

# **INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT I**

## **Situations for Interpersonal Effectiveness**

### **ATTENDING TO RELATIONSHIPS**

- Don't let hurts and problems build up.
- Use relationship skills to head off problems.
- End hopeless relationships.
- Resolve conflicts before they get overwhelming.

### **BALANCING PRIORITIES vs. DEMANDS**

- If overwhelmed, reduce or put off low-priority demands.
- Ask others for help; say no when necessary.
- If not enough to do, try to create some structure and responsibilities; offer to do things.

### **BALANCING THE WANTS-TO-SHOULDS**

- Look at what you do because you enjoy doing it and "want" to do it; and how much you do because it has to be done and you "should" do it. Try to keep the number of each in balance, even if you have to:
  - Get your opinions taken seriously.
  - Get others to do things.
  - Say no to unwanted requests.

### **BUILDING MASTERY AND SELF-RESPECT**

- Interact in a way that makes you feel competent and effective, not helpless and overly dependent.
- Stand up for yourself, your beliefs and opinions; follow your own wise mind.

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 2

## Goals of Interpersonal Effectiveness

### **OBJECTIVES EFFECTIVENESS:**

#### **Getting Your Objectives or Goals in a Situation**

- Obtaining your legitimate rights
- Getting another to do something
- Refusing 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:**

#### **Getting or Keeping a Good 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

#### **QUESTIONS**

1. *How do I want the other person to feel about me after the interaction is over?*
2. *What do I have to do to get (or keep) this relationship?*

### **SELF-RESPECT EFFECTIVENESS:**

#### **Keeping or Improving Self-Respect and Liking for Yourself**

- 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?*
2. *What do I have to do to feel that way about myself? What will work?*

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 3

## Factors Reducing Interpersonal Effectiveness

### LACK OF SKILL

You actually DON'T KNOW what to say or how to act. You don't know how you should behave to achieve your objectives. You don't know what will work.

### WORRY THOUGHTS

Worry thoughts get in the way of your ability to act effectively. You have the ability, but your worry thoughts interfere with doing or saying what you want.

- WORRIES ABOUT BAD CONSEQUENCES.  
*"They won't like me," "She will think I am stupid."*
- WORRIES ABOUT WHETHER YOU DESERVE TO GET WHAT YOU WANT.  
*"I am such a bad person I don't deserve this."*
- WORRIES ABOUT NOT BEING EFFECTIVE AND CALLING YOURSELF NAMES.  
*"I won't do it right," "I'll probably fall apart," "I'm so stupid."*

### EMOTIONS

Your emotions (ANGER, FRUSTRATION, FEAR, GUILT) get in the way of your ability to act effectively. You have the ability, but your emotions make you unable to do or say what you want. Emotions, instead of skill, control what you say and do.

### INDECISION

You CAN'T DECIDE what to do or what you really want. You have the ability, but your indecision gets in the way of doing or saying what you want. You are ambivalent about your priorities. You can't figure out how to balance:

- Asking for too much versus not asking for anything.
- Saying no to everything versus giving in to everything.

### ENVIRONMENT

Characteristics of the environment make it impossible for even a very skilled person to be effective. SKILLFUL BEHAVIOR DOESN'T WORK.

- Other people are too powerful.
- Other people will be threatened or have some other reason for not liking you if you get what you want.
- Other people won't give you what you need or let you say no without punishing you unless you sacrifice your self-respect, at least a little.

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 4

## Myths about Interpersonal Effectiveness

1. I can't stand it if someone gets upset with me.

CHALLENGE: \_\_\_\_\_

2. If they say no, it will kill me.

CHALLENGE: \_\_\_\_\_

3. I don't deserve to get what I want or need.

CHALLENGE: \_\_\_\_\_

4. If I make a request, this will show that I am a very weak person.

CHALLENGE: \_\_\_\_\_

5. I must be really inadequate if I can't fix this myself.

CHALLENGE: \_\_\_\_\_

6. I have to know whether a person is going to say yes before I make a request.

CHALLENGE: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Making requests is a really pushy (bad, self-centered, selfish, un-christian) thing to do.

CHALLENGE: \_\_\_\_\_

8. It doesn't make any difference; I don't care really.

CHALLENGE: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Obviously, the problem is just in my head. If I would just think differently I wouldn't have to bother everybody else.

CHALLENGE: \_\_\_\_\_

10. This is a catastrophe (is really bad, is terrible, is driving me crazy, will destroy me, is a disaster).

CHALLENGE: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Saying no to a request is always a selfish thing to do.

CHALLENGE: \_\_\_\_\_

12. I should be willing to sacrifice my own needs for others.

CHALLENGE: \_\_\_\_\_

13. \_\_\_\_\_

CHALLENGE: \_\_\_\_\_

14. \_\_\_\_\_

CHALLENGE: \_\_\_\_\_

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 5

## **Cheerleading Statements for Interpersonal Effectiveness**

1. It is OK to want or need something from someone else.
2. I have a choice to ask someone for what I want or need.
3. I can stand it if I don't get what I want or need.
4. The fact that someone says no to my request doesn't mean I should not have asked in the first place.
5. If I didn't get my objectives, that doesn't mean I didn't go about it in a skillful way.
6. Standing up for myself over "small" things can be just as important as "big" things are to others.
7. I can insist on my rights and still be a good person.
8. I sometimes have a right to assert myself, even though I may inconvenience others.
9. The fact that other people might not be assertive doesn't mean that I shouldn't be.
10. I can understand and validate another person, and still ask for what I want.
11. There is no law that says other people's opinions are more valid than mine.
12. I may want to please people I care about, but I don't have to please them all the time.
13. Giving, giving, giving is not the be-all of life. I am an important person in this world, too.
14. If I refuse to do a favor for people, that doesn't mean I don't like them. They will probably understand that, too.
15. I am under no obligation to say yes to people simply because they ask a favor of me.
16. The fact that I say no to someone does not make me a selfish person.
17. If I say no to people and they get angry, that does not mean that I should have said yes.
18. I can still feel good about myself, even though someone else is annoyed with me.

OTHERS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 6

## Options for Intensity of Asking or Saying No, and Factors to Consider in Deciding

### OPTIONS

#### HIGH INTENSITY: TRY AND CHANGE THE SITUATION

Ask firmly, insist . . . 6 . . . Refuse firmly, don't give in.

Ask firmly, resist no . . . 5 . . . Refuse firmly, resist giving in.

Ask firmly, take no . . . 4 . . . Refuse firmly, but reconsider.

Ask tentatively, take no . . . 3 . . . Express unwillingness.

Hint openly, take no . . . 2 . . . Express unwillingness, but say yes.

Hint indirectly, take no . . . 1 . . . Express hesitancy, say yes.

Don't ask, don't hint . . . 0 . . . Do what other wants without being asked.

#### LOW INTENSITY: ACCEPT THE SITUATION AS IT IS

### FACTORS TO CONSIDER

- 1. PRIORITIES:** OBJECTIVES very important? Increase intensity.  
RELATIONSHIP very tenuous? Consider reducing intensity.  
SELF-RESPECT on the line? Intensity should fit values.
- 2. CAPABILITY:** Is person able to give me what I want? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.  
Do I have what the person wants? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.
- 3. TIMELINESS:** Is this a good time to ask? Is person "in the mood" for listening and paying attention to me? Am I catching person when he or she is likely to say yes to my request? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.  
Is this a bad time to say no? Should I hold off answering for a while? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.

(cont.)

## INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 6 (cont.)

- 4. HOMEWORK:** Have I done my homework? Do I know all the facts I need to know to support my request? Am I clear about what I want? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.  
Is the other person's request clear? Do I know what I am agreeing to? If NO raise the intensity of NO.
- 5. AUTHORITY:** Am I 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 me (e.g., my boss, my teacher)? And is what the person is asking within his or her authority? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.
- 6. RIGHTS:** Is person required by law or moral code to give me what I want? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.  
Am I required to give the person what he or she wants? Would saying no violate the other person's rights? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.
- 7. RELATIONSHIP:** Is what I want appropriate to the current relationship? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.  
Is what the person asking for appropriate to our current relationship? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.
- 8. RECIPROCITY:** What have I done for the person? Am I giving at least as much as I ask for? Am I willing to give if person says yes? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.  
Do I owe person a favor? Does he or she do a lot for me? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.
- 9. LONG VERSUS SHORT TERM:** Will being submissive (and not asking) get peace now but create problems in the long run? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.  
Is giving in to get short-term peace more important than the long-term welfare of the relationship? Will I eventually regret or resent saying no? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.
- 10. RESPECT:** Do I usually do things for myself? Am I careful to avoid acting helpless when I am not? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.  
Will saying no make me feel bad about myself, even when I am thinking about it wisely? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.

Other factors: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 7

## Suggestions for Interpersonal Effectiveness Practice

Interpersonal skills can only be learned if they are PRACTICED, PRACTICED, PRACTICED. To do this, you must be alert to every practice opportunity. If no situations arise naturally, then you may need to go out of your way to find or create opportunities to practice. Some of the following situations are examples of ones you can create for practice. Others are situations that may arise in your day-to-day life.

1. Go to a library and ask the librarian for assistance in finding a book. (Variation: ask salesperson to help you find something.)
2. While talking with someone, change the subject.
3. Invite a friend to dinner (at your house or at a restaurant).
4. Call an insurance company and ask about its rates.
5. Take old books to a used-book store and find out what they are worth. Leave after you have your information.
6. Pay for a newspaper, pack of gum, or anything else costing less than \$.50 with a \$5.00 bill.
7. In a drug store or candy store, ask for change for a \$1.00 bill without buying anything.
8. Go to a luncheonette or lunch counter during a slack time and ask for a glass of water, drink it, say "Thank you," and walk out again.
9. Go into a restaurant and ask to use the restroom; leave without eating anything.
10. Phone the department of sanitation, ask to speak to the commissioner (or as highly placed an official as you can reach), and complain about the garbage collection in your neighborhood. (Variations on this theme are numerous—e.g., complaining about telephone service, newspaper delivery, taxi service, bus service, bad TV program, etc.)
11. Go to a full-service gas station and ask the attendant to check the water in your radiator (or air in your tires); leave without buying gas.
12. Get on a bus (or wait for a bus) and ask other passengers for change. (Variations on this theme are numerous—asking someone for change for a newspaper, parking meter, etc.)
13. Call and make an appointment to have your hair cut. Call back later and cancel the appointment. (Variations: Make and cancel dinner reservations; make and cancel airline reservations.)
14. Ask the pharmacist for information on an over-the-counter drug.
15. Ask for special "fixings" on a sandwich bought at McDonald's, Burger King, or another fast-food restaurant. A variation of this is to ask for a substitution on the menu when ordering a meal.
16. Ask a salesperson in a store to help you find something.
17. Ask the manager in the supermarket to order something that you would like to buy but the store doesn't now carry.

(cont.)

*From Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Disorder by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.*



## INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 7 (cont.)

18. Ask a clerk in the grocery store whether they have any fresher lettuce (or other fruit or vegetable) in the back of the store. (Variation: Ask the clerk to check whether an item you want is in the back if you don't find it on the shelf.)
19. Go to a deli counter and ask for 2 ounces of meat or cheese. Leave without buying anything else.
20. Go into a department store or gift store and ask the salesperson for help in choosing an item or a gift. (Variation: Ask salesperson for an opinion on outfit you are considering buying.)
21. Call and ask for information about jobs listed in the classified section of the newspaper. (Variations on this theme are numerous: Call about things being sold in the classified ads; call universities and ask for information about classes; etc.)
22. Ask coworkers or classmates to do a favor for you (e.g., fix you a cup of coffee while they are fixing their own, give you an opinion on some aspect of your work, etc.).
23. Ask someone for a ride.
24. Disagree with someone's opinion.
25. Express disagreement with a parent, spouse, partner, or close friend regarding specific topics (scheduling priorities, sexual practices, time spent together, etc.).
26. Express disagreement over social arrangements as planned by a parent, spouse, partner, or close friend.
27. Request parent, spouse, partner, or children to accept more responsibility in some specific area.
28. Ask a friend for help in fixing something.
29. Ask a person making too much noise to be a bit quieter (person talking in a movie, neighbor playing loud music, etc.).
30. Ask your therapist or counselor for a favor.
31. Ask for help in moving furniture.
32. Ask your landlord to fix leaky roof, faucet, broken appliances, creaky door, etc.
33. Go see a dentist or physician and tell him or her clearly what the problem is.
34. Order a nonalcoholic beverage in a bar or cocktail lounge.
35. Ask to be excused from class or ask to leave early.
36. Ask a person to stop doing something that bothers you.
37. Ask skills training leader (who is going overtime) to end the session because time is up.
38. Ask a teacher for time to speak to him or her and make a complaint or give a compliment about the class.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 8

## Guidelines for Objectives Effectiveness: Getting What You Want

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).

Tell the person exactly what you are reacting to. Stick to the facts.

### **Express**

Express your FEELINGS and OPINIONS about the situation.

Assume that your feelings and opinions are not self-evident. Give a brief rationale. Use phrases such as "I want," "I don't want," instead of "I need," "You should," or "I can't."

### **Assert**

Assert yourself by ASKING for what you want or SAYING NO clearly.

Assume that others will not figure it out or do what you want unless you ask. Assume that others cannot read your mind. Don't expect others to know how hard it is for you to ask directly for what you want.

### **Reinforce**

Reinforce or reward the person ahead of time by explaining CONSEQUENCES.

Tell the person the positive effects of getting what you want or need. Tell him or her (if necessary) the negative effects of your not getting it. Help the person feel good ahead of time for doing or accepting what you want. Reward him or her afterwards.

(cont.)

## INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 8 (cont.)

**(stay) Mindful**

Keep your focus ON YOUR OBJECTIVES.

Maintain your position. Don't be distracted.

**"Broken record"**

Keep asking, saying no, or expressing your opinion over and over and over.

**Ignore**

If another person attacks, threatens, or tries to change the subject, ignore the threats, comments, or attempts to divert you. Don't respond to attacks. Ignore distractions. Just keep making your point.

**Appear 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, saying "I'm not sure," etc.

**Negotiate**

Be willing to GIVE TO GET. Offer and ask for alternative solutions to the problem. Reduce your request. Maintain no, but offer to do something else or to solve the problem another way. Focus on what will work.

**Turn the tables**

Turn the problem over to the other person. Ask for alternative solutions: "What do you think we should do?" "I'm not able to say yes, and you seem to really want me to. What can we do here?" "How can we solve this problem?"

Other ideas: \_\_\_\_\_

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# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 9

## Guidelines for Relationship Effectiveness: Keeping the Relationship

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

(be) GENTLE  
(act) INTERESTED  
VALIDATE  
(use an) EASY MANNER

**(be) Gentle**

Be COURTEOUS and temperate in your approach.

**No attacks**

No verbal or physical attacks. No hitting, clenching fists. Express anger directly.

**No threats**

No "manipulative" statements, no hidden threats. No "I'll kill myself if you. . . ." Tolerate a no to requests. 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. . . ." "You shouldn't. . . ."

**(act) Interested**

LISTEN and be interested in the other person.

Listen to the other person's point of view, opinion, reasons for saying no, or reasons for making a request of you. Don't interrupt, talk over, etc. Be sensitive to the person's desire to have the discussion at a later time. Be patient.

**Validate**

Validate or ACKNOWLEDGE the other person's feelings, wants, difficulties, and opinions about the situation. Be nonjudgmental out loud: "I can understand how you feel, but . . . "; "I realize this is hard for you, but . . . "; "I see that you are busy, and. . . ."

**(use an) Easy manner**

Use a little humor. SMILE. Ease the person along. Be light-hearted. Wheedle. Use a "soft sell" over a "hard sell." Be political.

Other ideas: \_\_\_\_\_

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 10

## Guidelines for Self-Respect Effectiveness: Keeping Your Respect for Yourself

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) Fair Be fair to YOURSELF and to the OTHER person.

(no) Apologies No OVERLY apologetic behavior. No apologizing for being alive, for making a request at all. No apologies for having an opinion, for disagreeing.

Stick 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) Truthful DON'T LIE, ACT HELPLESS when you are not, or EXAGGERATE. Don't make up excuses.

Other ideas: \_\_\_\_\_  
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