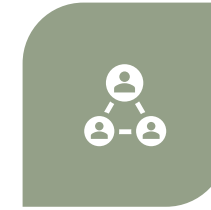
NOT KNOWING
WHAT THEY WANT



EMOTIONS GET IN
THE WAY



FORGET LONG OR
SHORT- TERM
GOALS



OTHER PEOPLE GET
IN THE WAY



THOUGHTS AND
BELIEFS GET IN THE
WAY

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 2A

(Interpersonal Effectiveness Worksheet 2)

Myths in the Way of Interpersonal Effectiveness

Myths in the Way of Objectives Effectiveness

- 1. I don't deserve to get what I want or need.
- 2. If I make a request, this will show that I am a very weak person.
- 3. I have to know whether a person is going to say yes before I make a request.
- 4. If I ask for something or say no, I can't stand it if someone gets upset with me.
- 5. If they say no, it will kill me.
- 6. Making requests is a really pushy (bad, self-centered, selfish, etc.) thing to do.
- 7. Saying no to a request is always a selfish thing to do.
- 8. I should be willing to sacrifice my own needs for others.
- 9. I must be really inadequate if I can't fix this myself.
- 10. Obviously, the problem is just in my head. If I would just think differently I wouldn't have to bother everybody else.
- 11. If I don't have what I want or need, it doesn't make any difference; I don't care really.
- 12. Skillfulness is a sign of weakness.

Other myth: _____

Other myth: _____

Myths in the Way of Relationship and Self-Respect Effectiveness

- 13. I shouldn't have to ask (say no); they should know what I want (and do it).
- 14. They should have known that their behavior would hurt my feelings; I shouldn't have to tell them.
- 15. I shouldn't have to negotiate or work at getting what I want.
- 16. Other people should be willing to do more for my needs.
- 17. Other people should like, approve of, and support me.
- 18. They don't deserve my being skillful or treating them well.
- 19. Getting what I want when I want it is most important.
- 20. I shouldn't be fair, kind, courteous, or respectful if others are not so toward me.
- 21. Revenge will feel so good; it will be worth any negative consequences.
- 22. Only wimps have values.
- 23. Everybody lies.
- 24. Getting what I want is more important than how I get it; the ends really do justify the means.

Other myth: _____

Other myth: _____

Relationship Myths

Power & Relationships

Three types of power balances exist in relationships:

- Equal Power
- You have or perceive yourself as having more power over your partner
- Your partner has or perceives themselves as having more power over you

Relationship Effectiveness Overview

Clients learn that having goals and objectives in any given interaction can increase their effectiveness.

Different skills correspond to different goals.

Remind clients that correct skill use does not mean that they will necessarily get what they want.

Skills Overview:

For the goal of Asserting Rights & Wishes use DEAR MAN

For the goal of Maintaining relationships use GIVE

For the goal of Maintaining self respect use FAST

“Skillful relationships can be intentionally and consciously developed and maintained.”



Skill #2: Preliminary decisions

- In addition to the pros and cons of skill use, clients should have a sense of whether or not the relationship itself is healthy. Is it worth maintaining?

Distinguish between a *destructive* vs *interfering* relationship

Destructive relationship – causes active harm to self or others (physical, emotional, psychological etc.); properties of relationship also destroy it

Interfering relationship – blocks ability to pursue important goals or interests, maintain other relationships or disrupts your ability to enjoy your life

When deciding to end a relationship, encourage clients to do this from **Wise Mind**.

DBT does not recommend using interpersonal effectiveness skills when client safety is compromised. Safety planning must be prioritized.

If relationship
needs to end:

Decide	Decide to end the relationship in Wise Mind
Use	Use problem solving if there is any hope of retaining relationship
Use	Use Cope Ahead to rehearse ending the relationship before it actually ends
Use	Use DEAR MAN and FAST skills
Use	Use Opposite Action for love ALL THE WAY if the relationship needs to end



DEAR MAN

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=EC-M59R-0JG](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EC-M59R-0JG)

Skill #3: DEAR MAN

- Getting legitimate needs met

- Asking for one's opinion to be taken seriously

- Consider the cons of acting on the emotions

- Saying no to unwanted requests and setting boundaries

D - Describe the current situation factually – no judgments or assumptions

E- Express your emotions and opinions about the current situation

A- Assert your want/need by asking for what you want or saying no assertively

R - Reinforce (reinforce) the person ahead of time by explaining benefits of you getting what you want

M - Be mindful – stay in the present as much as possible

A - Act confidently in body language, including tone of voice

N - Negotiate if desired

Challenges to implementing DEAR MAN

- Clients may have trouble identifying what their “ask” is – use the Express, Request, Boundary (ERB) framework.
- Clients may have been reinforced for not asserting their needs and wants and may fear incurring significant consequences for asserting themselves.
- Clients may describe their feelings as facts, and need to practice distinguishing the two.
- Clients may believe that the other person should know how they feel and may use phrases like “should.”
- Clients can get caught in self blame.
- Client might negotiate when they do not really want to or are unable to.
- Sometimes clients associate boundary setting with punishment of the other person or conflict.

A note on assertiveness

Ideally, effective use of assertiveness skills allows the client to state their needs and wants in a clear and meaningful way. Assertiveness skills can teach clients to maintain their own power within a relationship.

Different forms of communication engage power variably within relationships:

- Assertive behavior is standing up for one's legitimate rights in a respectful manner – it is about maintaining power *within*
- Non assertive or submissive behavior/communication prioritizes the needs, feelings, perceptions and experiences of others while ignoring one's own – it is about feeling powerless or pushing power “*out*”
- Aggressive behavior entails asserting one's needs, perceptions and desires above those of another person – it is about exerting power *over*



Skill # 4: GIVE

This skill is a “how” skill for **maintaining relationships** when using DEAR MAN

(Be) Gentle: Approach the conversation with a sense of kindness and compassion

- No attacks or threats
- No judgments
- No sneering

(Act) Interested: show genuine interest in the perspective and experience of the other person

- Actively listen to and try to empathize with the person
- Show active listening body language

Validate

- Use words and actions to show that you see the other person’s point of view

(Use an) Easy Manner

- Smile, use humor
- Polite, no attitude

When GIVE goes wrong

- Clients may not be fully participating in the skill which can then come off as patronizing rather than sincere, which can make things worse (for example – be gentle, not condescending)
- Clients become derailed by arguing against someone else's point of view
 - Desire to be “right” over wanting to resolve conflict can interfere
- Client may be trying to maintain a relationship that is destructive to them (i.e. an abusive relationship)
- Clients who are prone to ignoring or minimizing their needs might use the GIVE skill to do so
- Many clients may not have a lot of experience with validation – can use the therapy relationship as an opportunity to model validation

Skill # 5: FAST

This skill is helpful because:

Clients need to know how to communicate in a way that helps them maintain their **self respect**

Clients who are conflict avoidant and/or who fear abandonment may rush to self blame or trying avoid hurting another person at all costs, rather than being fair to themselves

F – Be fair to yourself and the other person

- Validate the other person's experience but also your own

A – (no) apologies

- Do not over apologize
- Do not apologize for “being alive,” for making a request, having feelings or perspectives

S – Stick to your values

- Be clear on your own values, especially the ones of great importance
- Do not give up values easily

T – Be truthful

- Do not lie in words or deed, i.e. acting more helpless than you may actually be

Possible barriers to implementing FAST

- Many clients have trouble identifying their needs, asserting them and then NOT apologizing for them.
- May have to help clients define what self respect means to them, i.e. *how does it feel when you are respecting yourself? How do you behave when you respect yourself? How do you know when others respect you?*
- Can be important to help clients recognize when they are protecting their self respect vs when they may be consistently elevating their needs over the needs of others. The converse is also true, when clients are consistently sacrificing self respect in the name of relationship.

Skill # 6: Middle Path & Mindfulness of others

Use Mindfulness skills as a way to connect with others:

- OBSERVE

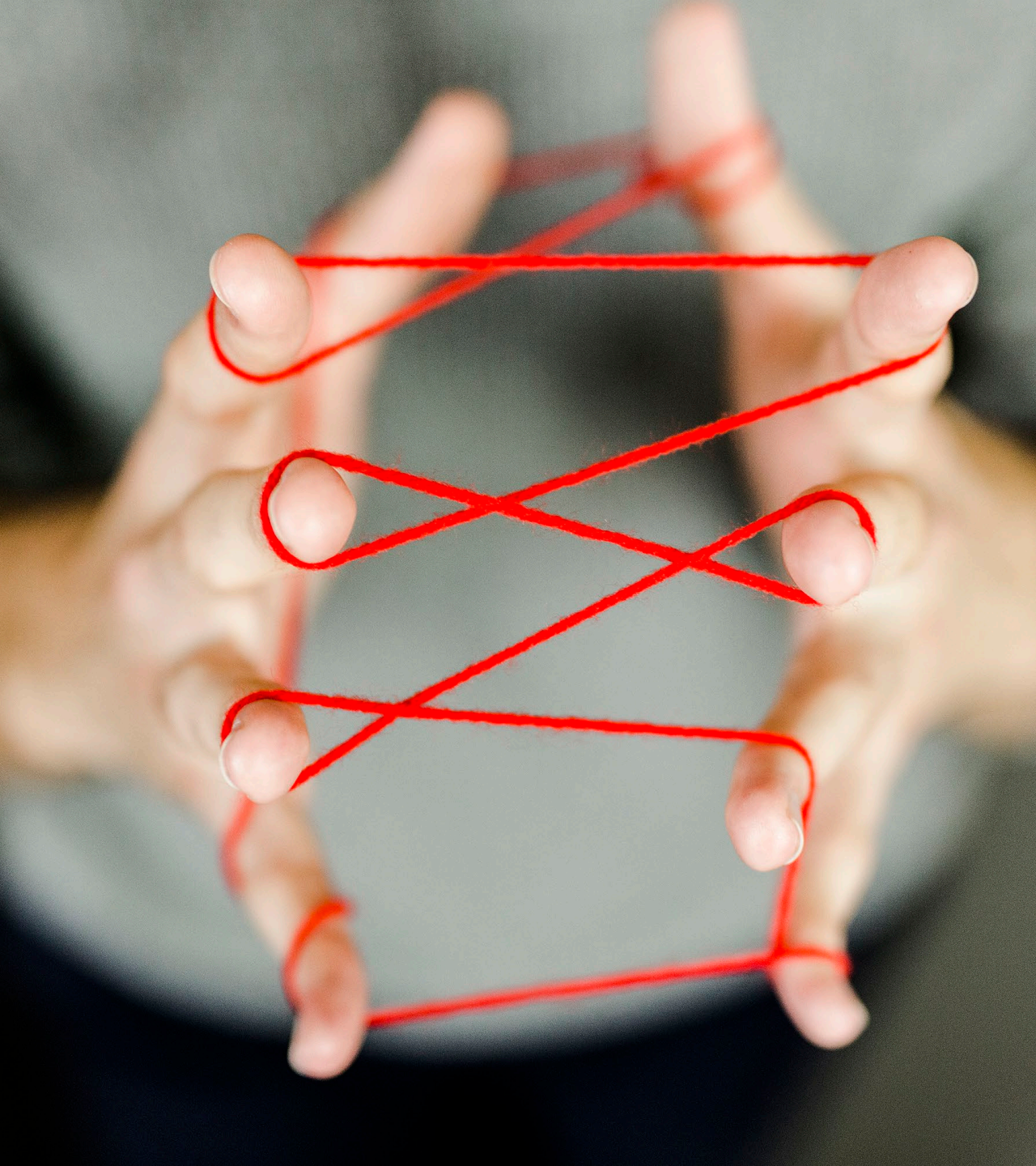
- Fully attend to the other person, without anticipating what you will say next
- Do not multitask while engaging with them
- Attend to their verbal and nonverbal communication

- DESCRIBE

- Describe instead of judge
- Try to avoid interpretations and assumptions about what other may or may not think of you
- Give others the benefit of the doubt unless you have evidence to the contrary

- PARTICIPATE

- Fully engage with others
- Be a part of the interaction rather than trying to control interactions



“I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.”

— **Brené Brown**
