

The GIVE Technique for Interpersonal Effectiveness

Objective

To help you lower your emotional reactivity and be more of aware of the emotional needs of others.

You Should Know

Interpersonal relationships can be very challenging for many people—issues of trust, blame, shame, shoulds vs. wants, worry, and betrayal rise up quite often, causing you to criticize yourself harshly or act out toward others. Although that pattern might be a problem thus far in your life, the good news is that change is possible!

One approach is called GIVE, which is aimed at helping you lower your emotional upset or reactivity and learning to be more aware of others' needs and wants.

What to Do

When you experience distress in your relationships, it is sometimes hard to know what to do or how to solve the problem. You might expend a lot of energy blaming others or trying to get them to change, only to be rejected over and over. You might be overly focused on your needs and wants, to the exclusion of others' needs and wants. It is possible to improve your approach to resolving conflicts and getting what you want in your relationships.

Write below the primary concerns or problems you are experiencing currently in your interpersonal relationships.

GIVE

The purpose of this skill is to help you be more effective in establishing and keeping healthy relationships with others using a gentle, kind approach; lowering your emotional reactivity; and style.

GIVE stands for:

Gentle

Interested

Validate

Easy Manner

Let's take them one by one. After each brief description, write down your ideas about how, and with whom, you could use this skill in an interpersonal situation:

GENTLE means that you will practice using a soft voice, speaking respectfully, and avoiding arguments. You can learn not to be bossy or a bully, if that is a problem for you. You can remain calm and say nice things to others rather than blaming or criticizing them.

INTERESTED refers to taking the opportunity to really pay deep attention to the other person. What are they saying? Are you hearing their words or just thinking about what you want to say back? Try listening and lowering the volume on your own thoughts and desires. Make good eye contact. Don't interrupt. Smile.

VALIDATE is a skill you learn that has to do with being aware of the other person's feelings as well as your own—and letting them know you hear them. You can even say, "I hear you" in a

kind way. Validate for them that what they are asking for or dealing with is their truth and they are entitled to their feelings.

EASY MANNER is a skill that goes beyond learning to be a gentle, kind, active listener who validates the other person. This aspect refers to being goofy or fun or silly sometimes. Lighten up. Try not to take everything so seriously. Let yourself be friendly toward others; let them see you as someone they can approach and maybe ask for help or advice. Let yourself ask for and receive advice from them too.

In the next week or so, keep track of any situations when you used the GIVE skill to help you improve your interpersonal effectiveness.

Situation	With whom?	What you wanted	What GIVE skills did you use?

Reflections on This Exercise

1. What parts of the GIVE skill worked well for you?

2. What was the main obstacle(s) you encountered in this exercise?

3. If you struggled with a certain aspect of GIVE, whom can you talk with to review what went well and what didn't go well? How would you like to go about asking them for help?

How helpful was this exercise? _____
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What could you do differently to make progress in this area?
