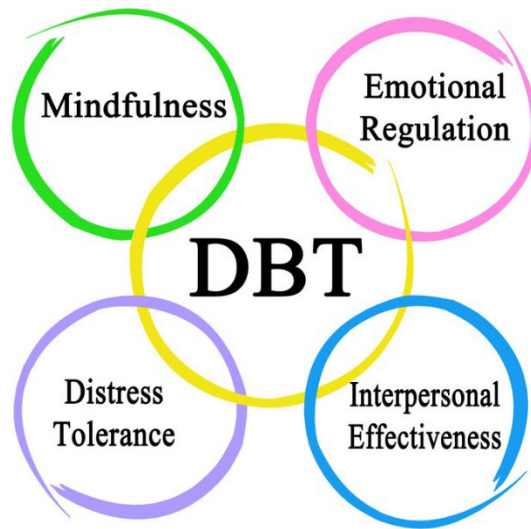




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DBT Skills



Workshop

Core Mindfulness: an acute awareness of the moment (which can be extremely difficult to do!)

THE WHAT:

1. Observe: Simply notice what's happening. Notice your thoughts, emotional feelings, physical sensations, and anything else that is happening. Become aware of sensations and pay attention to them.

- Teflon Mind: Imagine that your mind is Teflon, the non-stick chemical that coats pans and other objects. Teflon is waterproof, cuts down on friction, and creates a nonstick surface. Teflon mind is allowing experiences, feelings, and thoughts to bounce right off of you; the thoughts are there momentarily but cannot stick because you're Teflon. Using this analogy is very helpful particularly when distressing emotions come since they tend to "stick" in our consciousness. Teflon mind is a way to validate those thoughts without becoming distracted by them.
 - An alternative metaphor – When your mind starts to drift, try to watch your thoughts go by as if they are on a moving train so as not to ruminate or get preoccupied. – Understand there is a difference between dissociation and observation; during observation, the goal is still to feel, just without judging those thoughts.
 - Practicing this skill can help you to cope with painful emotions in the long term and allow you to continue with your day throughout these natural thoughts.

2. Describe: Put fact-based words to what you have observed. Observe and describe often happen simultaneously and that is okay too. Labeling our response to certain environments can help us more clearly understand our triggers and associations. Labeling our emotions can help us manage and cope with them. Remember that, while they're valid, your emotions and thoughts are not always accurate to the situation; for example, you may feel judged or fearful in a situation due to past experiences AND that doesn't mean that you're necessarily in danger. Since thoughts and feelings can be inaccurate or short-sighted, try to zoom out and describe your experiences and feelings without a positive or negative connotation (which we will discuss more HOW to do this later).

3. Participate: Fully participate in an experience; actively concentrate and be aware of the activity you are doing, whether that's breathing, washing dishes, or walking. Often, when beginning to practice mindfulness, we become distracted or engaged in another activity; this is very natural to do, and if this occurs, gently try to pull yourself back to the moment – try not to get upset with yourself because perfect mindfulness does not exist. If you're watching your

favorite show on TV as a form of self-care, try to watch that show with your full attention. If you're practicing mindfulness meditation, be fully present and participate in that experience.

- This practice can be a great tool with food as well, to try to focus solely on the experience of eating, rather than any anxieties; it can often aid in better digestion since you will chew more thoroughly.

THE HOW:

4. Non-judgmental stance: Reduce judgments. This one is challenging because we naturally judge things as “good” or “bad.” This skill, rather, helps us reduce judgments and focus on the **facts**. Thus, if you observe that you're feeling tightness and discomfort in your chest due to anxiety, a judgmental stance would be:

- “I feel awful. This is embarrassing. Everyone is looking at me, and it's just making me feel even worse.”
- Whereas a non-judgmental stance would be: “My chest is feeling tight, and it's making it hard to breathe.”

5. One-Mindful: Do one thing at a time. As a culture of multitaskers, this one is hard! But this is an important one to practice. If you are watching TV, then only watch TV; don't also play a game on your phone or scroll through Twitter. If you are eating dinner, then only eat dinner. It will allow you to be much more aware and to absorb the moment.

6. Effectiveness: Do what works. If something isn't working for you, or if something is making you feel worse, then try something else. It is OK to move on from something if it doesn't serve you.

- In DBT, we often think of effectiveness as our scale, instead of right or wrong because it is all about how it may benefit you.

Activity: Practice observing and describing non-judgmentally.

- First try to observe without describing. just sit and take a few breaths and try to become present with your body and surroundings. Place your feet flat on the floor and close your eyes. Allow yourself to breathe normally and just be conscious of it. Notice your chest inflate while you inhale and compress while you exhale. Imagine your thoughts are like leaves flowing in a river; sit on the bank and watch them float by. Don't reach into the river to grab them.

- Now try to describe nonjudgmentally how you feel in this moment: How does your body feel? Is there any tension? Does it feel relaxed? Is it hot or cold?
 - Many of us are tense without even realizing it. Many of us are thinking about the past or the future. Try to get out of your head and into your body.
 - Most of us will place a positive or negative connotation on a feeling. Release those boundaries. Notice your mind judging and then let that judgment pass on; try to adapt that observation to be fact-based instead of feeling based.
- Continue breathing in and out, up and down. And slowly open your eyes.
- Can anyone tell me a judgmental thought they held while participating in this activity? — Can anyone tell me how to shift that thought?
 - Can anyone tell me a non-judgmental thought they had?

Emotion Regulation

ABC PLEASE

The purpose of the ABC PLEASE skills are to decrease your vulnerability to experiencing unwanted emotions. In the past, these skills were known as “PLEASE MASTER”.

Accumulating positive experiences: By regularly participating in activities that we enjoy, as well as setting and working toward long-term goals, most of the negative experiences we have won’t seem as detrimental.

Build mastery: This skill reminds us to constantly work on improving ourselves and our talents. As we learn and master a new hobby or skill, we feel successful and accomplished on a regular basis. We become more confident and learn that we can be successful in other areas, as well.

Cope Ahead: We are often aware of the situations that will make us uncomfortable before they happen. Coping ahead helps us to prepare in advance for these situations. If, for example, you have a test coming up, you are able to prepare ahead by studying, talking with your teacher, and identifying a self-soothing skill to use during the test. This preparation will likely decrease the anxiety you feel before and throughout the exam.

Practice: Make a list of activities you enjoy that might be useful in alleviating the thoughts of negative experiences. In this list, also include a list of long-term goals and things you can do to help you achieve them.

What situations do you feel like coping ahead would benefit you? What are things that help you cope ahead?

Opposite Action

The dialectical behavior therapy skill of opposite action helps us take control of our emotions when they don't fit the facts. Each emotion we experience comes with an action urge, or behavior, associated with it. After identifying the emotion you're experiencing, try to identify the associated behavior. If you are feeling ashamed, the behavior might be isolating from others. If you are feeling happy, the behavior might be smiling. When you are feeling proud, it might be giving the person a hug. Exactly what the action looks like will be different for everyone, but each person experiences an urge associated with each emotion they feel.

The dialectical behavior therapy skill of opposite action helps us take control of our emotions when they don't fit the facts.

Often, these action urges make sense for the situation you're in. These urges are often intended to protect you. But emotions aren't always right. For example, feeling fearful before public speaking and having the urge to run away doesn't fit the fact. Public speaking does not put your life in danger; therefore, you don't need to run away. When the emotion doesn't fit the fact, you'll want to identify an action that opposes the emotional urge. If you're feeling ashamed and experience the urge to isolate, you could intentionally seek out the companionship of a safe friend and speak your shame. While this is easier said than done, you'll almost certainly feel better afterwards. Individuals with borderline personality disorder may find opposite action particularly useful, as their action urge is commonly a self-destructive behavior. Though challenging, the opposite action strategies can reduce and eventually eliminate self-destructive urges.

Opposite action is most effective when it's done "all the way", meaning that you act opposite in thoughts, words, and deeds. Although it's difficult at first, continue practicing opposite action until you start to feel differently. Eventually the action urge will be replaced with the new, more

productive action. Because you know how to counter the urges of your unpleasant emotions, they'll be easier to tolerate and you will bounce back quicker.

When we regularly practice the ABC PLEASE skills, we keep ourselves more mentally, emotionally, and physically healthy.

Each time we practice an emotion regulation skill, we decrease the likelihood that a negative emotion will severely impact us. When we regularly practice the ABC PLEASE skills, we keep ourselves more mentally, emotionally, and physically healthy. This increases our positive emotions and reduces vulnerability to unpleasant emotions. By identifying our emotions and their urges, as well as evaluating whether or not they fit the facts, we are able to healthily alter the way we feel. Emotion regulation skills help us understand that we do have some control over the emotions that we feel and how they impact us.

Distress Tolerance - helping create short-term relief for painful situations, helping minimize the risk of impulsive actions, and can help with reality acceptance

STOP

Stop! Don't react to whatever stimuli you may be facing. Stay in control of both your emotions and your physical body. Remain still.

Take a step back! Remove yourself from the situation. Take a quick break or a deep breath. Don't act impulsively based on your feelings.

Observe! Take a moment to notice your surroundings and environment—both inside and out. How do you feel? What are others doing or saying?

Proceed mindfully! Think about your goals in the situation and act with total awareness. What can you do to make the situation better, and what kind of action will make the situation worse?

Practice:

- For the exercise, let's say that we were feeling emotionally distressed and were having urges to go out to the bar. Thinking of that now, make a list of the pros and cons of acting on your urges for that situation. Other examples of acting on your urges might be engaging in dangerous, addictive, or harmful behaviors as well giving in, giving up, or simply avoiding what needs to be done.
- Make a separate list of pros and cons for what could happen if you resisted those urges.
- Carry your list with you and review it often. When a crisis situation or urge for impulsive action arises, reference your list. Consider what has happened in the past when you acted on crisis urges. Use your pros and cons list to help you choose a different course of action this time.

Interpersonal Effectiveness

THINK

THINK is a newer DBT interpersonal effectiveness skill. It was developed to reduce negative emotions toward others. You won't need to use this skill in every interaction, but it will be helpful when interpersonal problems arise and you're feeling upset.

Think — about the situation from the other person's perspective. Is she angry, too? Is she viewing you as unreasonable, just like you're viewing her as unreasonable?

Have empathy — What does it feel like to be the other person? Let yourself feel her emotions for a moment.

Interpretations — of the other person's behavior. Think about possible reasons why she did the thing that upset you. Start with outlandish reasons (to open your mind) and move toward more realistic reasons.

“She was raised in a lab and doesn't have a heart → She wasn't *raised* in the lab, but she works *for* the lab and is doing tests on how mean she can be and get away with it → Her hamster died this morning and she's masking her sadness with meanness → She struggles with depression and just had a snap that caused her to be rude → She's just human and got frustrated and didn't manage it well. We all make mistakes.”

Hopefully, these first three steps will bring your anger level down enough to be more rational in your thoughts and actions. That will help you with the following two steps.

Notice — the other person. Notice when she is trying to be kind and improve the relationship.

Notice that she looks scared, even though you thought she was mad. Notice that she smiled at you, even though you may not be on good terms yet. You don't have to do anything about it just yet, simply take note.

Kindness — in your response. This doesn't mean you have to forgive and forget immediately.

This simply means that your words are kind. You may say, "What you said to me hurt, and I hope we can fix this in the future. Right now I need some space." A kind response will be better for the long-term relationship than name-calling and yelling.

The acronym THINK could be considered an interpersonal distress tolerance skill. Once you're in a place where you feel able to manage your emotions toward the other person, you'll be able to successfully use the next interpersonal effectiveness skills.

FAST

FAST is about maintaining your self-respect during conflict. You'll want to use these skills first in sequential order, and then all together.

Fair — to yourself and others. This includes both your thoughts and your actions. When you're being fair, you are not using dramatic or judgmental thoughts or statements such as "I'm powerless in this situation" or "They're the worst!" Instead, your thoughts may be along the lines of, "What's going on for that person, and what's going on for me?" or "I didn't agree with most of what he just said, but what were the elements of truth?"

(no) Apologies — this doesn't mean you never apologize—apologizing can be incredibly powerful in relationships. However, you don't need to apologize when you haven't done anything wrong.

Stick to your values — Stand up for what you believe in. If you're not sure what you believe in, do some self-examination to determine your values. Be honest about what you value. If you say

you value family but you avoid them at all costs, then you're not valuing family. You may want to make a list of your current values, and what you hope your values will be in the future.

Truthful — be honest with yourself and others. Are you exaggerating the situation? Are you minimizing it? Are your words true?

Using the four steps of FAST will allow you to maintain your dignity and come out of a situation feeling good about yourself, regardless of how you feel about the outcome.

While THINK and FAST can be used in all interpersonal communication, they are especially helpful when there is conflict in the relationship. For everyday interpersonal communication, you can use the skills GIVE and DEAR MAN to grow a healthy relationship.

Practice:

Try and think of a recent conflict that you had. How could using FAST have made a difference in the outcome of the situation?

GIVE

The GIVE skill is useful in every interpersonal relationship. Whether it's your first time meeting this person or you've been married for 45 years, GIVE will help to build and maintain positive relationships.

Gentle — in your approach. When you're gentle, you are being mindful of the other person's emotions. This will help the person with whom you're communicating to feel loved instead of attacked. Communication is always better when no one is feeling defensive.

Interested — in what the other person is saying. Interest can be conveyed through words and/or body language. Using words, you can ask the person questions about what she is saying or simple "uh-huh" "oh really?" responses. You can convey interest through body language by maintaining eye contact, actually listening to what is being said, and making a facial expression.

Validate — Confirm not only that you hear what the other person is saying, but that you understand it by echoing the emotion back to her. If she is telling you that her friend canceled their lunch date for the third time in a row, you might say "How frustrating! You must feel so disappointed!"

Easy manner — present yourself as being relaxed and comfortable throughout the interaction. You will be more approachable.

Both verbal and nonverbal communication is essential in the GIVE skill. These actions will set you up for effective interpersonal communication in each of your relationships.

DEAR MAN

DEAR MAN is the interpersonal skill used to ask for something in a respectful and effective way that builds and maintains a relationship—whether or not you actually get what you are asking for.

Describe — the situation in a simple way. If you want to go to the movies with your friends, you could briefly describe the situation by saying, “My friends are going to see the new comic book movie this weekend.”

Express — what you would like. “I would like to go to the movie with them.”

Assert — why this is important to you in a way that is respectful, and not aggressive. “I haven’t been able to spend much time with them since track season started, so it would be really meaningful if I could spend time with them.”

Reinforce — when you do get what you asked for. “I promise I’ll have my room clean and my homework is done before I leave for the movie.”

Mindful — Stay in that moment. Don’t worry about the past or future, such as what your friends will say if you can’t go. Just be in that moment.

Appear Confident — are you scared out of your mind to ask your boss for a raise? She doesn’t need to know that. Approach the situation in a confident way.

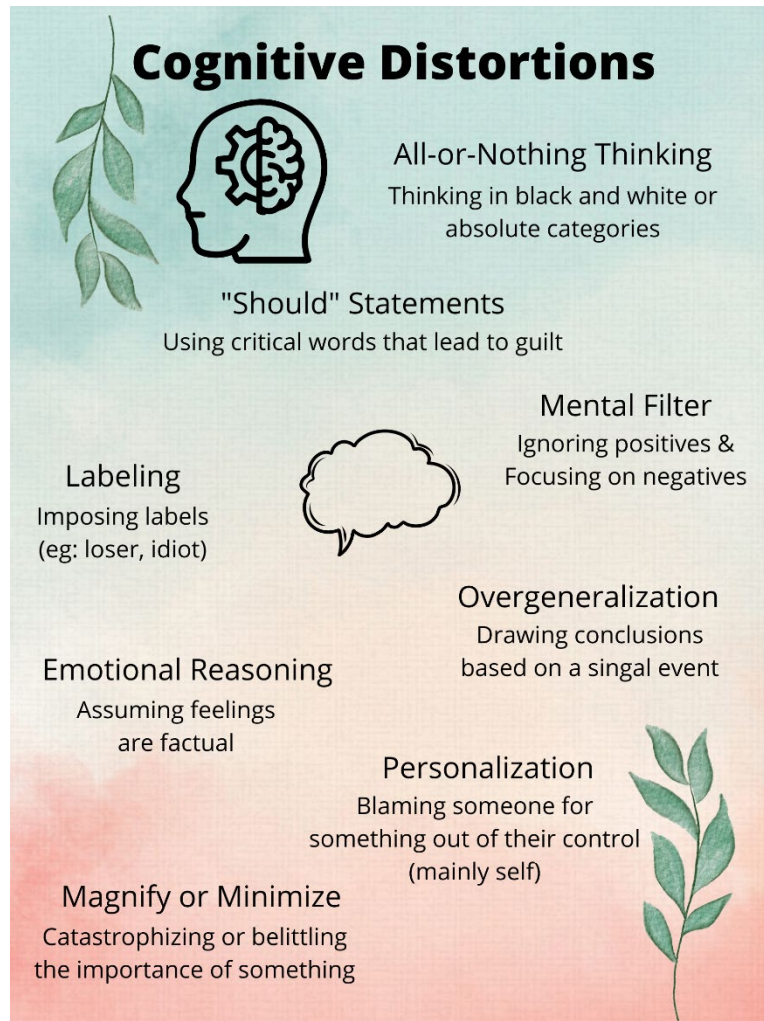
Negotiate — when it doesn’t look like you’re going to get the result you were wanting, be flexible. Negotiate to find a happy middle ground for both parties.

Activity: Describe a recent situation where you had trouble speaking up for your needs. Using the tools above, how could you have been more assertive?

DBT Skills Site – [DBT Self-Help](#)



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CORE VALUES

To discover your **PERSONAL** values, look at the list below of more than 100 personal and work values. Tick your top 25.

NB: This list is by no means exhaustive and can add to it accordingly☺



- Accomplishment
- Achievement
- Accountability
- Accuracy
- Adventure
- Attitude - positive
- Beauty
- Calm
- Challenge
- Change
- Collaboration
- Commitment
- Communication
- Community
- Comfort
- Compassion
- Competence
- Competition
- Connection
- Cooperation
- Coordination
- Creativity
- Decisiveness
- Delight of being, joy
- Democracy
- Discipline
- Discovery
- Diversity
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Empowerment
- Excellence
- Fairness
- Faith
- Faithfulness
- Family
- Flair
- Flexibility
- Focus
- Freedom
- Friendship
- Fun
- Global view
- Good health
- Gratitude
- Greatness
- Growth
- Happiness
- Hard work
- Harmony
- Honesty
- Improvement
- Independence
- Individuality
- Inner peace
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Intuitiveness
- Justice
- Knowledge
- Leadership
- Learning
- Love
- Loyalty
- Management
- Maximum utilization (of time, resources)
- Meaning
- Modelling
- Money
- Openness
- Orderliness
- Passion
- Peace - inner
- Perfection
- Personal Choice
- Pleasure
- Power
- Practicality
- Preservation
- Privacy
- Progress
- Prosperity
- Punctuality
- Purpose
- Recognition
- Regularity
- Relationships
- Reliability
- Resourcefulness
- Respect for others
- Responsibility
- Results-oriented
- Safety
- Satisfaction
- Security
- Self-giving
- Self-reliance
- Self-thinking
- Service (to others, society)
- Simplicity
- Skill
- Solving Problems
- Speed
- Spontaneity
- Standardisation
- Status
- Structure
- Succeed; A will to
- Success; Achievement
- Teamwork
- Techniques
- Timeliness
- Tolerance
- Tradition
- Transformation
- Tranquility
- Trust
- Truth
- Unity
- Variety
- Wealth
- Wisdom

Once you have a list of 25 values, look at them again and then highlight **10 core PERSONAL values** that are most important to you. Write them below:

My 10 Core Personal Values	
1.	6.
2.	7.
3.	8.
4.	9.
5.	10.



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Using the DEAR MAN Skill

Use this worksheet to write out what you might say to ask for something in a respectful and effective way.

Describe the situation in a simple way.

Express why this is important to you.

Assert what you would like.

Reinforce what you will do when or before you get what you asked for.



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Mindful. Stay in the current moment. Don't worry. How will you do this?

Appear Confident. Approach the situation in a confident way. How will you do this?

Negotiate. Be flexible. What are you willing to alter or be flexible about?

After using this practice sheet, if you went through with DEAR MAN, what was the results of using this practice? What did you do well? What could you do better? What did you learn?



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Using the STOP Skill

Describe the event and then your use of STOP to help.

Event. Rate the level of distress (0 – 100) Before STOP: _____ After STOP: _____

What was the event? What triggered it?

Impulse you are trying to manage: _____

- ☐ Stop
- ☐ Take a step back
- ☐ Observe
- ☐ Proceed Mindfully

Check the steps you used and describe what you did here.

Describe the outcome of using STOP.

What thoughts do you have about this skill that you want to process or share with your mental health professional?



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Using the THINK Skill

Use this worksheet to process an interaction that leads to problems and feeling upset.

What is the interaction that occurred?

Think about the situation from the other person's perspective. What do you think his/her perspective is?

Have empathy. What does it feel like to be the other person?

Interpretations. Think about what are possible reasons for the other person's behaviors – starting with outlandish to realistic reasons.

Notice. Notice any attempt he/she is making to improve the relationship.

Kindness. Your response in kindness, which doesn't mean forgiving and forgetting.



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Pros & Cons Worksheet

Urge: _____

Acting on Urges

Pros	Cons

Resisting Urges

Pros	Cons