

REHABILITATION SERVICES  
PATIENT EDUCATION MANUAL

# **INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS SKILLS**



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN FRANCISCO  
Langley Porter Psychiatric Hospital & Clinics

# THE GOALS OF INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS SKILLS

The ideas presented in this manual can introduce you to the skills that will help you to maintain or improve interpersonal relationships while maintaining your self-respect.



## GOALS INCLUDE

- Learning to be clear about your goals when interacting with others
- Learning how to ask for what you want
- Learning how to say "no"
- Learning how to resolve conflict

# THERE ARE THREE KINDS OF INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Be clear with yourself in identifying your priorities in interpersonal relationships. Which of these goals are important to you?

## **I. OBJECTIVES EFFECTIVENESS**

### **Basic Questions:**

*What specific result do I want from this interaction?*

*What do I have to do to get results?*

*What will work?*

### **Basic Goals:**

- ❖ Obtaining your legitimate rights
- ❖ Getting another to do something
- ❖ Resolving interpersonal conflict
- ❖ Getting your opinion taken seriously



## **II. RELATIONSHIP EFFECTIVENESS**

### **Basic Questions:**

*How do I want the other person to feel about me after the interaction is over?*

*What do I have to do to get or keep this relationship?*

### **Basic Goals:**

- ❖ 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

## **III. SELF-RESPECT EFFECTIVENESS**

### **Basic Questions:**

*How do I want to feel after the interaction is over?*

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

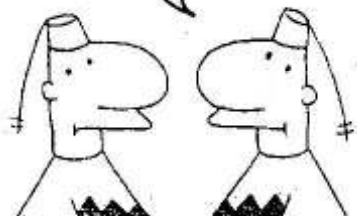
### **Basic Goals:**

- ❖ Respecting your own values and beliefs, acting in a way that makes you feel moral or ethical
- ❖ Acting in a way that makes you feel capable and effective

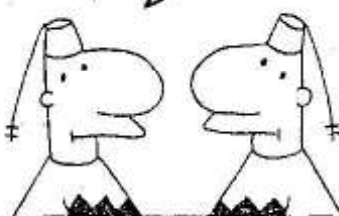
# LIFE IN HELL

©2001  
BY MATH  
GROENING

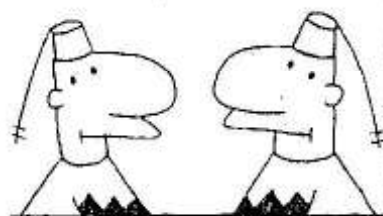
DO YOU MIND  
IF WE TALK ABOUT  
THE RELATIONSHIP?



AS LONG AS  
THERE'S NO  
SCREAMING



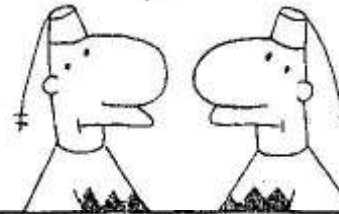
OR  
NAME-CALLING



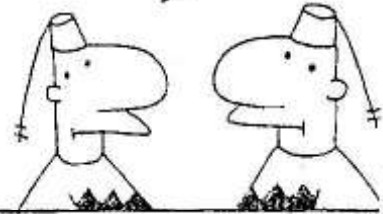
OR SNIDE  
SARCASM



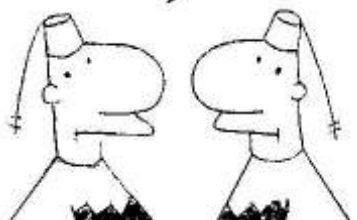
OR VICIOUS  
INSULTS



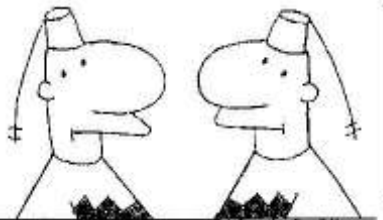
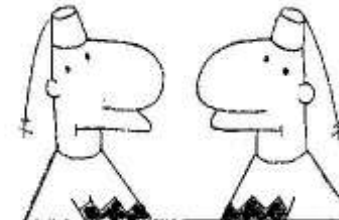
OR BITTER  
RECRIMINATIONS



OR HATEFUL  
VINDICTIVENESS.



NEVER MIND.



# EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Here are the four most typical styles of communication.

On the next few pages, you'll find good descriptions of these communication styles, followed up by some useful worksheets.

The most *effective* style that gets the best results is ASSERTIVE communication (see pg. 10).

<b>ASSERTIVE</b>  <i>"I count"</i> <i>"You count"</i>	<b>AGGRESSIVE</b>  <i>"I count"</i> <i>"You don't count"</i>
<b>PASSIVE- AGGRESSIVE</b>  <i>"I count"</i> <i>"You don't count...but I'm not going to tell you this"</i>	<b>PASSIVE</b>  <i>"I don't count"</i> <i>"You count"</i>

## **AGGRESSIVE**

*"I count"*  
*"You don't count"*

### **Aggressive Communication**

- ❖ Thoughts, feelings and wishes are communicated at the expense of others' rights and feelings.
- ❖ Use of sarcasm, blame, judgment and putdowns.
- ❖ Use of absolute terms like "always" and "never".
- ❖ Voice may be loud, shrill, yelling.
- ❖ Posture is typically rigid, feet planted apart, hands on hips, jaw clenched. Finger pointing.
- ❖ Being right is most important.
- ❖ Listening to others seldom occurs.

## PASSIVE

*"I don't count"*

*"You count"*

### Passive Communication

- ❖ Thoughts, feelings and wishes are not expressed directly.
- ❖ Non-verbal, passive communication may include frowning, crying or mumbling.
- ❖ More listening than speaking.
- ❖ Use of disclaimers and apologies such as "I'm no expert, but..." or "I'm sorry to have to ask you this..."
- ❖ Voice is soft, weak, wavering.
- ❖ Posture is slouched, leaning on something for support.
- ❖ Eye contact is usually indirect, down or away from the person.
- ❖ Because you are often not saying what you mean, you don't look like you mean what you say.

## **PASSIVE- AGGRESSIVE**

*"I count"  
"You don't count...but I'm not  
going to tell you this"*

### **Passive-Aggressive Communication**

- ❖ Thoughts, feelings and wishes are expressed indirectly or not expressed at all, and this results in the putdown of others.
- ❖ Verbal response is often different than behavior, i.e. what is said is not what is done, in fact is often the *opposite* of what is done.
- ❖ Examples include frequent lateness or "forgetting" commitments made to others.



# ASSERTIVE

*"I count"*  
*"You count"*

## **Assertive Communication**

- ❖ Thoughts, wishes and feelings are expressed directly while considering rights and feelings of others.
- ❖ Active listening.
- ❖ Open to negotiation and compromise while rights and dignity are maintained.
- ❖ Voice is relaxed, well-modulated and firm.
- ❖ Posture is balanced and erect.
- ❖ Good eye contact is maintained.

# PRACTICING "I" STATEMENTS

An important part of *ASSERTIVE* communication

When you're angry, it's easy to blame someone or something for your problems. Getting comfortable using "I" statements can help you learn to take responsibility for your feelings. Fill in the statements below to practice talking in terms of yourself and your feelings.

I feel ANGRY  
when YOU ARE LATE GETTING HOME FOR DINNER.  
Next time, I would like TO KNOW IF YOU'RE  
GOING TO BE LATE. PLEASE TRY TO CALL.

I feel \_\_\_\_\_  
when \_\_\_\_\_.  
Next time, I would like \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I feel \_\_\_\_\_  
when \_\_\_\_\_.  
Next time, I would like \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Another Assertiveness Worksheet

Think about a situation in which  
you would *like* to respond assertively.

**DESCRIBE:** Describe the current situation.

*What's going on?*

Tell the person exactly what's upsetting you.

**STICK TO THE FACTS.**

(Write a description here)



**EXPRESS:** Express your **FEELINGS AND OPINIONS** about what's going on. Don't assume people know. Use phrases like "*I want*" and "*I don't want*" instead of "*YOU should*" or "*I can't*".

**ASSERT:** Assert yourself. Ask for what you want or say **NO** clearly. Don't assume other people can read your mind or 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 what will happen, the effects, if you get/don't get what you're asking.

# TRY THE “*SERGEANT FRIDAY*” APPROACH

If you are not in touch with your needs and feelings, chances are you won't be very skillful in getting your needs met.



Write down a *situation* with another person that is stressful for you:

1. Write your observation of what is happening now. These are Sergeant Friday “*just the facts, Ma’am*” descriptions without evaluating, moralizing, analyzing, judging or blaming.

2. What I am feeling and what I guess the other person is feeling?

3. What it is I think I need and what it is I think the other person needs?

4. Write down concise, specific concrete, *doable*, requests of the other person to meet those needs. A five year old should be able to tell if the request was granted. You can't ask that \_\_\_\_\_ *love* you, but you can ask for a *kiss* or a *cherry pie*. State requests positively, what you want them to do, not what you want them to avoid doing.

# ***"HOW SKILLS" FOR ASSERTIVENESS***

Remember these basic points about *how* to show assertiveness

**MINDFUL**: Keep focused on your objectives. What do you want in this situation? Stand your ground. Don't be distracted. How to "STAND MY GROUND":

- ❖ Be a BROKEN RECORD, keep asking or saying NO or expressing your opinion over and over and over and over...
- ❖ If the other person tries to change the subject or attacks...IGNORE...don't respond to the attacks. Ignore distractions. Just keep making your point!!!

**APPEAR CONFIDENT**: No stammering, whispering, staring at floor saying "I'm sorry" or "I'm not sure". Pretend you are a confident person. Fake it 'til you make it.

**NEGOTIATE**: Be willing to give to get. Maintain no, but offer to do something else or solve the problem another way...Focus on what will work.

*How do I do that?*

Turn the problem over to the other person. "What do you think we should do?" or "How can we solve this problem?"

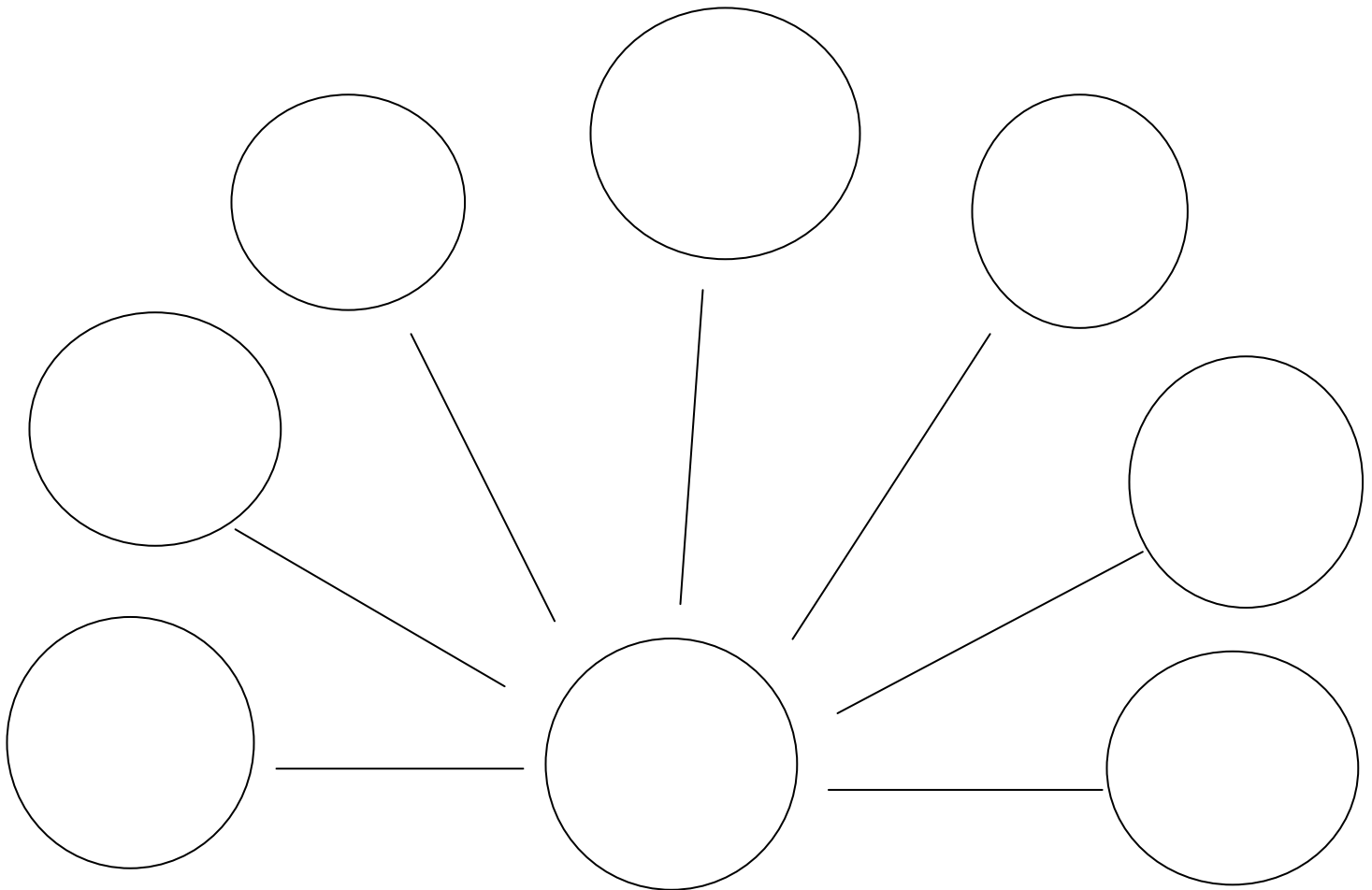
## **ASSERTIVE BILL OF RIGHTS**



- To be treated with respect
- To express my feelings and opinions
- To be listened to and taken seriously
- To set priorities
- To ask for what I want
- To get what I pay for
- To ask information from other professionals
- To make mistakes
- To change my mind
- To be illogical
- "I count and you count"

# My Support Network

Write your name in the center circle,  
then fill in the names of people in your life to whom you can turn to for  
support. Also note what *kind* of support or help you can reasonably expect from  
each person. Be aware of the limits of support that each person may be able to  
offer.



# RESOURCE LIST FOR ADDITIONAL READINGS

This manual is part of a series discussing Mindfulness Skills, Distress Tolerance Skills, Emotion Regulation Skills and Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills. If you would like additional reading materials or resources related to the skills discussed in these manuals, we would like to direct you to the following:

**Don't Let Your Emotions Run Your Life: How Dialectical Behavior Therapy Can Put You in Control** by Scott E. Spradlin, MA, New Harbinger Publications, 2003.

**The Feeling Good Handbook** by David D. Burns, M.D., Penguin Books, 1999.

**Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness** by Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D., Dell Publishing, 1990.

**Guided Meditations, Explorations and Healings** by Stephen Levine, Doubleday, 1991.

**The Language of Letting Go** by Melody Beattie, Hazelden Foundation Meditation Series, 1990.

**Practicing the Power of Now** by Eckhart Tolle, publisher New World Library, ([www.newworldlibrary.com](http://www.newworldlibrary.com)), 1999.

**The Relaxation & Stress Reduction Workbook** by Martha Davis, Ph.D., New Harbinger Publications, 2000.

**The Spirituality of Imperfection** by Ernest Kurtz, Ph.D., Bantam Books, 1994.

**Turning Suffering Inside Out: A Zen Approach to Living with Physical and Emotional Pain** by Darlene Cohen, Shambhala Publications, 2000.

**Women, Anger & Depression: Strategies for Self Empowerment** by Lois P. Frankel, Ph.D., Health Communications, Inc., 1992.

## **TAPES AND CDs**

Guided Mindfulness Meditation by Jon Kabat-Zinn, Stress Reduction CDs and Tapes, P.O. Box 547, Lexington, MA 02420 or [www.mindfulnessstapes.com](http://www.mindfulnessstapes.com)

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Many of the materials discussed in these manuals are based on the works of Marsha M. Linehan, Ph.D. as presented in her books **Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder** and **Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder**. Both are available through the Guilford Press, 1993.