



LENNOX FIELDS

CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

DEARMAN Skills for Effective Communication

Your Homework for Better Relationships

What is DEARMAN?

DEARMAN is a powerful DBT skill to help you **ask for what you want**, **say no**, or **express yourself clearly and respectfully**. Practicing DEARMAN can improve your relationships and build your confidence over time.

When emotions run high or stakes feel personal, communication can get tricky. DEARMAN helps you slow things down and stay grounded in your values while still being true to yourself.

DEARMAN Breakdown

Each letter stands for a step. Use these in order to express yourself effectively:

D -- Describe the situation

State the facts. Be specific and neutral.

Example: "I noticed you didn't call me yesterday."

E -- Express your feelings and opinions

Share how the situation affects you, using "I" statements.

Example: "I felt worried because I value our plans."

A -- Assert your wishes or boundaries

Be clear about what you need or want.

Example: "I'd like you to call if you can't meet up."

R -- Reinforce

Explain the positive outcome if they honor your request.

Example: "That way, I know you care and I feel connected."

M -- Mindful

Stay on topic. Don't get pulled into other issues.

Tip: Breathe, pause, and bring your attention back if things drift.

A -- Appear confident

Use body language and tone that shows self-respect.

Tip: Sit or stand tall, make eye contact, and speak clearly.

N -- Negotiate

Be open to compromise when needed.

Example: "Maybe we can find a different time that works for both of us."

Your DEARMAN Practice Homework

Choose one situation this week where you'd like to be more effective in how you communicate. Before the conversation, write out your plan using the DEARMAN steps.

Situation:

(What's happening? What do you want to talk about?)

My DEARMAN Script:

Describe:

Express:

Assert:

Reinforce:

Mindful Plan:

(How will I stay calm and focused?)

Appear Confident Plan:

(What will my voice/posture/body say?)

Negotiate (if needed):

After the Conversation: Reflect

Take a few moments to reflect. You don't need to be perfect—just notice.

1. How did it go?

2. What felt good or surprising?

3. What would I try differently next time?

4. How did I feel afterward?

Remember:

- Growth takes practice. Every conversation is a chance to learn.
- You are worthy of being heard.
- DEARMAN is a skill—build it like a muscle!
- Even small improvements ripple outward in your relationships.

You've Got This!

You're learning how to **honor your needs, stay grounded, and build connection**. DEARMAN is a tool for building bridges —not walls. Keep practicing—you're doing amazing work just by showing up.