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DBT Skills: DEAR MAN

DEAR MAN is an assertiveness skill. Assertiveness means directly and clearly making a request or saying no. The goal is to ask another person to do something or to say no to another person's request. Each letter in DEAR MAN stands for a way that we can be assertive.

D- Describe

- Share the facts about the current situation. For example, "I called you last night, and you never called me back."

E- Express

- Express your feelings and opinions about the facts. Try to be non-judgemental and avoid attacking or blaming. For example, "I felt angry when you did not call me back."

A- Assert

- Ask for what you want or say no clearly and directly. Do not assume that the other person already knows what you want. For example, "Will you please call me back?"

R- Reinforce

- Reinforce means doing something that makes what you want more likely. There are several ways to reinforce: 1. Share the positive impact of others doing what you ask. For example, "I feel important and happy when you call me back." 2. Offer the other person a reward for doing what you ask. For example, "I will make you a friendship bracelet if you try to call back more."

M-Mindful

- Stay focused on your goal. Remember why you are using DEAR MAN. Do not get distracted, and always come back to your goal.

A-Act Confidently

- You might not always feel confident when asserting yourself, but acting confident can make DEAR MAN more effective. Here are some ways to act confident: make eye contact, do not talk too fast, speak clearly, think encouraging thoughts, have straight posture and do not mumble.

N-Negotiate

- Compromise or be willing to give in on some things, so you can get some of what you want. For example, "Instead of calling, you could send me a short text."

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Homework:

Think of a situation where you want to assert yourself.

Describe the situation:

Describe: What are the facts of the situation?

Express: What are your opinions and emotions about the facts?

Assert: Ask for what you want.

Reinforce: What can you give or take away to help you get what you want?

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Mindful: How can you stay focused on your objective?

Appear Confident: How can you look confident and self-assured?

Negotiate: How can you compromise to still get some of what you want?

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