

C.L.E.A.R. Communication Framework – A Guide for Clinicians

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Purpose:

C.L.E.A.R. helps clients express themselves effectively—balancing honesty, confidence, and respect. It's a tool for teaching emotional regulation and interpersonal effectiveness in individual or group settings.

C.L.E.A.R. Framework

C — Clarify the Situation

Encourage clients to describe what happened in neutral, factual terms. Avoid assumptions or labels.

Example: "You arrived 20 minutes late to our meeting."

L — Label Feelings

Guide clients to identify and name their emotional response clearly and calmly.

Example: "I felt disappointed and worried about the time."

E — Express Needs

Support clients in communicating what they need or want to happen next.

Example: "I need us to start on time so we can finish everything."

A — Affirm the Relationship

Highlight mutual respect and positive intentions to maintain connection.

Example: "I really value our work together and want to make sure we both succeed."

R — Revisit and Adjust

Encourage flexibility—invite collaboration and problem-solving.

Example: "If mornings are hard, we can try scheduling later sessions."

Teaching Tips for Clinicians

- Use role-play to help clients practice real-life scenarios.
- Reinforce calm tone, eye contact, and confident posture.
- Discuss barriers like guilt, fear of rejection, or people-pleasing tendencies.
- Integrate with other DBT or CBT modules on boundaries and communication.

Example Exercise

Have the client write a C.L.E.A.R. Script for a recent conflict and review it together, focusing on tone and clarity.