

Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

Learning to get along with others while also asserting your own needs is essential to healthy relationships. It can be difficult to balance your own needs and the needs of others. How can you get what you need without being aggressive or neglecting of the needs of others? There are three sets of skills you will learn to help achieve this goal: objective effectiveness, relationship effectiveness, and self-respect effectiveness.

Objective Effectiveness (D.E.A.R. M.A.N.)

What is the goal of an interaction? *Objective effectiveness* is about getting what you want out of a situation. The acronym D.E.A.R. M.A.N. will remind you how to clearly express your needs or desires.

Describe	Use clear and concrete terms to describe what you want. <i>Don't say:</i> "Could you please clean?" <i>Do say:</i> "Could you do the dishes before going to bed?"
Express	Let others know how a situation makes you feel by clearly expressing your feelings. Don't expect others to read your mind. Try using this line: " <i>I feel ___ because ___.</i> "
Assert	Don't beat around the bush—say what you need to say. <i>Don't say:</i> "Oh, well, I don't know if I can cook tonight or not." <i>Do say:</i> "I won't be able to cook because I'm working late."
Reinforce	Reward people who respond well, and reinforce why your desired outcome is positive. This can be as simple as a smile and a " <i>thank you</i> ".
Mindful	Don't forget the objective of the interaction. It can be easy to get sidetracked into harmful arguments and lose focus.
Appear	Appear confident. Consider your posture, tone, eye contact, and body language.
Negotiate	No one can have everything they want out of an interaction all the time. Be open to negotiation. <i>Do say:</i> "If you wash the dishes, I'll put them away."