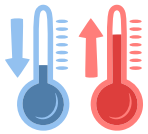
DISTRESS TOLERANCE SKILLS

STOP SKILL

Purpose: Interrupt the emotional/behavioral chain reaction.

- **S: Stop (freeze, pause, do nothing)**
- **T: Take a step back (physically or mentally)**
- **O: Observe (thoughts, physical sensations, emotions, urges, environment)**
- **P: Proceed mindfully**

Practice STOP as soon as they notice early signs of escalation.

TIPP SKILLS 

Purpose: Rapid physiological downregulation.

- Adolescent chooses one or more:
- **T: Temperature change (cold water, ice pack)**
- **I: Intense exercise (short burst: stairs, wall push-ups, pacing)**
- **P: Paced breathing (6 breaths/min or prolonged exhale)**
- **P: Paired muscle relaxation**

TIPP is recommended for panic spikes, anger surges, dissociation onset, or strong urges.

DROP ANCHOR

Purpose: Reduce cognitive fusion and reconnect to the present moment.

1. Sequence: Defusion
2. Notice and name thoughts ("I'm having the thought that...")
3. Notice and name emotions ("I'm feeling...")
4. Orient to senses (5 things you see, feel, hear, etc.)
5. Ground in the body (feet on floor, hands on chair)
6. Notice the environment

This step promotes stability and interrupts spiraling.

DISTRESS TOLERANCE SKILLS

Urge Surfing

Purpose: Separate urges from behaviors and ride out discomfort.

Instructions:

- Notice the urge like a wave in the body
- Describe its shape, intensity, and movement
- Breathe through the wave without acting
- Observe how the wave rises, peaks, and falls
- Check in at 30, 60, 90 seconds

Used for:

- urges to self-harm
- emotional acting out
- avoidance behaviors
- compulsions
- anger or impulsivity
- etc.

Opposite Action

Purpose: Decide if emotion is effective / helpful to act on

- Identify the emotion and he action urge attached to emotion
- Check the facts - is this emotion accurate for the situation? Is the intensity of the emotion accurate?
- If the emotion or the intensity does not match, identify a behavior that counters your identified urge.
    - Ex: If you are angry and want to yell, practice kindness.

Practice opposite action when the emotion / intensity of the emotion is not effective to act on or is not accurate.

ACCEPTS

Purpose: Reduce emotional distress through distractions.

- Activities
- Contributions
- Comparisons
- Emotions
- Push away
- Thoughts
- Sensations

Utilize ACCEPTS to find different ways to distract self from distressing situation.

DISTRESS TOLERANCE SKILLS

SELF-SOOTHE

Purpose: Reduce / tolerate emotional discomfort through our senses. Observe environment and items around you in detail based on what you see, hear, smell, taste, and feel.

- Vision
- Hearing
- Smell
- Taste
- Touch

Utilize Self-Soothe skills to tolerate uncomfortable emotions by pairing activities specific to our senses.

CHOOSE A SKILLFUL ACTION

Purpose: Reinforce agency and move toward regulation or values.

Possible actions:

- Opposite Action
- Reach out to a safe support
- Use a coping statement
- Self-soothe (DBT)
- Distraction (ACCEPTS)
- Return to group or activity
- Engage in a values-aligned behavior
- Ask for help