

# RELATIONSHIP STYLES

## Interpersonal Effectiveness Guide

A DBT-informed worksheet for understanding your relationship patterns and applying interpersonal effectiveness skills for healthier connection.

### Common Relationship Styles

These patterns are common, especially under stress. Notice which ones appear for you and in what situations.

#### 1. Avoidant Style

Tends to withdraw or shut down when needs, intimacy, or conflict arise.

You may notice:

- Avoiding difficult conversations
- Pulling away during emotional moments
- Difficulty asking for help or reassurance

Helpful DBT skills:

- DEAR MAN for structured requests
- Practising small moments of connection
- Mindfulness of emotions

#### 2. Anxious Style

Seeks closeness, fears rejection, and may over-communicate or people-please.

You may notice:

- Reassurance-seeking
- Difficulty saying no

- Feeling responsible for others' emotions

Helpful DBT skills:

- FAST for self-respect
- Boundaries Without Burnout skills
- Opposite action to urges to over-please

### **3. Chaotic / Mixed Style**

Shifts quickly between closeness and distance, often triggered by stress or conflict.

You may notice:

- Emotional intensity and rapid shifts
- Difficulty staying steady in conflict
- Impulsive communication or withdrawals

Helpful DBT skills:

- STOP skill before reacting
- Emotion Regulation tools
- DEAR MAN + negotiation

### **4. Secure-Growing Style**

A developing ability to stay connected while maintaining self-respect.

You may notice:

- Balanced communication
- Ability to give and receive feedback
- Capacity to repair after conflict

Helpful DBT skills

- GIVE for maintaining connection
- FAST for self-respect
- Values-based communication

# Boundaries Without Burnout

Boundaries protect emotional energy and create clearer relationships. They are not punishments — they are clarity.

Useful skills:

- FAST – maintaining self-respect
- DEAR MAN – structured boundary-setting
- Opposite action to guilt after setting limits

## How to Ask for What You Need

Use DEAR MAN for clear, calm requests:

- Describe – state the facts
- Express – share your emotion
- Assert – say what you need clearly
- Reinforce – show how cooperation helps both of you

## Saying No Without Losing Connection

A respectful 'no' is part of healthy relationships.

Tips:

- Validate the other person's feelings
- Be honest about your limits
- Keep it short and steady
- Offer alternatives only if appropriate

## Protecting Your Self-Respect (FAST)

FAST supports you when your dignity matters more than pleasing others.

- Fair – to yourself and them
- Apologies – only when necessary

- Stick to your values
- Truthful – no exaggeration or bending

## Your Reflection

My main relationship style:

What triggers this style:

What I want to practise:

DBT skills I will use:

## Additional Resources

### DBT Support Hub

Psychoeducation and peer support only – not therapy, diagnosis, or crisis care.

#### If you cannot stay safe:

- Call 000 (Australia)
- Lifeline 13 11 14
- Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467
- 13YARN 13 92 76