

IN-SESSION SCRIPT ROLE-PLAY PROTOCOL

DBT DEAR MAN Alignment

A structured 15-minute role-play protocol designed to help clients practice delivering their adapted WTW script while maintaining emotional regulation and interpersonal effectiveness.

Phase 1 Pre-Assessment & Grounding	Phase 2 Role-Play Execution	Phase 3 Post-Assessment & Debrief
3 minutes	7 minutes	5 minutes

PHASE 1: PRE-ASSESSMENT & GROUNDING (3 MINUTES)

1. **Check Distress Level:** Ask the client to rate their Subjective Units of Distress (SUDS) on a scale from 0 to 10.

- **If SUDS > 6:** Pause and conduct 2 minutes of paced breathing (4-second inhale, 6-second exhale) or sensory grounding before proceeding.

2. **Review Skill Alignment:** Confirm the adapted WTW script satisfies DBT DEAR MAN criteria:

- **Describe** the situation factually.
- **Express** feelings/opinions clearly.
- **Assert** wishes directly.
- **Reinforce** positive outcomes.
- **Mindful** of the objective — stay focused.
- **Appear confident.**
- **Negotiate** where appropriate.

PHASE 2: ROLE-PLAY EXECUTION (7 MINUTES)

1. **Establish Roles:** The therapist plays the recipient (e.g., family member, employer, partner); the client delivers the adapted WTW script.

2. **Run Trial 1 — Ideal Scenario:**

- The practitioner responds neutrally or receptively.
- The client reads/delivers the WTW script aloud, focusing on tone, eye contact, and pacing.

3. **Run Trial 2 — Pushback Scenario:**

- The practitioner responds with mild hesitation, pushback, or deflection.
- The client practices the **Broken Record Technique** — reasserting the core boundary/request without escalating or losing focus.

PHASE 3: POST-ASSESSMENT & DEBRIEF (5 MINUTES)

1. **Re-evaluate SUDS:** Record post-role-play distress level.

2. **Deconstruct Performance:** What felt manageable during the WTW script delivery? Where did physical tension or an emotional urge to surrender/defend arise?

3. **Consolidate Learning:** Reinforce that the primary goal is maintaining self-respect and clear boundary communication, regardless of the recipient's reaction.

ABOUT THE BROKEN RECORD TECHNIQUE

An assertive communication strategy in which the client repeats their core request, boundary, or decision using the same or very similar words, without becoming angry, defensive, or off-track. In DBT, this technique supports the **Mindful** component of the DEAR MAN framework by helping the client remain focused on the objective.

Core Practice Goal: Maintain emotional regulation, self-respect, and clear boundary communication regardless of the recipient's response.