2025-10

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
952-835-2002
952-835-9889 fax

# Table of Contents

**Section 1: Before you begin**

What to expect 3
Group structure 4
Diary card 5
Safety plan 7

**Section 2: Program documents**

Group rules 10
Attendance policy 11
Payment policy 12
Payment agreement 13
Safety policy 14
HIPAA policy 15
Client bill of rights 16
Skills implementation plan 22
Graduation packet 26

**Section 3: DBT materials from Dr. Lane Pederson**
Learning the foundations of DBT 36

***Mindfulness***
Introduction to mindfulness 47
Myths about mindfulness 48
States of mind 51
The path to wise mind (WM) 52
Focus on nonjudgmental stance (NJS) 54
Focus on one-mindfulness (OM) 55
Mindfulness exercises 57

***Distress Tolerance***
Introduction to Distress Tolerance 70
Distress Tolerance: Guidelines for Use 71
Distress Tolerance: Crisis and Safety Plan 73
Distract with Accepts
Self Soothe (SS) 81
IMPROVE the Moment 85
Pros and Cons (P&C) 87

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
952-835-2002
952-835-9889 fax

Bridge-Burning (BB) 90
Urge-Surfing (US) 97
Grounding Yourself (GY) 98
Radical Acceptance (RA) 99
Everyday Acceptance (EA) 102
Willingness (W) 103
TIP 105

***Emotion Regulation***

Introduction to Emotion Regulation 106
Well Being 108
Pleased (PL) 109
Focus on Nutrition and Exercise 111
Sleep Routine 116
Build Mastery (BM) 118
Model of Emotions 121
Basic Emotions and Their Opposites 124
Emotions on a Continuum 125
Changing Your Relationship to Emotions 126
Mindfully “Hold” Emotions to Soothe and Reduce Suffering 127
Build Positive Experience (BPE) 128
Attend to Relationships (A2R) 131
Mood Momentum (MM) 133
Opposite to Emotion (O2E) 134
Do Your A-B-Cs 139
Your Emotions and Your Body: Discovering the Connection 141

***Interpersonal Effectiveness***

Introduction to Interpersonal Effectiveness 142
Interpersonal Effectiveness Dialectics 143
Fast (F) 144
Give (G) 158
Listening (L) 159
VALIDATION (V) 160
What Validation Is Not 162
DEAR MAN (DM) 163
DEAR MAN Alternative: ASSERT 165
DEAR MAN: Factors to Consider 166
Your DEAR MAN Bill of Rights 167
Conflict Resolution 168
Interpersonal Intensity 169
Making Friends 171
Trust (T) and Relationships 173

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
952-835-2002
952-835-9889 fax

Boundaries 174
Definitions and Types of Boundaries 175
Boundary (BO) 176

***Dialectics***
Introduction to Dialectics 179
Dialectical Principles 181
Dialectics Applied to Other Skills 190
Using Behavior and Solution Analysis to Create Change 192

***Problem-Solving***
Introduction to Problem-Solving 202
Basic Principles of Problem-Solving 203
Using SOLVED (SO) 205

***Building a Satisfying Life***
Introduction to Building a Satisfying Life 207
Using ROUTINE (RO) 208
Everyday Care 210

***Appendix***
Master Skills List with Abbreviation and Definitions

**Section 4: DBT materials from Dr. Marsha Linehan**

***General Handouts***
Goals of Skills Training 222
Guidelines for Skills Training 223

***Mindfulness Handouts***
Taking Hold of your Mind: States of Mind 224
Taking Hold of your Mind: “What” Skills 225
Taking Hold of your Mind: “How” Skills 226

***Interpersonal Effectiveness Handouts***
Situations for Interpersonal Effectiveness 227
Goals of Interpersonal Effectiveness 228
Factors Reducing Interpersonal Effectiveness 229
Myths about Interpersonal Effectiveness 230
Options for Intensity of Asking or Saying No 231
Guidelines for Objectives Effectiveness 233
Guidelines for Relationship Effectiveness 235
Guidelines for Self-Respect Effectiveness 236

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
952-835-2002
952-835-9889 fax

***Interpersonal Effectiveness Homework Sheets***

Goals and Priorities in Interpersonal Situations 237
Observing and Describing Interpersonal Situations 238
Using Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills 240

***Emotion Regulation Handouts***

Goals of Emotion Regulation Training 242
Myths about Emotions 243
What Good are Emotions? 244
Reducing Vulnerability to Negative Emotions 245
Steps for Increasing Positive Emotions 246
Changing Emotions by Acting Opposite to the Current Emotion 247

***Emotion Regulation Homework Sheets***

Observing and Describing Emotions 248

***Distress Tolerance Handouts***

Crisis Survival Strategies 249
Guidelines for Accepting Reality: Observing Your Breath 254
Guidelines for Accepting Reality: Half-Smiling 256
Guidelines for Accepting Reality: Awareness 258
Basic Principles of Accepting Reality 260

***Distress Tolerance Homework Sheets***

Crisis Survival Strategies 262
Acceptance and Willingness 264

Note: The materials in this book are adapted from

*The Expanded Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Training Manual* (2012) by Lane Pederson
*DBT Skills Training for Integrated Dual Disorder Treatment Settings* (2013) by Lane Pederson
*Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* (1993) by Marsha Linehan

# Section 1: Before You Begin

# What to expect your first day in program?

Welcome to MHS!

Your first day in program can be a bit overwhelming, so here is some information to help know what to expect when you start your journey through your program.

If you have never done DBT before, the beginning might be confusing. DBT has a lot of acronyms and language that takes some getting used to. But you will get used to it! We encourage you to be patient and ask questions. This will help you get into the swing of things.

On your first day, the Facilitator/s will orient you to the group and the process. You will review the group rules and expectations (also found in this Handbook).

You can expect the group and Facilitators will be:

- Welcoming
- Accepting
- Interested in you
- Patient as you get used to the program
- Helpful with things that might be confusing
- Ready to answer questions

## Group Structure

Before Program:

- Please turn off your cell phone or set it to silent.
- Please be in the group by the time it is scheduled to begin.
- Be mindful of the Attendance Policy (also found in this Handbook)

The program has 3 parts:

**Teaching:**

- The teaching hour is where the Facilitator will teach on the topic of the day
- Most of the time, the topic is a DBT skill
- Other, relevant topics are also covered
- Participate in this hour by asking questions, getting clarification, and interacting with each other

**Diary Card:**

- Members must present their diary card every day
- Members will complete a diary card every day of the week
- Diary cards need to be completed before group starts
- Participate in this hour by asking questions, validating, and showing interest

**Process Time:**

- Time is for your personal use
- Common uses for Time are
  - Asking for problem-solving
  - Better understanding a DBT skill
  - Asking for support from other members
  - Presenting Behavior Chain Analyses or other homework
- Participate in this hour by taking Time effectively and proving support and htfeedback to other members

| **MON** | Rx | SI | SIB | TIB | ANG | DEP | ANX | ENERGY LEVEL | HOURS OF SLEEP | BM | BPE | Goals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| RATING 0-10 | | | | | | | | | | | | 1. |
| Skills | | | | | | | | | | | | 2. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | 3. |
| **TUES** | Rx | SI | SIB | TIB | ANG | DEP | ANX | ENERGY LEVEL | HOURS OF SLEEP | BM | BPE | Goals |
| RATING 0-10 | | | | | | | | | | | | 1. |
| Skills | | | | | | | | | | | | 2. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | 3. |
| **WED** | Rx | SI | SIB | TIB | ANG | DEP | ANX | ENERGY LEVEL | HOURS OF SLEEP | BM | BPE | Goals |
| RATING 0-10 | | | | | | | | | | | | 1. |
| Skills | | | | | | | | | | | | 2. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | 3. |
| **THURS** | Rx | SI | SIB | TIB | ANG | DEP | ANX | ENERGY LEVEL | HOURS OF SLEEP | BM | BPE | Goals |
| RATING 0-10 | | | | | | | | | | | | 1. |
| Skills | | | | | | | | | | | | 2. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | 3. |
| **FRI** | Rx | SI | SIB | TIB | ANG | DEP | ANX | ENERGY LEVEL | HOURS OF SLEEP | BM | BPE | Goals |
| RATING 0-10 | | | | | | | | | | | | 1. |
| Skills | | | | | | | | | | | | 2. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | 3. |
| **SAT** | Rx | SI | SIB | TIB | ANG | DEP | ANX | ENERGY LEVEL | HOURS OF SLEEP | BM | BPE | Goals |
| RATING 0-10 | | | | | | | | | | | | 1. |
| Skills | | | | | | | | | | | | 2. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | 3. |
| **SUN** | Rx | SI | SIB | TIB | ANG | DEP | ANX | ENERGY LEVEL | HOURS OF SLEEP | BM | BPE | Goals |
| RATING 0-10 | | | | | | | | | | | | 1. |
| Skills | | | | | | | | | | | | 2. |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | 3. |

| | MON | TUES | WED | THURS | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **STRESSORS** | | | | | | | |
| **FEELINGS** | | | | | | | |
| **THANKFUL** | | | | | | | |
| **DAILY GOAL** | | | | | | | |
| **TIME** | | | | | | | |

**Wise Mind (WM)** To dialectically balance emotion and reason so you can respond rather than react
**Observe (OB)** To just notice experience
**Describe (DE)** To put words on experience
**Participate (PA)** To fully enter into your experience
**Nonjudgemental Stance (NJS)** To not attach strong opinions or labels to experience
**One-mindfulness (OM)** To focus your attention on one thing
**Effectiveness (EF)** To focus on what works

**Pleased (PL)**
**P**hysical Health: To engage in behaviors that keep your body healthy
**L**ist Resources and Barriers: To identify your resources and barriers for each area of PLEASED
**E**at Balanced Meals: To maintain a healthy diet everyday
**A**void Drugs and Alcohol: To minimize or eliminate drug and alcohol use
**S**leep 7 to 10 Hours: To get the amount of sleep that helps you feel good
**E**xercise: To exercise 20 minutes three to five time each week
**D**aily: To make PLEASED skills daily habits, for maximum benefit

**Build Mastery (BM)** To do things to help you feel competent and in control
**Build Positive Experience (BPE)** To seek out events that create positive feelings
**Attend to Relationships (A2R)** To connect with meaningful people in your life
**Mood Momentum (MM)** To perform balanced behaviors to maintain positive moods
**Opposite to Emotion (O2E)** To do the opposite of the action a negative emotion pulls you to perform

**Distract with ACCEPTS**
**A**ctivities (AC): To keep busy and involved
**C**ontributing (CON): To do something for others
**C**omparisons (COM): To see that others struggle, too
**E**motions (EM): To do something that creates other emotions
**P**ush Away (PA): To shelve your problem for later
**T**houghts (T): To think about something other than your distress
**S**ensations (S): To invigorate your senses or to do something physically engaging
**Self-Soothe (SS)** To relax yourself through the senses
**Urge Surfing (US)** To ride the ebbs and flows of emotions/urges without reacting
**Bridge Burning (BB)** To remove the means to act on harmful urges

**IMPROVE the Moment**
**I**magery (IM): To relax or practice skills visually in your mind
**M**eaning (ME): To find the "why" to tolerate a difficult time
**P**rayer (PR): To seek connection and guidance from a higher power
**R**elaxation (RE): To calm the mind and body
**O**ne Thing at a Time (OT): To focus on one thing when overwhelmed
**V**acation (V): To take a brief break
**E**ncouragement (EN): To coach yourself with positive self-talk

**Pros and Cons (P&C)** To weigh the benefits and costs of a choice
**Grounding Yourself (GY)** To use OB and DE to come back to the here and now
**Radical Acceptance (RA)** To acknowledge "what is" to free yourself from suffering
**Everyday Acceptance (EA)** To accept daily inconveniences that occur in life
**Willingness (WI)** To remove barriers and do what works in a situation

**Fast (F)**
**F**air: To be just and take a Nonjudgemental Stance (NJS) with yourself and others.
**A**pologies Not Needed: To not apologize for having an opinion, for your own viewpoints or for things over which you have no control
**S**tick to Values: To know what values are non-negotiable and when values conflict, work to resolve the conflict through Wise Mind (WS)
**T**ruth and Accountability: To be honest and accountable with yourself and others

**Give (G)**
**G**enuine: To be honest, sincere, respectful and real with others
**I**nterested: To make efforts to connect with a person – listen intently, ask questions and listen to the answers, make appropriate eye contact
**V**alidate: To acknowledge others' feelings, thoughts, beliefs and experiences without judgement
**E**asy Manner: To treat others with kindness and a relaxed attitude

**Dear Man (DM)**
**D**escribe: To outline the situation in nonjudgemental language
**E**xpress: To share your opinions and feelings if they relate and will help others understand the situation
**A**ssert: To ask clearly for what you want or need, say no or set your boundary
**R**eward: To let others know what is in it for them, avoid ultimatums and threats
**M**indful: To stay focused on your goal
**A**ppear Confident: To use an assertive tone of voice, make eye contact and use confident body language
**N**egotiate: To strike compromises that make sense, meet in the middle

# Safety Plan

I, _____, will follow this safety plan until the next time I receive services. This means I will not engage in suicidal behavior. I will use the steps listed below to assist with my safety, call my team members/people in my support system/crisis numbers listed below as needed, or admit myself into the hospital if needed.

Events that might lead to safety concerns:

1)

2)

3)

4)

Specific *steps* I will take to maintain my safety:

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

Team members/other people in my support system/crisis numbers I will call for help are:

| | |
|---|---|
| 1) | Phone number: |
| 2) | Phone number: |
| 3) | Phone number: |
| 4) County Crisis Line | _____ |
| 5) Crisis Text Line | 988 |
| 6) Crisis line for MH and Substance Use | 988 |
| 7) Emergency | 911 |

Client signature: _____ Date: _____

Therapist signature: _____ Date: _____

# Section 2: Program Documents

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
952-835-2002
952-835-9889 fax

# MHS DBT Program Rules & Expectations

- **Program Members are expected to attend every scheduled session.** Absences must be planned with the therapist and/or group in advance. Documentation of absences may be requested. All absences, regardless of reason, count towards overall attendance. Attendance below 90% will result in an attendance contract to support consistent attendance. Three consecutive absences without phone calls will be grounds for discharge (see attached attendance policy).
- Members must maintain confidentiality. Group issues cannot be discussed outside of programming or during break. Breaking confidentiality may be grounds for discharge. Recording, photographing, screenshotting, or otherwise capturing any part of programming is strictly prohibited. This includes the use of phones, smart watches, smart glasses, computers, tablets, AI-enabled devices, or any other recording technology. Maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of all group members is a shared responsibility.
- Members are expected to participate in programming through active listening, providing support and feedback to peers, being engaged in teaching, presenting diary cards, and completing behavior chains and homework as assigned.
- Members are expected to take problem-solving time and practice skills whenever they report significant distress.
- Members' feedback and behavior are expected to be respectful at all times. Anyone engaged in disrespectful feedback will be given a verbal warning and then may be asked to take a break or leave. Examples of disrespectful behavior include:
    - Interrupting others
    - Using inappropriate verbal and/or non-verbal language
    - Sharing specific details of behaviors that are self-injurious
    - Not respecting the boundaries of others
    - Using cell phones or participating in other distracting activities
- A pattern of disrespectful behavior may result in a Success Plan, suspension, or discharge from programming.
- Discrimination and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. Discrimination or harassment may be grounds for discharge from programming.
- Relationships and interactions between members outside of programming are generally discouraged (this includes social media spaces), but at times members may be allowed to use each other for skill-based support outside of programming. Members are expected to be clear and respectful of each other's boundaries. Members are not allowed to have romantic or other private relationships with each other, and they are not allowed to engage in behaviors that could be problematic or unskillful with one another (for example, substance use, gambling, sexual behavior, etc.).
- Members are not allowed to use alcohol, drugs, or engage in unhealthy behaviors together. Participating in these behaviors may be grounds for discharge.
- Members are not allowed to engage in SI/SIB behaviors on premises or come to group under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Members are not allowed to vape or use any other substances in the therapy space. Such behaviors may be grounds for discharge.
- Members may not call other members for 24 hours after they have acted on SI/SIB/TIB behaviors.
- Members are required to participate in ongoing individual therapy and comply with prescribed medications.
- To help maintain a safe, respectful, and therapeutic environment, Members are expected to wear clothing that fully covers the genitals, buttocks, and chest/torso, as well as shoes, while in the clinic. Our clinic is committed to creating a welcoming environment where people of all identities and backgrounds can feel safe, respected, and able to focus

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
952-835-2002
952-835-9889 fax

on treatment. Clothing and footwear expectations are intended to support physical safety, promote a professional healthcare environment, and be mindful of the diverse experiences, cultural backgrounds, personal boundaries, and trauma histories of those in our community. These expectations apply equally to everyone and are not intended to make assumptions about gender identity or expression. We ask everyone to follow these expectations to help foster a therapeutic space where all individuals can feel comfortable and supported.

- Members are expected to comply with their payment agreements.

**Acknowledged by:**_____

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
952-835-2002
651-383-4935 fax

# MHS DBT Virtual Clinic Rules and Expectations

- Members must be physically located in the state of Minnesota at the time of participation in group.

- Members participating in virtual programming are expected to attend sessions from a safe, private, and stable location where confidentiality can be maintained.
    - Never record, stream, or screenshot your session.
    - Never include anyone in your physical environment in the session, i.e. no friends or family members in the room, no one walking in and out of the space you are using for sessions etc.
    - Members may not participate while driving or being driven or engaging in other activities that interfere with treatment.
    - Keep your camera unless it is a break time. If you must briefly turn off your camera due to tech difficulties or a brief break, please inform your group in the chat; failure to inform your facilitator about camera being off and lack of verbal communication may result in being removed to the waiting room.
    - An intentional violation of confidentiality will result in discharge; an unintentional violation (as determined by the group facilitator) will be reviewed by the clinical team to determine if virtual programming is an appropriate ongoing care option.

- Safety expectations:
    - At the beginning of each virtual session, members must be able to provide their current physical location (an address and make/model/license number of vehicle if parked somewhere confidential) so staff can respond appropriately in the event of a safety concern or wellness check. If you connect for a session from a different or new location, you must inform your therapist immediately upon login to session.
    - Members will have an active safety plan, cooperate with safety assessments, and will be clear about their safety related to suicidal ideation (SI) and urges.
    - Members who do not have a clear commitment to safety with suicidal ideation and urges by the end of the session will have the police and/or ambulance sent to their physical location and transported to the hospital for further evaluation.
    - Members who deliberately disconnect during a safety assessment, intervention, or effort to obtain a safety commitment will have police and/or ambulance sent to their physical location and transported to the hospital. This behavior will result in discharge.
    - *Members who have technical difficulties or who get unintentionally disconnected will immediately call/email their facilitator to ensure safety (this applies to all clients, regardless of safety concerns). Deliberately disconnecting will be treated at a Therapy Interfering Behavior (TIB).*

- Members must treat the virtual space as if it were a shared physical space, including:
    - Refraining from all nicotine/vaping use until break times (*all use must be off-screen during break times*)
    - Facing the camera as if you are in an in-person conversation
    - Refraining from distracting activities (use of cell phone or other devices, moving around your home to do chores, vigorous exercise, cooking, TV on in the background etc.)

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
952-835-2002
651-383-4935 fax

  - Your group facilitator may also suggest use of hand-raising, muting, headphones etc. to support an environment where everyone can participate without talking over each other or being interrupted by environmental noise
  - Members are also encouraged to come to the session as if coming to an in-person appointment, this may include: changing out of pajamas into something you would wear out; sitting up; arriving a few minutes early; preparing a snack or meal in advance; having fidgets or comfort items to use skillfully during group

- If your group facilitator becomes disconnected unexpectedly from the session, please wait at least 15 minutes for them to reconnect to the session. Please pause therapy-related discussion until they return.

# MHS DBT Program Attendance Policy

Consistent attendance is necessary for DBT programming to be effective. Research has shown that consistent attendance leads to better results in therapy. Attendance, timeliness, and consistency are also life skills.

**It is expected that program members attend all program sessions.** Please schedule other appointments around your DBT programming. Attending all scheduled program groups consistently is an essential part of progress not just for individuals, but for the group as a whole. While the policy accounts for absences for illness, emergencies, and other causes, absences are counted regardless of the reason for missing programming. There are no "excused" or "unexcused" absences.

If you miss more than 1 out of 10 sessions, you will receive an **attendance contract** for the next 10 sessions. Your therapist will discuss and problem-solve barriers to attendance with you, and may include members of your treatment team as needed. While on an attendance contract you must attend 9 of the 10 sessions to end the attendance contract. If you miss more than 1 of 10 sessions while on an attendance contract you will receive a 10-day **discharge contract** and barriers to attendance will be discussed with all who can help you succeed. Like the attendance contract, you must attend 9 out of 10 of these sessions. If you miss more than one of those 10 sessions, you can be discharged from the program and cannot reapply until the barriers to attendance have been successfully addressed. The goal of all contracts is to support success in programming.

At the discretion of the program, allowances for circumstances beyond a person's control will be considered prior to discharge. For this to occur documentation of the cause of the absence may be required.

You are responsible for keeping your therapist and the program informed if you have to miss your program session. Always call before programming if you will be absent.

Three consecutive absences without phone calls will be grounds for discharge.

If you are late to an individual therapy session, depending on your history of tardiness and the availability of the therapist, your session could be canceled or rescheduled.

Three instances of tardiness, in a short period of time, count as an absence. A tardy is returning late after break or arriving late for the start of programming.

A **Leave of Absence** (LOA) may be granted at the discretion of the therapist/treatment team and must be planful with a clear time-limit. It is your responsibility to contact your therapist and team during an LOA. Documentation to support a LOA may be required.

**Acknowledged by:**_____

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
Ph: 952-835-2002
Fax: 651-383-4935

# Co-pay, Co-Insurance, Deductible, and Spend-down Policy

Mental Health Systems, PC (MHS) is committed to providing excellent service to our clients. We are a fee for service clinic and cover our expenses through payment for services provided. MHS has legal and contractual obligations to bill clients for co-pays, deductibles, and spend-downs as dictated by your insurance policy.

If you are unable to pay your bill in full, MHS will negotiate a monthly payment agreement that fits your budget. Unlike many other clinics, MHS will not charge you interest on your bill or send your bill to collections. In exchange, we ask that you honor your payment agreement by paying at least the agreed-upon amount each month you have an outstanding balance due to MHS.

All clients whose insurance assesses a copay, co-insurance, spend down or deductible, regardless of financial status, will be required to make some form of regularly scheduled financial contribution toward services received at MHS. No client with an outstanding balance will be seen without a minimum contribution regardless of financial situation.

If you are unable to make your monthly payment, we ask that you inform your therapist and/or business office so that your agreement can be revised if necessary or so another arrangement can be made.

Your monthly payment is due on the 20th of each month. Please give your payment to your therapist or send it to the business office in Edina.

Clients are responsible for informing MHS when a change in insurance occurs.

We understand that loss of insurance or unexpected financial hardship may occur to a client while being seen at MHS. It is MHS's policy not to immediately discharge a current client from our programs because of lack of insurance. Clients are expected to actively pursue health insurance during lapses in coverage. New payment agreements need to be negotiated when clients lose their insurance. Clients without insurance and paying a reduced fee have a maximum of six months to complete the DBT program.

Three consecutive months of non-payment without making another arrangement may be grounds for discharge.

**Thank you in advance for honoring your payment agreement. Your cooperation allows MHS to have a flexible policy for both you and others.**

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
Ph: 952-835-2002
Fax: 651-383-4935

# PAYMENT AGREEMENT

Insurance Company:

Deductible: _____

Copay – group: _____

Copay – individual therapy: _____

Co-insurance: _____

Spenddown: _____

Is insurance an MA product? Yes No

Medical Assistance Number:

**Do you have Medicare or is this policy a Medicare product or substitute?Yes No**
(if yes, inform the billing office immediately after the intake interview or the change in insurance)

Mental Health Systems, PC is credentialed with most primary insurance carriers in the state of Minnesota. Insurance companies may not pay fully for all services provided. Examples include copays, deductibles, spenddowns and/or co-insurance.

Mental Health Systems, PC expects clients to meet their financial obligations for the care received at MHS. However, we know that paying for one's medical care can be difficult. Therefore, we have instituted a program designed to help those who find themselves in financial distress. Clients may pay their financial obligations to MHS over time.

If I cannot pay my invoice in full, I agree to pay $_____ per month for the duration of the outstanding balance on my account.

_____ _____
Client signature Date

_____ _____
Signature of Parent/Guardian if client is a minor Date

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
Ph: 952-835-2002
Fax: 651-383-4935

# MHS DBT Safety contracting and transportation and safety policy

- DBT clients are expected to accurately report all safety concerns to their group and/or individual therapist. (In the case of children and adolescents it is expected that parents will inform therapists about safety concerns prior to the start of their child's session.)
- At that time the therapist will ask the client whether or not they can contract to remain safe from suicide and/or self-injury until the next time they see that therapist.
- If they are willing the client will work to update their safety plan to assure safety. Included in that plan is a commitment that if conditions change where the client cannot remain safe with the plan they have, that they will go to the emergency room to be assessed for safety and potential admission.
- Safety planning will be goal driven with the safety plan as a goal and will be time limited. (approximately 5 minutes).
- If a client is unwilling to commit to safety, the offer to plan for safety will be given and followed through with. The goal being a commitment to safety at the end of the planning time (5 minutes).
- If a client is unwilling or unable to commit to safety and will not engage in safety planning, or is unable to commit at the end of that planning, a transportation hold will be executed to safely transport the client to the hospital.
- Transportation to an emergency room is a process by which a mental health professional assesses the situation, completes a transportation hold form and police or paramedics are called to take the client safely and securely to the hospital.
- **Transportation by parties other than paramedics, police or ambulance personnel is strictly prohibited by MHS policy.** (this means family members, parents, friends, therapists, case managers, etc.) This is MHS policy to assure the safety of all concerned and **will not** be deviated from in any case.

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
Ph: 952-835-2002
Fax: 651-383-4935

**THIS NOTICE DESCRIBES HOW MEDICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOU MAY BE USED AND DISCLOSED AND HOW YOU CAN GET ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION. PLEASE REVIEW IT CAREFULLY.**

Mental Health Systems' Commitment to Protecting the Privacy of Your Health Information

Concern for the privacy and security of health information is widespread across our nation. MHS has always gone to great lengths to protect your health information. New federal laws reinforce these protections and call for additional protections of health information. They also provide you with rights to access your health information and understand how it is being used. This form is being given to you to help summarize the posted document, *Access to Health Records: Practices and Rights.*

Summary of the Federal Privacy Regulations and Mental Health Systems' *Access to Health Records: Practices and Rights.* Effective April 14, 2003, all health care providers and health plans are required to follow standard federal privacy regulations. These privacy regulations are part of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act - HIPAA for short. HIPAA will help protect the privacy of your health information in these ways:

1. Defines individual health information -HIPAA tells us what is considered to be health information. It includes an individual's health and billing information in any format - electronic, paper or oral.
2. Defines health care organizations - HIPAA tells us what kinds of organizations must follow these standard privacy regulations. HIPAA covers physicians, hospitals, health plans, claims clearinghouses and many other organizations that are involved in the health care delivery process.
3. Defines individual rights over your health information- HIPAA provides you with new rights to help you understand and control how your health information is being used. A document called Mental Health Systems' *Access to Health Records: Practices and Rights* will be provided to you. This document explains in detail how Mental Health Systems will use and release your health information. Included in this document are descriptions of your rights to:

- Access to your health information
- Request an amendment or correction to your health information
- Authorize non-routine disclosures of your health information
- Request a history of where your health information has been released outside of MHS
- File a formal complaint if you feel your privacy rights have been violated

For more information about Mental Health Systems' privacy practices

HIPAA regulations are intended to protect the privacy of your health information, yet allow the appropriate flow of information necessary to care for you. MHS takes these regulations seriously and we will do our best to protect your privacy while providing you with the highest quality health care services available. Please review the *Access to Health Records: Practices and Rights* document for more information about how MHS protects your privacy. You may also contact MHS at 952-835-2002 for additional copies of the document, if you have questions about the privacy of your health information or if you have suggestions as to how we can better protect your privacy.

Acknowledgement of Receipt of the Access to Health Records: Practices and Rights document. Federal regulations require that MHS obtain proof that patients have received the Access to Health Records: Practices and Rights document. My signature below indicates only that I have received a copy, not that I have read it or agree with its contents.

_____CLIENT COPY_____

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
Ph: 952-835-2002
Fax: 651-383-4935

## BILL OF RIGHTS FOR PERSONS SERVED

1. Mental Health Systems, PC (MHS) does not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, sex, marital status, age, sexual preference, national origin, previous incarceration, disability or public assistance status.

2. Every client shall be fully informed, prior to or at the time of the intake session, of the services available at MHS and of related financial charges that are the clients responsibility to pay beyond the coverage (if any) of health insurance.

3. Every client can expect complete and current information concerning her or his diagnosis and individual treatment plan in terms he or she can understand from her or his mental health professional or practitioner. This information shall include diagnosis, the nature and purpose of the proposed treatment, the risks and benefits of the proposed treatment, the possible negative outcomes of and possible alternatives to the proposed treatment, the probability that the proposed treatment will be successful, and the prognosis if the client chooses not to receive the treatment.

4. Every client shall have the opportunity to participate in the formulation of her or his individual treatment plan.

5. Every client shall have the right to know the name and the competencies of the licensed mental health professional responsible for coordination of her or his treatment.

6. Every client who will be treated by an unlicensed mental health practitioner shall have available to them and provided upon request a Statement of Credentials that will include the following information before treatment begins:

   a. Name, title, business address and telephone number of the unlicensed practitioner;
   b. Degree(s), training, experience, or other qualifications of the unlicensed practitioner;
   c. Name, business address and telephone number of the unlicensed practitioner's licensed mental health professional supervisor;
   d. Brief summary, in plain language, of the theoretical approach used by the unlicensed practitioner in treating clients.

7. Every client shall have the right to respectfulness of privacy as it relates to her or his psychotherapy treatment program. Assessment, case discussion, consultation and treatment are kept private.

8. Every client shall have the freedom to voice grievances and recommend changes in policies and services to MHS staff free from restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal.

9. In addition to the rights listed above, consumers of psychological services offered by psychologists licensed by the State of Minnesota have the right to:

   (a) expect that a psychologist has met the minimal qualifications of and experience required by state law; (b) examine public records which contain the credentials of a psychologist; (c) to obtain a copy of the rules of conduct for psychologists. A consumer who wishes to obtain a copy should contact the Minnesota Board of Psychology, 2829 University Avenue S.E., Suite 320, Minneapolis, MN, 55414-3237, 612-617-2230.

10. Every client has the right to refuse to participate in any experimental research.

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
Ph: 952-835-2002
Fax: 651-383-4935

11. Every client has the right to reasonable notice of changes in services or financial charges.

12. Every client may expect courteous treatment and to be free from verbal, physical, or sexual abuse by MHS staff.

13. Every client shall receive a copy of the MHS fee schedule and information on billing before receiving treatment.

14. Every client may refuse mental health services or treatment.

15. Every client has a right to coordinated transfer when there will be a change of therapists.

16. Every client may assert the client's rights without retaliation.

17. Every client has the right to choose freely among available mental health professionals and practitioners in the community and to change therapists after mental health services have begun within the contractual limits of the client's health insurance, if any.

18. Other mental health services may be available in the community. For more information, telephone First Call for Help at 612-335-5000.

## PROCEDURES FOR FILING A GRIEVANCE (COMPLAINT)

1. If a client believes that her or his rights have been violated by a mental health practitioner, the client is encouraged to submit an oral or written complaint to the Clinical Director, Dr. Steve Girardeau. If the client is not able to submit a complaint written by the client or by someone else of the client's choosing in behalf of the client, the client may choose to submit a taped complaint in the client's own voice identifying the specific rights violation(s) believed to have occurred. The Director shall investigate the complaint and attempt to rectify the problem within five working days. The client may request that this resolution be put in writing and given to the client.

2. If a client believes that her or his rights have been violated by a mental health professional, the client is strongly encouraged to submit a written complaint clearly stating the specific rights violation(s) and signed and dated by the client to the Director, Dr. Steve Girardeau, PsyD, Licensed Psychologist . The client may choose to file a complaint with the mental health professional's state licensing board, or with the Office of Mental Health Practice in the case of a mental health practitioner.
   - A nurse is licensed by the Minnesota Board of Nursing, 2829 University Avenue S.E.. Suite 500, Minneapolis. MN, 55414, 612-617-2277.
   - A psychiatrist is licensed by the Minnesota State Board of Medical Practice, 2829 University Avenue S.E., Suite 400, Minneapolis, MN 55414, 612-617-2130.
   - A psychologist is licensed by the Minnesota Board of Psychology, 2829 University Avenue S.E., Suite 320, Minneapolis, MN. 55414, 612-617-2230.
   - A social worker is licensed by the Minnesota Board of Social Work. 2829 University Avenue S.E., Suite 340, Minneapolis, MN, 55414, 612-617-2100.
   - An unlicensed mental health practitioner is regulated by the Office of Mental Health Practice, Minnesota Department of Health. P.O. Box 64975, 121 East 7th Place, Suite 400, St.. Paul, MN 55164-0975. 651-282-5621.

3. If a client needs assistance in the process the Director will assist or appoint a staff to work with the client.

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
Ph: 952-835-2002
Fax: 651-383-4935

4. In lieu of items 1-3 above, a client may file a complaint with the Division of Licensing, Minnesota Department of Human Services, 444 Lafayette Road. St. Paul, MN, 55155, 651-296-3971.

**DATA PRIVACY NOTICE FOR CLIENTS WHO PROVIDE INFORMATION IN PERSON**

1. Minnesota Statute requires MHS to give a "data privacy notice" or "Tennessen Warning" before asking anyone for private or confidential data. Often the first contact with a prospective client is over the telephone. In cases where persons are asked for private data such as name or service desired or some details about circumstances, they must be given the following data privacy information:

> "Before I can ask you to give me any information I am required by law to explain who can see it and how it will be used. The information you give will be used by the staff of this agency to help you determine the kind of treatment you need. No law requires that you give us information, but we cannot help you without some information. What you say will be kept private, but it could be reviewed by the staff who work in the program(s) you are treated within.
>
> If you are a minor you can ask that data about you be kept private from your parents."

Any prospective client given this information over the telephone should also be given a copy of the complete data privacy notice at the intake session.

2. Federal and state laws require MHS to keep all information about you strictly private. Anyone at MHS who may have access to information about you must keep that information private. Anyone who illegally shares information about you is subject to fines, dismissal or other legal action.

3. All information we request will be used for one or more of the purposes stated below:

   a. to evaluate your need for care;
   b. to plan the types of care that will help you the most;
   c. to assist MHS in collecting payment for the service we provide you.

4. You are not required to provide any information to us. But if you choose not to give us information about you, that will make it more difficult for us to help you, and may interfere with or prevent achieving your counseling goal(s).

5. Information about the type, the amount, the dates, the cost, the outcome and the evaluation of the treatment given to you will be available to MHS staff who need such information to keep records. This information may be sent to your insurance company for billing purposes, but only after you give your signed permission.

No audio or video recording of a treatment session will be made without your written permission. No one except MHS staff involved in your treatment will view or listen to a treatment session or recording of a session, or read a verbatim transcript of a session, unless you give your permission. There are a few instances where MHS may be unable to protect your privacy. MHS staff are required by law to report suspected child or vulnerable adult maltreatment, even if the information was received in confidence. If you are involved in a court action, your record may be

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
Ph: 952-835-2002
Fax: 651-383-4935

subpoenaed. During an emergency non-MHS people or agencies may be contacted (for example, physician, hospital, telephone answering service) in order to help you resolve your emergency. If you do not pay your bill on time, it may be reviewed by our attorney, used in a lawsuit or turned over to a collection agency.

6. You may see all the data about you unless it is used to investigate an illegal action or if a licensed mental health professional believes that it will be harmful to you or others. You may have the information explained to you and have information corrected you think is wrong and MHS finds to be wrong. If you consider incorrect any information which MHS finds to be correct, you may still attach your own explanation to your client record.

## PRIVACY

Most of the information we collect about you will be classified as private. That means that you and MHS staff who need the information can see it while others cannot. For example, MHS therapists may participate in periodic case conferences for case review in order to insure that you and other clients receive the most effective service possible. Your therapist will inform you if your case is discussed in a case conference.

Occasionally statistics and other anonymous data may be taken from the information we collect about you. This is public and open to anyone, but it will not identify you individually in any way.

## ACCESS BY YOU

You can see all public and private records about yourself and your children. (See section on minors for an exception.) To see your file go to the office where it is kept--usually where you receive services--and ask to see your records. Access may take a few days, but ten working days is the longest you can be asked to wait. You may also authorize anyone else to see your records. Any access is without charge, but you will be charged for photocopies. Remember to bring identification with you when you request to see records.

## ACCESS BY OTHERS

Employees of MHS will have access to information about you any time their work requires it. Any individual or agency you authorize by informed signed consent may have access to information about you for the purposes you identify. By law some other government and contractor agencies may also have access to certain information about you if they provide a service to you or if they provide a service to this agency that affects you and requires access to your records. In circumstances specified in statute, information about you may or must be released without your consent. For examples of these circumstances, please review the document, “Access to Health Records: Practices and Rights,” given to you at the time of your intake interview.

Details about how the information we collect about you may be shared are available from the staff person(s) who work with you.

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
Ph: 952-835-2002
Fax: 651-383-4935

## PURPOSES

The purposes of the information we collect from you, or that you authorize us to collect from others about you, are listed below. Because this list of purposes covers a variety of situations, some of the purposes will not apply to you. Details about the purposes of the information we collect from you are listed on any release of private data form(s) you will be asked to complete and are available from MHS staff. Depending on the services you receive. The purposes of the data we collect from you are:

- to assess your need for treatment;
- to provide effective care and treatment of problems identified by you;
- to coordinate your treatment with other members of your interdisciplinary team;
- to prepare statistical reports and do evaluative studies (you will not be individually identified in the reports or studies);
- to enable us to collect federal, state or county funds for the services, care or assistance that you or your dependent(s) receive from this agency;
- to permit this agency to collect from you or the Minnesota Department of Human Services or a county human services agency the payment owed us for the service(s) you receive from MHS;
- to evaluate and audit programs; and
- other purposes specifically authorized by you.

## OTHER RIGHTS

You have the right to challenge the accuracy of any of the information in your records. If you want to challenge any information, talk to your MHS therapist or write to the MHS Clinical Director. Your challenge must be answered in 30 days.

You have the right to insert your own written explanation of anything you object to in your records.

You have the right to appeal the decisions about your records. To file an appeal, you may write to the Commissioner of Administration, State of Minnesota. 50 Sherburne Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota. 55155. Your notice to the Commissioner of Administration should contain the following information:

- your name, address, and phone number, if any;
- a statement that Mental Health Systems, PC is the agency involved in the dispute and that MHS's Director of Clinical Services, is the responsible authority representing MHS;
- a description of the nature of the dispute, including a description of the data; and
- the desired result of your appeal.

This notice must be filed within 60 days of the action being appealed.

## Minors

If you are a minor (i.e., less than 18 years old), you have the right to request that information about you be kept from your parent(s) or legal guardian(s). This request should be made in writing to your MHS therapist and both explain the reasons for withholding data and show that you understand the consequences of doing so. In a few cases the law permits us to withhold data from your parent(s) or legal guardian(s) without a request from you, if that data concerns the treatment of drug abuse or venereal disease or if you are married. If you have any questions about this, ask the MHS therapist who works with you.

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
Ph: 952-835-2002
Fax: 651-383-4935

## WHOM TO CONTACT

If you have any questions regarding the Data Practices Act or any of the information above, ask your MHS therapist or MHS' Clinical Director. You may also direct inquiries to the Data Privacy Division, Department of Administration, 305A Centennial Office Building, 658 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN 55155, 651-296-6733 or 1-800-657-3721.

## FUNDING

MHS, PC is a private, for-profit clinic whose sole source of revenue is based on fees for services provided. Major sources of reimbursement for services provided are the Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP), and private health insurance. MHS, PC accepts MHCP (Medical Assistance, MinnesotaCare, or Medicare) reimbursement as payment in full for covered services provided to a recipient with the following exceptions: (1) in the case of a spend-down, (2) when the recipient has received an insurance payment designated for the service, in which case MHS is allowed to bill the recipient directly to recover the insurance payment that the recipient has received, and (3) under MinnesotaCare, if a co-payment or dollar cap on the service exists.

## RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY

Dr. Lane Pederson is the Clinical Supervisor of Mental Health Systems, PC and as such is the responsible authority regarding the interpretation and implementation of the Government Data Practices Act. His business address is listed on page 1 of this document. He is the person responsible in this Center for answering inquiries from the public concerning the provisions of the Data Practices Act.

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
Ph: 952-835-2002
Fax: 651-383-4935

# Skills Implementation Plan

Crisis Behavior_____

**0-1 No Crisis**

What is a typical situation where you experience this level of distress? _____

_____

_____

What are your thoughts?_____

_____

_____

Feelings?_____

_____

Behaviors?_____

_____

_____

Skills to maintain or improve the situation:_____

_____

_____

**1-2 Early Warning Signs**

What is a typical situation where you experience this level of distress? _____

_____

_____

What are your thoughts?_____

_____

_____

Feelings?_____

_____

_____

Behaviors?_____

_____

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
Ph: 952-835-2002
Fax: 651-383-4935

Skills to maintain or improve the situation:_____

**3-4 Some Distress**

What is a typical situation where you experience this level of distress? _____

What are your thoughts?_____

Feelings?_____

Behaviors?_____

Skills to maintain or improve the situation:_____

**5-6 Increased Distress**

What is a typical situation where you experience this level of distress? _____

What are your thoughts?_____

Feelings?_____

Behaviors?_____

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
Ph: 952-835-2002
Fax: 651-383-4935

Skills to maintain or improve the situation:_____

_____

_____

**7-8 Intense Distress**

What is a typical situation where you experience this level of distress? _____

_____

_____

What are your thoughts?_____

_____

_____

Feelings?_____

_____

_____

Behaviors?_____

_____

Skills to maintain or improve the situation:_____

_____

_____

**9-10 Crisis Point**

What is a typical situation where you experience this level of distress? _____

_____

_____

What are your thoughts?_____

_____

_____

Feelings?_____

_____

_____

Behaviors?_____

_____

_____

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave S, #230
Edina, MN 55435
Ph: 952-835-2002
Fax: 651-383-4935

Skills to maintain or improve the situation:_____

_____

_____

**Diagnoses and Symptoms**

_____

_____

_____

**Medications**

1. _____ Dosage _____
2. _____ Dosage _____
3. _____ Dosage _____
4. _____ Dosage _____
5. _____ Dosage _____
6. _____ Dosage _____

**Medical alerts** (such as asthma, allergies to medications)_____

_____

**Contacts**: List people to call for support (family, friends, mental health team members)

Therapist: _____ Phone # _____
Psychiatrist: _____ Phone # _____
Case Manager: _____ Phone # _____
Friend: _____ Phone # _____
Other: _____ Phone # _____
Other: _____ Phone # _____

**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY:**

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave, Suite 230
Edina, MN 55435
952-835-2002
952-835-9889 fax

## Graduation Packet

During the course of your treatment at MHS, your level of distress and the focus of treatment may change. These criteria help us to know when you are ready for a different level of care. You may move back and forth through these levels over the course of a one-day DBT or three-day DBT program as you move towards graduation. This sheet will help us to know when you are ready for graduation.

| **Entry** | | **client** | **therapist** | **date** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | No mental health/safety hospitalizations or ER visits for 3 months | | | |
| 2. | Up to date and meaningful use of Safety Plan and Skills Implementation Plan (pp. 2-5) | | | |
| 3. | No active SI/SIB issues (plans/acts) | | | |
| 4. | Active engagement in addressing targeted TIB issues (includes attendance with group, individual, and other providers as applicable) | | | |
| 5. | Distress levels (symptoms) at average of 5/10 or below for one month + | | | |
| 6. | Completion of all 4 DBT modules | | | |
| 7. | Completion of assigned DBT homework | | | |
| 8. | Create a strengths-based, clear, and specific Vision of Recovery that is integrated into treatment planning and daily life. | | | |
| 9. | Identify potential system of support; begin building support network. | | | |

- TOP outcome guidelines for LOC transition and staying in LOCII or lower.
    1) No TOP "Red Alert" in latest administration
    2) If recent TOP has a "Yellow Alert," we will reassess if you are meeting the above criteria.
    3) Must not have any "extreme" elevations on scales for depression, mania, psychotic symptoms, substance abuse, social conflict, suicide, violence, or panic
    4) Must not have more than two "moderate" elevations on above scales
    5) Short term elevations in above scales due to unusual events will be considered in decision making process.

| **Midway** | | **client** | **therapist** | **date** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | No mental health/safety hospitalizations or ER visits for 5 months | | | |
| 2. | Distress levels at average of 3/10 or below for one month + | | | |
| 3. | Up to date and meaningful use of Safety Plan and Skills Implementation Plan | | | |
| 4. | Completion of DBT modules for second time | | | |
| 5. | Complete *Graduation Plan* (p. 7-12); begin use in daily life. | | | |
| 6. | Complete *Vision of Recovery: Reflection 1* (p. 6), and vision is integrated into treatment planning and daily life | | | |
| 7 | Continue building and expanding system of support. | | | |

| **Graduation Preparation** | | **client** | **therapist** | **date** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | No significant TIB issues | | | |
| 2. | Up to date and meaningful use of Safety Plan and Skills Implementation Plan | | | |
| 3. | Up to date and active use of *Graduation Plan* | | | |
| 4. | Distress levels at average of 3/10 or below for two months + | | | |
| 5. | Complete *Vision of Recovery: Reflection 2* (p.13), plan for the future | | | |
| 6. | Consistent use of stable system of support | | | |
| 7. | Conversation with care team about graduation and aftercare | | | |
| 8. | Identify and coordinate transitional care for any additional services required for success. | | | |

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave, Suite 230
Edina, MN 55435
952-835-2002
952-835-9889 fax

**Vision of Recovery**
**Reflection 1**

At intake you were asked to identify a Vision of Recovery, a description of what you want your life to look like when you have completed therapy. The Vision of Recovery is stated in terms of what you want, not what you don't want. For example, instead of "I want to feel less depressed" we would say, "I want to feel more content." Having a destination is important; it gives direction, a way to measure progress, and a goal to attain. This will help to focus and motivate you as you move through the program.

Below, you will update your Vision of Recovery, identify concrete steps you have taken towards it, plan new steps for the coming days, and reaffirm your sense of purpose and direction.

My Vision of Recovery:

_____

_____

_____

_____

What have I already done to move towards this Vision?

_____ _____

_____

_____

_____

What other steps can I take towards my Vision?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do I still want this Vision of Recovery? Am I making progress towards it?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave, Suite 230
Edina, MN 55435
952-835-2002
952-835-9889 fax

# Graduation Plan

The Graduation Plan is designed to help you reflect on how you will use your time after leaving the program, how you will continue to access support, how you will continue to work on your goals, how you will gain closure, and what you will do to be successful going forward. Please answer the questions thoughtfully.

## Step 1: Using my Time

After I leave the program, how will I incorporate meaning and purpose into my life?

_____

_____

_____

What structure will I have in my day?

_____

_____

_____

What judgments and/or unskillful urges will I watch and plan for?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What skills will be most helpful as I leave the program?

_____

_____

_____

How will I keep track of how I am doing?

_____

_____

_____

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave, Suite 230
Edina, MN 55435
952-835-2002
952-835-9889 fax

How will I get my needs met?

Will I use my individual therapy differently? If so, how?

**Step 2: Accessing Support**

What is my support system like?

What are my relationships like?

Who are my strongest supporters?

Who are the people in my life who have supported me the longest?

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave, Suite 230
Edina, MN 55435
952-835-2002
952-835-9889 fax

Who are my most encouraging supporters?

_____

_____

_____

Who are my healthiest supporters?

_____

_____

_____

Who are my more unhealthy supporters?

_____

_____

_____

What are some supportive environments I can go to when distress is high?

_____

_____

_____

List the most important people who support you:

| Name | Phone number | How to Contact Them |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |
| 4. | | |
| 5. | | |

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave, Suite 230
Edina, MN 55435
952-835-2002
952-835-9889 fax

**Step 3: Achieving my Goals**

What is my vision of recovery?

_____

_____

_____

What are my short term goals?

_____

_____

_____

What are my long term goals?

_____

_____

_____

Based on my values, how can I increase participation in my community (e.g. working, volunteering, spiritual activities, artistic expression, etc)?

_____

_____

_____

What can I do to continue to increase my own self-respect?

_____

_____

_____

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave, Suite 230
Edina, MN 55435
952-835-2002
952-835-9889 fax

**Step 4: Closure with group**

What tells me I am ready to leave the program?

_____

_____

_____

What feelings come up when I think about my last day in the program?

_____

_____

_____

How can I use group and individual therapy to prepare for my last day?

_____

_____

_____

**Step 5: After graduation**

What are the skills that help me the most when I feel anger, anxiety or depression?

_____

_____

_____

What are the skills I use the most? Why?

_____

_____

_____

What are the skills I have trouble with sometimes?

_____

_____

_____

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave, Suite 230
Edina, MN 55435
952-835-2002
952-835-9889 fax

What skills do I use the least? Why?

_____

_____

_____

What questions would I like answered before graduating?

_____

_____

_____

Do I want to attend Aftercare? If so, how will I prepare for it?

_____

_____

_____

How will I know if I need more support, such as therapy?

_____

_____

_____

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave, Suite 230
Edina, MN 55435
952-835-2002
952-835-9889 fax

**Vision of Recovery**
**Reflection 2**

Before you graduate, we ask that you reflect on your Vision of Recovery and update it if needed. The Vision of Recovery is a description of what you want your life to look like. Please state it in terms of what you want, not what you don't want. For example, instead of "I want to feel less depressed" we would say, "I want to feel more content." Having a destination is important; it gives direction, a way to measure progress, and a goal to attain. This will help to focus and motivate you as you move beyond the DBT program.

Below, you will update your Vision of Recovery, identify concrete steps you have taken towards it, plan new steps for the coming days, and reaffirm your sense of purpose and direction.

My Vision of Recovery:

_____

_____

_____

What have I already done to move towards this Vision?

_____ _____

_____

_____

What other steps can I take towards my Vision?

_____

_____

_____

Do I still want this Vision of Recovery? Am I making progress towards it?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Mental Health Systems, Inc
6600 France Ave, Suite 230
Edina, MN 55435
952-835-2002
952-835-9889 fax

**Final steps:**

- ☐ Talk with my program leaders about graduation.
- ☐ Set a graduation date for about a month in advance.
- ☐ Think about my graduation day; how would I like to celebrate my accomplishments?
- ☐ Talk to my individual therapist about this plan and my graduation.
- ☐ Talk to my support system about this plan and my graduation.
- ☐ Complete this Graduation Plan and review it with my group.
- ☐ Celebrate my accomplishments!

My signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of group facilitator: _____ Date: _____

# Congratulations!

# Section 3: DBT Materials from Dr. Lane Pederson

# Learning the Foundations of DBT Skills Training and Programs

## DBT Programs and Therapists: A Brief Introduction

DBT stands for dialectical behavior therapy. It was developed at the University of Washington, Seattle, to treat people who have chronic suicidal thinking and behaviors as well as other behaviors that disrupt their lives. The first population studied with DBT was women with borderline personality disorder (BPD).

Today, we know that DBT can be used across clinical settings for a variety of problems (Dimeff & Koerner, 2007; Marra, 2005; Moonshine, 2008a, 2008b; Pederson, 2015) and that the skills and approach can be used proactively in health and growth models, too.

DBT is an approach that is both highly innovative and highly derivative (dialectically speaking). The developer of DBT largely borrowed and repackaged ideas and interventions that already had substantial research and practice to support their use. In *Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder*, the original book on DBT, the developer wrote:

> *The strategies used in this and the following chapters no doubt have many things in common with aspects of the other varieties of psychotherapy currently in use . . . In writing the original draft of this volume, I read every other treatment manual I could find, both behavioral and nonbehavioral. I also read books that tell new therapists how they are supposed to behave in therapy. Whenever I found a treatment component or strategy that was the same or similar to one used in DBT, I tried to use similar language to describe it. Thus, in a sense, much of this manual has been "stolen" from preceding manuals. (Linehan, 1993a, p. 200)*

In therapy, few ideas are completely new and novel, but really committing to and emphasizing helpful concepts can be hugely effective. One established concept that DBT commits to and emphasizes is that we need to learn skills to replace behaviors that do not work and to address problems that cause difficulties in how we function in life.

Teaching skills is essential to DBT. Skills can be taught in either individual or group settings (or both), and they are the central focus of this book. In addition to skills training, DBT emphasizes an accepting, nonjudgmental, and validating approach to clients. This approach means that DBT therapists work hard to understand their clients' world and acknowledge how their clients' feelings, thoughts, and behaviors make sense given the context of their unique situation.

This validating approach is dialectically balanced with change strategies. Often, therapists will use validation to demonstrate that they understand the client's emotions and perspectives, which then opens the client to try something different with skills and behaviors. The DBT change strategies used

by therapists follow traditional behaviorism but also borrow from cognitive, psychodynamic, strategic, and gestalt orientations, among others. DBT approximates a technically eclectic approach, yet it is a standalone therapy in that it has its own guiding theory, called the biosocial theory. This guiding theory postulates that people struggle with emotion dysregulation, which has a reciprocal relationship with invalidating environments. In other words, many people have sensitive and intense emotions, and important people in their lives can have difficulty understanding and supporting them.

Supplementing this great variety of change strategies, DBT incorporates the concepts of mindfulness and the philosophical underpinnings of dialectics, as explained in the Dialectics module.

DBT therapists use specialized tools in therapy such as diary cards and behavior and solution analysis. Diary cards are forms on which clients track symptoms, feelings, and skills; they also help therapists to determine the priorities for treatment and to monitor their clients' progress. Behavior and solution analysis is used to understand behaviors and highlight options to help clients use their skills. In addition to these tools, therapists address safety issues and anything that interferes with treatment (e.g., lateness, absences, nonparticipation) before any other issues.

DBT therapists are sometimes available by phone to coach clients between appointments, and they actively seek consultation from other therapists to stay motivated and effective.

Note that some therapists may not be DBT oriented but may follow another approach and/or integrate approaches along with teaching skills from DBT and other sources. It is fine for therapists to use different approaches; the key is whether the approach works for their clients. Therapists and clients can address the therapist's approach during a discussion on informed consent prior to treatment.

Some DBT therapists treat clients only in individual sessions whereas other DBT therapists treat groups of clients in DBT programs. DBT programs vary in their design based on differing treatment settings. "How much" DBT clients require depends on their unique needs and the level of care indicated. As a general rule, if clients have ongoing safety issues or are chronically unstable, they will probably do best in a structured, comprehensive DBT program.

Professional opinions vary about whether structured DBT programs should follow the original researched treatment model—called standard DBT—but research is clear that high adherence to treatment models (i.e., therapists' close application of the therapy manual as it was originally researched) has no meaningful effect on clinical outcomes (Webb, DeRubeis, & Barber, 2010), so not all programs have to follow the standard model exactly. Be wary of therapists who talk of "real" DBT and who denigrate other therapists or programs. Effective therapists are backed up by their own clinical outcomes and need not talk down others.

The evidence-based practice of psychology, as defined by the American Psychological Association (2005), recognizes that researched models are not directly applicable to all real-world clients, so changes based on therapists' expertise guided by clients' culture, characteristics, and preferences are frequently indicated. Just as different treatment models may be equally beneficial, a variety of established DBT models are too. In other words, one size does not fit all. Monitoring clinical outcomes and adjusting treatment based on that information are also essential parts of evidence-based practice.

In the real world, DBT programs are developed to meet the needs of unique clients seen in unique settings because clients can be different in important ways from research subjects (e.g., differences in gender, ethnicity, diagnosis, and level of care needed). The approach should be customized to the client. The standard model and other applications of DBT are both valid, and the effectiveness of one over another depends on the needs of the client.

That said, clients choosing a DBT program or therapist should be sure to ask about how clinical outcomes (data showing how effective the treatment is) are monitored and used to adjust the therapy approach for clients and to make overall program improvements.

Overall, the therapeutic factors of "good" DBT (and other treatments for BPD) will include clear structure, rules, and expectations; a dialectical balance of validation and change; and an accepting, respectful, and active therapist who supports *and* challenges clients (Weinberg, Ronningstam, Goldblatt, Schechter, & Maltsberger, 2011). These factors, applied through active and collaborative alliances between clients and therapists with agreed-upon goals, will strongly predict positive change (Duncan, 2015; Wampold, 2001).

## DBT Skills: An Orientation for Clients

DBT skills are life skills. Many people have said they wish these skills had been taught to them in school. A lot of people never had the opportunity to learn skills and perhaps did not have parents or anyone else model a skillful approach to life.

If we do not see examples of skills being used, it is more difficult to learn them. As you study these skills, be on the lookout for instances in which you might see skill use by others around you. Actively learn through seeking connections and through practice. Practice makes you prepared to use skills successfully in your life.

Learning DBT skills is like learning a new language. Try to encourage yourself to minimize frustration. Skills you might not have learned yet will be referenced as you study other skills. This cross-referencing is deliberate, so over time you can see the connections between skills and how they work together.

When we learn languages, words have limited meaning until they are put into sentences and then into conversations. Skills work the same way. Keep connecting skills to other skills until they form chains of new behaviors, creating a more satisfying life. We learn a language through speaking it, and we need to practice skill use every day until it is fluent.

Many of the skills' names are referred to by their abbreviations (e.g., Opposite to Emotion is often called "O2E"). The relevant abbreviation is included after the name of the skill in the main headings, so you will associate the names with the abbreviations. For example, Wise Mind is abbreviated as WM, so it will appear as Wise Mind (WM) in the heading for the section about this skill. You can also reference the Master Skills List (Appendix 1) to see the skills' names and abbreviations along with brief explanations.

All of the teachings and applications have a "core concept" identified. This idea orients you to a primary function or purpose of the skill. As you study and practice each skill, try to see how the core concept might relate to your priorities, goals, and values. If you can make a connection, it will help to motivate you to continue refining that skill until it is a part of your life. Again, remember that learning skills requires daily review and practice.

Work on creating your satisfying life one step at a time, one day at a time. We all have setbacks. These setbacks and problems can be opportunities to learn and grow. Do not give up. There are many people like you on similar journeys. Keep moving and stay open to influencing and being influenced by your world.

Before jumping in, it helps to outline your Life Vision, which you can do using the information in the following section. Your Life Vision will help to guide you through the skills and keep your journey on track.

# Your Life Vision (LV)

■ ***CORE CONCEPT***: Knowing why you want change motivates you to change.

A vision for your life helps to define your priorities, goals, and values and the roads you want to explore on your journey. Fill in each section of this worksheet and refer to it often. Do not judge what you write down: It is your vision based on your wants, needs, and dreams. You will start with a big picture and then fill in details. Imagine you are painting a picture of a life you can work toward.

Look to revise the picture every few months as you grow and improve. We are all works in progress, so changes will happen. Use the information from this exercise for treatment planning with your therapist.

It is difficult for some people to imagine a satisfying life, especially when they feel hopeless and out of options. If this is your situation, fill in what you can today and do not judge yourself for struggling with this exercise. As you learn skills over time, your Life Vision will come into focus.

# Life Vision: Big Picture

Describe your priorities, goals, and values in life. What is important to you? What is your motivation to improve? How would you like life to be different? What would/will you be doing if you managed life more effectively? What are your dreams in life?

Describe what you do effectively and what you want to improve on in each of the following areas. See how what you do and what you want to improve on will be part of the big picture. Remember that even small details can impact your Life Vision in important ways. Create one manageable goal for each area that builds on what you do effectively or that addresses a desired improvement. Keep in mind that your goals may change each time you review and revise this section.

Mental health:

Physical health:

Chemical health (avoiding drugs and alcohol):

Education (school or self-education):

Productivity (work or projects):

Volunteering or contributions:

Finances:

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition*. All rights reserved.

Home environment:

Leisure:

Family:

Friends:

Spirituality (religion or other connection):

Choose one to three of your goals in these areas to get started on, and refer to them often.

Describe your strengths and other resources that will help you move toward your goal(s):

Describe how your life will be different when you accomplish your goal(s):

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition*. All rights reserved.

# DBT Beliefs About Skills Training

*CORE CONCEPT:* How we think about ourselves and skills training influences the success of our efforts.

The following beliefs provide a foundation for DBT and skills training. Consider these beliefs and use them to guide your approach to learning and practicing skills.

### You are Doing Your Best

Everyone, yourself included, is doing their best in any given moment. None of us want to make mistakes, offend or put off others, or fall into behaviors that do not work. When you or someone else is struggling, remember this belief and dialectically balance it with the next belief.

### Skills Help You to Do Better

Even though we are all doing our best, sometimes our best is not enough to be effective. We all have room for improvement, and skills help us to be better.

### Skills Apply to All Areas of Your Life

Most of us are skillful sometimes, with some people, in some situations. The trick is to learn how to use skills in our trouble spots: with those people and situations in which we struggle to be effective. Practice your skills across all areas of your life.

### No Matter How a Problem Happened or Who Caused it to Happen, You are Responsible for a Skillful Response

Sometimes we cause our own problems and sometimes other people cause them. Sometimes stuff just happens. Blaming others and getting into behaviors that make situations worse tends to be self-defeating. Focus less on how something happened or who should be accountable, and focus more on how you can be skillful in the face of difficulties.

### Skills Work When You Work the Skills

*Merriam-Webster's Dictionary* defines a skill as "the ability to do something that comes from training, experience, or practice." You have to work the skills for the skills to work. It's that simple. Do not give up. Again, practice your skills to be more skillful.

# Common DBT Program Expectations

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Program expectations create a safe and effective environment.

The following guidelines are intended to build and maintain a healthy and effective skills training program for you and others. Note that your particular therapist or program may have different or additional expectations. Whatever the expectations, they are intended to maximize benefit for all.

**Be an active participant**

Research is clear that the active participation of clients is essential to achieving a successful outcome (for any therapy). You will get out of treatment what you put into it. Commit yourself to throwing your whole self into the process!

**Be on time, stay the whole time, and attend all scheduled sessions**

Not only is following this tip respectful but it is also essential for the treatment to work for you. You cannot participate and benefit if you miss sessions. Prioritize your attendance and address barriers with your therapist and/or program group. If you have to miss a session or be late, be sure to call ahead.

**Offer support, validation, and suggestions to others**

Research shows that group cohesion, simply defined as how connected members are to one another, has a major effect on treatment outcomes. Building relationships between members happens through active involvement with one another, which is also a great way to develop your interpersonal effectiveness skills.

**See and encourage the best in others (and yourself)**

Give others the benefit of the doubt. People are in skills programs because they need to learn and practice new behaviors, including new skills for relating to other people. Remember that we are all doing our best, and continue to help those who are struggling with support, validation, and suggestions.

**Never glamorize or promote harmful behaviors to others**

Some programs strictly forbid discussing behaviors that could be "contagious" to others. Other programs allow members to discuss harmful behaviors such as self-injury or drug use in general, and not specific, detail. When this is allowed, the goal is to understand the behavior and provide alternatives and solutions in the form of skills. Research shows that behavior contagion can happen for better or worse; in other words, contagious behavior can be harmful or helpful. Never talk about harmful behaviors in ways that might tempt other people to try them out. In all skills programs, we want to promote skillful behavior. Make skill use contagious in your program.

**Keep relationships skillful**

Romantic and other private relationships are not allowed between members of the same skills program. Any time members spend time together outside the program, those members must commit to not engage in any problem or potentially problematic behaviors together (e.g., drinking alcohol, doing drugs, gambling, and self-injury are strictly forbidden). When relationships negatively affect the treatment process, the relevant therapy-interfering behavior issues will be addressed.

**Be willing to ask for, and accept, help**

If you allow yourself to be a little vulnerable to others and a lot willing to accept their feedback, other people will too, and you will have an effective program group.

**Keep others' information confidential**

Confidentiality is vital for therapy to be a safe place to share. Do not disclose who else is in your DBT program or any information that other people discuss in the program. What is discussed in the program room stays in the program room.

**Complete your diary card, homework, and behavioral and solution analysis as assigned**

Your therapist(s) and the program have your best interests in mind, and they want to see you do well. Assignments are given for your benefit. If you are struggling with an assignment and need help, or otherwise wish to negotiate what is assigned, then you must use your interpersonal effectiveness skills. As a rule, DBT therapists will not change expectations and assignments if clients are not skillful in negotiating because they do not want to reinforce unskillful behavior. Further, even when a client is skillful, the expectation or assignment sometimes cannot be changed.

# Mindfulness

## Introduction to Mindfulness

- ***CORE CONCEPT*:** Mindfulness is the pathway to an effective and enjoyable life.

Mindfulness means choosing to pay attention to this present moment, on purpose, without judgment. Mindfulness allows us to gain awareness of our emotions, thoughts, bodily sensations, behaviors, relationships, and environment. As we become more mindfully aware in our lives, we can make more informed and effective choices to build more satisfying lives. Neuroscientific research clearly shows that mindfulness makes positive and lasting changes to our brains.

Central to mindfulness is the concept of taking hold of one's mind. This means concentrating our attention on what we choose rather than having emotions, thoughts, or other experiences control us. Training yourself to collect, unify, and direct your attention creates containment in your mind.

Mindfulness skills open doors to acceptance, experience, and connection to yourself and the world. This approach is additive and allows for more complete and richer information and experience to guide us. It is also different from some of our default ways of being: disconnected, judgmental, and alone. These default approaches reduce our experience because we label, categorize, and quickly move on without seeing and connecting to the bigger picture.

As we learn mindfulness, we must remember that it needs to be practiced with other skills and nurtured. The concepts behind mindfulness can be straightforward, but being mindful in our lives requires attention and disciplined practice over time. Like all worthwhile pursuits, our efforts dedicated to mindfulness will reap great benefits if practiced daily.

The Mindfulness module teaches us the core skills to get us to Wise Mind. From Wise Mind, we can live centered and balanced lives using both our hearts and minds. We can also stay One-Mindful in the present, visiting the past and future by choice and connecting with ourselves and the world in a nonjudgmental fashion. Ultimately, we can use mindfulness to slow down and find peace, contentment, and enjoyment in everyday life.

# Myths About Mindfulness

> ***CORE CONCEPT***: Misconceptions about mindfulness can interfere with the effective practice of these skills.

Many people, therapists included, have misconceptions about what mindfulness is and what it is not. Sometimes these misconceptions get in the way of engaging in mindfulness practice. Below are some of the most common myths about mindfulness.

**Mindfulness is Buddhist (or some other philosophy or religion)**

While a large variety of philosophies and religions promote mindfulness practices, mindfulness is best thought of as a human activity that is owned by no group or person. Mindfulness belongs to us all, and, furthermore, mindfulness and its benefits are supported by robust research that clearly shows its psychological, emotional, physical, and performance-based benefits.

**Mindfulness is all new-age-y, wavy-gravy, or (insert your judgment here)**

For some reason, mindfulness seems to conjure images of people in flowing robes, sitting in serene settings, existing in some unreal world disconnected from your or my reality (admittedly, many photos showing people practicing mindfulness promote those stereotypes). The facts are that mindfulness is for everyone and that people across all races, ethnicities, cultures, religions, occupations, and socio-economic statuses practice mindfulness.

**Mindfulness is a fad or trend**

Mindfulness has been around since the dawn of consciousness, making the Beatles or Rolling Stones look like fads by comparison. Not much stands that test of time. When the end of the world comes, only cockroaches and Keith Richards, practicing mindfulness, will remain. Enough said.

**Mindfulness takes a lot of time**

While some advocates of mindfulness stress 45 minutes (or more) of meditation or other mindfulness practice daily, the fact is that you can achieve benefits from taking just a few minutes (or even moments in some cases) to re-center yourself mindfully in the moment. When you consider how much time we all spend distracted by problems, taking a few minutes to breathe or otherwise practice mindfulness is a great trade-off.

**People who practice mindfulness are always mindful (and effective)**

A mindfulness student once saw his teacher eating while watching TV. Angry at the apparent hypocrisy of doing more than one thing at a time, the student challenged his teacher. "You always teach One-Mindfulness, lecturing 'when you walk, walk, when you pray, pray, and when you eat, eat,' and now I see you both eating and watching TV!" The teacher calmly replied, "When you eat and watch TV, eat and watch TV."

Mindfulness does not create perfection, and practitioners will likely experience the benefits but will certainly not always be in the moment. Further, seeking to be ever-mindful means you are clinging to a goal and as such are not in the moment.

**Mindfulness is done only during meditation or other mindfulness practice**

This myth is one of the biggest, and it is analogous to saying people only move their bodies when they exercise. Think of meditation and other mindfulness practice as exercise for the brain, building the skills needed to collect and focus your attention and then guide your behavior. Just as physical fitness is about developing a healthy body, meditation and other mindfulness practices are about building healthy mental processes so you can be mindful in the moments of everyday life.

**Mindfulness is only about pleasure, peace, and relaxation**

While mindfulness can be pleasurable and promote peace and relaxation, mindfulness is also about relating to experiences that can be aversive, uncomfortable, and even painful. Think about how often we try to escape these types of experiences only to make them worse! Perhaps, paradoxically, using mindfulness to accept and relate to what is painful can transform the painful experience; mindfulness is fundamentally acceptance based and nonjudgmental, which alleviates the helping of suffering we often dump on pain.

**Mindfulness can turn off problems, or otherwise make them go away**

Mindfulness is not about turning anything on or off. Rather, it is about deciding what to focus on and when. What mindfulness can offer is a way to attend to something other than your problems when you choose to take a break, and a way to focus on your problems when you decide to—but with a different approach that can reduce your suffering, as mentioned above.

**People with attention deficit, racing thoughts, intrusive thinking, or other problems cannot practice mindfulness**

Mindfulness does not turn problems off or make them go away, but it is a set of skills you can practice to eventually minimize the impacts of these problems on your life. For example, if your problem is racing thoughts, you can simply notice when they distract you (gently and nonjudgmentally) and then turn your mind to the chosen focus of your attention. If your problem is attention deficit, then practicing the skill of (re)focusing your attention (i.e., mindfulness) is perfect for you!

**Children, people with cognitive disabilities, and (insert another category of people) cannot do mindfulness**

Watch young children eat, play with their toys, and explore. They are engrossed, and *there*. This is mindfulness. People of most developmental and cognitive levels have the ability to focus their attention and connect to the present moment, and can have that ability fostered. To this end, having a parent, friend, or loved one practice mindful engagement with them will gently pull along their mindfulness skills, even if they cannot explain mindfulness conceptually. For those without abstract thought, we simply make explanations of mindfulness more concrete. As an example, with young children we can simply say "smell the flowers and blow out the candles" to engage them in the mindful practice of breathing.

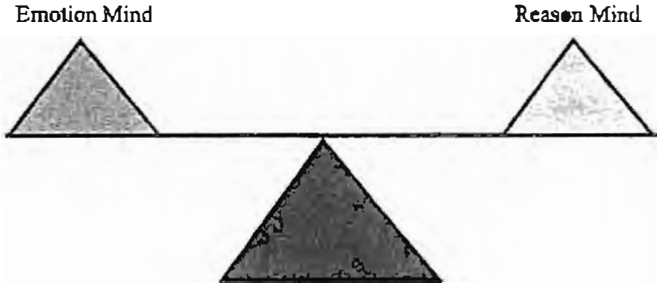
**You are unable to do mindfulness**

See above, and also remember that you already practice mindfulness sometimes, with some things, in some places. Where and with what do you find yourself totally connected and inhabiting the moment? Maybe it is when you play an instrument or sport, or when you are doing a hobby, or into the flow of your work. Maybe it's when you're in your garden, when you're cooking, or when you're connecting spiritually. Use existing times of mindfulness to branch out and develop your skills, remembering that mindfulness is like any other skill set: You get out of it what you put into it. Practice your practice, and the rewards will come with time.

# States of Mind

***CORE CONCEPT*:** Wise Mind is the dialectical balance between emotion and reason.

We experience three primary states of mind: Emotion Mind, Reason Mind, and Wise Mind.




These states of mind exist on a continuum, with Wise Mind being a balance of emotion and reason. Each state of mind is neither "good" nor "bad," although we often think in these terms. However, these judgments are relative and depend on the context of the situation. Instead of judging, seeing what "works" in a given situation is more useful, and you will usually find a balance is best.

Remember that, in dialectics, an extreme contains the seed of the opposite. When we are too far into Emotion Mind, the need for reason arises, and vice versa. We are most effective, most of the time, in Wise Mind.

In a Wise Mind place, we validate our emotional experience *and* integrate our ability to use reason. As described in the introduction to this module, we use our heart and our head, being fully present in the moment. In Wise Mind we can reflect without judgment, live our true intentions in spite of how we feel, and *be* in our experiences without being consumed by them.

Wise Mind is grounded in our values (see FAST in Module 5: Interpersonal Effectiveness) and meets the reality of situations effectively. In Wise Mind, we can overcome our conditioned reactions and be responsive instead. *We all have a wise mind!*

# The Path to Wise Mind (WM)

***CORE CONCEPT*:** The What and How skills lead us to Wise Mind.

Wise Mind is less elusive when we understand the skills used to lead us there: Observe, Describe, and Participate are the What skills. In other words, these three skills are *what* we do to get to Wise Mind. Nonjudgmentally, One-mindfully, and Effectively are the How skills. In other words, these three skills are *how* we apply the What skills to get to Wise Mind.

Although each What and How skill is described individually, remember that they work together to refine our connection with experience and bring us to Wise Mind. To orient yourself to use these skills, practice the directives of this mantra:

Pause, breath, center . . . enter

**What skills**

***Observe***

Notice your experience without adding to it or subtracting from it, without amplifying it or pushing it away. Let the experience pass through like clouds drifting in the sky or scenery passing by a car window. Cling to nothing.

Use your senses to gather information. What is seen, heard, smelled, tasted, and touched? What is happening in your mind and body?

Note your emotions, thoughts, and behaviors as well as other people, your situation, and the environment—look inside *and* outside yourself. Notice what is happening physically in your body and the associated sensations. Direct your attention and decide what enters and what stays out; open and close your mental windows with intention.

***Describe***

Outline the details of your observations with specific descriptions. Use words to bring your observations to life. Language frequently makes greater sense of experience than thought alone. Clarify your experience for yourself and others.

Do not get caught in analyzing your thoughts, feelings, sensations, impulses, and urges. Instead, remember that thoughts are just thoughts, feelings are just feelings, sensations are just sensations, and impulses and urges are just impulses and urges. You are not your mind, and these experiences are not commands.

***Participate***

Observe and Describe bring awareness to experience. Use this awareness to make choices and to become one with your experience. Go from simply watching your experience to being connected to your experience. Ultimately, *be in* your experience. Inhabit it.

Choose whether you want to stay with and relate further to your experience or redirect your Observe and Describe skills. Recognize whether you are participating in symptoms or problems and choose to participate in skills instead. Redirect your attention and what you participate in based on your wisdom of what works and not simply out of aversion to your experience or a desire to escape from your experience.

Practice these skills until they flow naturally from you.

**How skills**

***Nonjudgmentally***

Stick to the facts without coloring them with opinions. Focus on who, what, where, when, and how like an objective reporter. Use respectful language to describe yourself, others, and situations. Be impeccable with your words.

Remember that "good" and "bad" judgments are relative and may not be useful. Sometimes what appears to be desirable can be suffering in disguise, and sometimes problems are hidden opportunities.

Stay away from judgments that amplify or reduce experience or get you stuck in a painful experience by adding suffering. Instead, simply accept what is.

When you observe judgments, gently let go of them. We all judge, so do not amplify your judgments by giving them unneeded power.

***One-mindfully***

Focus on one thing with your complete attention. Distractions from inside and outside you will happen. Practice stepping out of distractions and avoid being consumed by them. Instead, gently notice and let go of distractions that keep you from your focus.

Treat yourself with kindness and compassion as you practice being One-Mindful and accept distractions instead of judging them. Do not trade the present moment for judgment mind.

If your attention gets divided, stop and focus your attention on what you choose to experience. Be in the here and now with one mind.

***Effectively***

Do what works best based on the demands of the situation as it is and not what you would prefer it to be. Do not spend your energies fighting reality, which does not unfold according to your preferences and desires.

Do not act out of judgments and a need to be "right." Instead, stay connected to your goals, priorities, and values and use them as guides to act as skillfully as possible.

Use Willingness to get from point "A" to point "B" to accomplish your goals. Remove your own complications and barriers to get out of your own way.

Train yourself to be responsive to experience rather than reactive to experience. Doing what works is a reflection of Wise Mind.

# Focus on Nonjudgmental Stance (NJS)

- ***CORE CONCEPT:*** Understand judgments and when to let them go.

Judgments (nonjudgmentally speaking!) are not "good" or "bad" or "right" or "wrong." In fact, judgments can be quite useful at times when we need to label, categorize, and move on or when we simply want to communicate quickly.

It is easier to say that the weather is "bad" than Observing and Describing every detail of the forecast to justify staying home during a storm. Similarly, we might say we have had a "good" day to quickly let others know that problems have been minimal or handled effectively.

Judgments have likely been useful in other ways too. If most men or most women have hurt you in life, judgments about that sex might keep you safe psychologically or even physically in some situations.

However, judgments are less effective when they become overgeneralized or rigid and when we are unable to shift them based on new or different information and experiences. Judgments that no longer work cause strong, ongoing negative emotions and interfere with you meeting your wants and needs. If judgments result in you clashing with a variety of people over time, this might be a sign that Nonjudgmental Stance could be worthwhile.

To see whether judgments might be more or less useful, try to see whether they are "Teflon" judgments or "sticky" judgments. We have no personal investment in or strong emotional reactions to Teflon judgments. These types of judgments can be readily revised when we take in more or different information. In fact, these judgments can be useful when we need to quickly make a decision and move on.

Sticky judgments act like tinted or colored glasses that shade almost everything around us. Because we are committed to these judgments, we refuse to take off those glasses to see ourselves, others, situations, and the world in a different light. Sticky judgments do not help us move on but weigh us down like rocks in a backpack. If you find that your "backpack" is full of heavy judgments, it may be time to take it off, put it down, and gently start to remove those rocks (and use one to smash your tinted glasses, metaphorically speaking of course!).

# Focus on One-Mindfulness (OM)

*CORE CONCEPT:* Direct yourself back to One-Mindfulness when your attention is divided.

We can clarify One-Mindfulness through examples of divided attention and mindlessness. When we find ourselves in these situations, we go back to the What and How skills to be One-Mindful.

### Continual partial attention

Many of us go through our days attending to multiple stimuli simultaneously without giving any one thing our full and complete attention. We eat while watching TV and check our email while in the presence of our families. We think about our problems in the middle of a conversation or during an otherwise positive experience. We talk on the phone while driving and choose to distract ourselves from everyday tasks rather than attending to them. We escape the small moments rather than recognizing that life *is* the small moments.

The result is disconnected attention and incomplete connections. When you notice this continual partial attention, stop, make a choice, and focus on one thing. Continued partial attention is also called the "unquiet mind" or "monkey mind."

### Multitasking

We have been misled to believe that multitasking is a strength and is desired. In reality, we can only multitask when behaviors are overlearned or automatic. In these cases, we do not use our conscious minds but instead act like robots.

When we try to multitask with behaviors and in situations that require our conscious attention, we are not actually doing more than one activity at once. Rather, we are shifting our attention back and forth. This approach requires much more mental energy and sets us up to make mistakes.

To illustrate, try this multitasking experiment with two independently easy tasks and notice the outcome: First, count from 1 to 26 as quickly as possible, noting the time. Next, say the ABCs as quickly as possible, again noting the time. Add up the times of these two tasks done one-mindfully. Now, try a true multitasking activity. Time yourself as you alternate performing the tasks of counting and reciting the ABCs (i.e., 1 A 2 B 3 C 4 D and so on). Notice the difference in time, energy, and accuracy.

As another example, you may notice that your computer progressively slows as you have more and more functions open. Your computer is programmed to "multitask," but at some point it spends more time switching and reorienting than actually working. It may even shut down. Your computer's limitations mirror our own limited capacity to spread out our focus. Work on doing one thing at a time as a habit.

### Automatic behaviors

Automatic behaviors include anything you can do unconsciously or without thought. While not recommended, most of us can drive, carry on basic conversations, and do most activities of daily living with virtually no attention or connection.

Automatic behaviors can be useful at times. In fact, sometimes automatic behaviors can be highly effective, such as when someone automatically follows an overlearned protocol in an emergency situation or when you swerve or hit your brakes to avoid an automobile accident.

The other side of the dialectic is that automatic behaviors remove us from the here and now of life and deprive us of basic pleasures. A great exercise is being mindful of your automatic behaviors, step by step, with intention. Examples include mindfully preparing and eating meals, driving with your full attention, and taking a shower or bath with awareness of the experience. Any thought or behavior in your day can be attended to one-mindfully.

# Mindfulness Exercises

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Use these exercises to practice your mindfulness skills.

These mindfulness exercises will strengthen your ability to practice mindfulness and happen to be quite enjoyable too! With all of the exercises, remember to engage each of your senses and to take your time. The text following each exercise just scratches the surface. Go deeper and make the exercise your own!

During your practice, when judgments, other thoughts, or any other distractions occur, do not fuss over them, but gently turn your attention back to the exercise.

**1. Explore a fruit:** Use Observe and Describe to explore an orange. What are the visual features, what does it feel like, and what does it smell like? Now, slowly start to peel the orange and continue to tune in to each sense. Notice any emotions, thoughts, or other experiences that you have during this process, but cling to nothing, instead staying engaged in the activity. Ultimately, you may choose to mindfully eat the orange.

**2. Create with Play-Doh:** Study the Play-Doh container, noticing the writing, colors, and design elements. Slowly peel the lid off the container, and notice the smell. What comes up for you? Notice any associated feelings, memories, or other experiences, and then turn your attention back to the Play-Doh. Feel it in your hands and begin to knead and work it. Notice the texture, the temperature, and whether there are changes in its flexibility as you handle it. Experience the Play-Doh without the need to create anything. (Alternatives: Create what you choose with the Play-Doh, be it an animal, a sculpture, or something else. Let go of judgments as to how the creation is shaping up. Or, imagine you are a child experiencing Play-Doh for the first time. Allow yourself to be immersed in this discovery!)

**3. Connect with a sound:** Put on music; listen to the sounds of waves, nature, or another soothing sound; or pick up on the naturally occurring sounds around you (the hum of an appliance, the sound of traffic, or the bustle of a workplace). Close your eyes and tune in to your chosen sound. Stay with the sound, returning to it when a distraction happens, and perhaps notice how you breathe along with it.

**4. Guided imagery:** Use imagery from a CD, from a website, or recorded from your therapist or another person. Visualize that you are in the place that is being described, hearing the sounds, and feeling the other sensations. Lose yourself in this experience, and, when the exercise is over, bring its benefits back to the present moment.

**5. Create a safe place:** Similar to guided imagery, create a place that is safe and comfortable. It may be a room, a cabin in the woods, or an imaginary land where you are protected by fire-breathing dragons! Use your senses to fully enter the safe place. Notice how it looks, paying attention to even the smallest details. Notice the sounds, or the silence. How does it feel? Stay in this place for a while, and go there whenever you need to soothe and calm yourself.

**6. Sounds of a bell:** Strike a bell or chime, or clang mini-cymbals to create a tone. Listen to the sound until it fades into complete silence. Repeat as many times as you wish. This can be done anytime during the day, before meetings, before meals, or at any other time that you want a break or to return to the moment.

**7. Mindful eating:** Strive to eat mindfully each time you sit down to eat. Notice your food, seeing the shapes, colors, and textures. Smell the aromas. Take it all in before experiencing your first small bite. Our taste buds register tastes more vividly during the first few bites. Eat these bites slowly, experiencing

the tastes, smells, temperature, and textures of each bite. Chew slowly, noticing the release of flavors and the sensations associated with eating. Continue thoughtfully, deliberately, until you notice feeling satisfied, and then stop and reflect. As they say, if you love food, spend some time with it!

**8. Mindfulness of smell:** Gather a variety of scented candles or essential oils and spend some time exploring the smell of each one. Notice the differences and any reactions you have to each kind of smell. Alternatively, disguise the labels on your candles or oils and see whether you or others can guess each scent.

**9. Mindful listening:** Pick a song, close your eyes, and listen closely to the music. Follow the lyrics, notice the different instruments, or take in the song as a whole experience. If you have heard the song before, did you notice anything new? Alternatively, pick a song that has a repetitive lyric, phrase, or melody line. Count how many times you hear the reoccurring detail.

**10. Mindfulness of touch:** Take any object into your hands. Explore the object with your hands and fingers, feeling the shape(s), texture(s), and temperature of the object. This can be done in combination with vision, or done with your eyes closed, focusing exclusively on touch. Alternatively, gather various fabrics such as silk, cotton, wool, and velvet and experience the different feels. Of course, this exercise can be done with any collection of objects (e.g., stress ball, worry stone, sandpaper).

**11. Mindfulness of nature/thunderstorms:** Put on a nature CD or the sound of a thunderstorm. Listen and notice what emotions, thoughts, and sensations start to come up.

**12. Mindful walking:** Take a walk outside or around your room. Pay attention to the sensation of your feet in contact with the ground. Let go of thoughts, emotions, and other distractions and just walk, as if being mindful of every step is vitally important. Alternatively, play a game and avoid cracks (or step on them) or count steps between fixed objects such as light poles or mailboxes.

**13. Mindful nature walk:** Take a walk outside through nature. Notice the sounds and smells. What do you see? Take this time to observe, as if this is the first time you have experienced this scenery and the surrounding elements of nature. When you find yourself getting distracted, come back to the scenery around you.

**14. Objects in a bag:** Take a bag and add in various types of objects. Make sure the objects are different in texture and shape. Pass the bag around and take turns using your sense of touch to guess what each object is. Observe and Describe the sensations.

**15. Making sounds:** Go around the group making funny sounds, one person at a time. Pass the sound from one person to another. Notice and release judgments, staying with the game. Alternatively, break into small groups or dyads and create a mantra (word or phrase to repeat) for relaxation, connection, energy, teamwork, or some other concept. Share your mantras and repeat them as a large group for 1 minute each, noticing the connection between the mantra and the resulting emotions and experience.

**16. Meditate on an object:** Find something in the room to focus on and use that object to ground you while you breathe. It could be a painting, a vase, or any ordinary household object. Fix your gaze on your chosen object, staying with it as you breathe. If you get distracted just pull yourself back to the object of focus.

**17. Spaceship:** Imagine you have a spaceship that can rocket you to your favorite place, real or imagined. Climb into your ship and count down from 10 to 1 and then blast off to your destination. Stay at your destination awhile and practice breathing, and then ride back home via your rocket ship or another means feeling relaxed and refreshed.

**18. Easy and enjoyable sitting mediation:** Sit in a comfortable chair, on a park bench, or out on your deck or porch. You are alive! So breathe the air, see your surroundings, listen to the sounds, and feel bodily sensations such as your physical connection to your seat, the air temperature, the breeze, etc. You have no place to be but here. Keep it simple.

**19. Mindfulness apps:** Search your smartphone, tablet, or computer for free or inexpensive mindfulness apps. Practice each one you find several times, and share them with your friends and family.

**20. Breathing colors:** Choose two different colors, one to breathe in and one to breathe out. Blue works well for the in-breath, since it matches the cool feeling of the air coming in. Red works well for the out-breath, as it matches the warm feeling of the air leaving your body. However, choose the colors you want, for the reasons you want. Close your eyes and pair each color with its breath.

**21. Square breathing:** Start by breathing in for four seconds. Hold your breath for four seconds, and then breathe out for another four seconds. Repeat four times.

**22. Deep breathing:** Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. To increase focus and quiet the mind, you can use a mantra such as "in" for when you breathe in and "out" for when you breathe out.

**23. Belly breathing:** Lie down on your back on the floor or in bed (preferred), or sit upright in a chair. Place a hand on your belly, and as you breathe in watch how your belly expands. Breathing in this way promotes deep breathing, which helps to get oxygen into your system. More oxygen helps us relax our bodies and think more clearly. Set an alarm and breathe deeply for a minimum of 1 minute.

**24. Progressive muscle relaxation:** Use the classic "squeeze and release" relaxation technique, beginning with your toes and working all the way up to your face. Squeeze each part of your body, holding the tension for a couple of seconds, and then release. Notice both the state of tension for each body part as well as the state of release. Although this exercise works best using your whole body, it can also be condensed to use fewer body parts, such as just squeezing and releasing your hands (making fists and then shaking them out), or by just scrunching up your face before relaxing it. For more directions, search for progressive muscle relaxation scripts online or on YouTube.

**25. Body scan:** Use Observe and Describe to scan your body from top to bottom, noting areas of tension and discomfort. Gently dismiss judgments that arise, and take a deep breath into each area of the body where this discomfort exists. Do not have an agenda about changing how these areas feel, but do notice differences that happen as you continue to breathe and connect. Also, notice areas of your body that feel relaxed and comfortable. Breathe into these areas too.

**26. Rigid body/relaxed body:** Stand and tighten your body, assuming a rigid and stiff stance. Hold that pose for 10 seconds or more. Then, relax your body and assume a loose, flexible, and comfortable stance. Identify the different emotions and sensations that came up with each pose.

**27. Half-smile (or full smile):** Sit in a chair and take a couple of deep breaths. As you continue to breathe, slowly start to turn the sides of your lips upward to make a small smile. Relax your face and take on this more serene look. Notice whether your emotions begin to change, as your face communicates acceptance to your brain. Alternatively, look in a mirror, make a peace sign with your first and middle fingers, and use those fingers to push up the sides of your mouth into a goofy smile. This moment need not be so serious, even if your life sometimes is!

**28. Positive memories:** Remember a positive event from your life, and use your imagination to transport yourself back to that time and place. Play it in your mind as if it is a movie, and tune in to your senses to fully enter into the memory. Notice what emotions come up as you immerse yourself in the experience. Let this positive memory have an impact on you.

**29. Compassion for others:** Think of a person who has offended you or others with his or her behavior. Imagine what factors would lead a person to behave in ways that hurt or put off others. Or imagine that person as a child or a baby with innocence. Send this person compassion from your heart, wishing them well in this world. Does sending compassion feel different from holding on to painful feelings about this person?

**30. Pictures and judgments:** Look at photos in a magazine and describe what comes to mind. What judgments do you notice? Now take a second and describe what you see in a matter-of-fact manner, sticking to the facts. Notice the difference in the experience.

**31. Gratitude lists:** Make a gratitude list with everything you can think of on it, both big and small. Mediate on the list for several minutes. Note any changes in your emotions. Alternatively, write a thank-you letter to someone, being specific about what the person did to receive your gratitude.

**32. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 senses:** To increase your awareness and ground yourself in the present moment, list five things you see, four things you hear, three things you feel, two things you smell, and one thing you taste.

**33. Standing like a tree:** Stand up and pretend your legs are the roots of a tree, reaching your arms up to be the branches. Start to sway side to side as if you are blowing in the wind. Notice that your legs don't move, keeping you grounded. Imagine yourself being a tree when the winds of life whip up. Be flexible yet grounded, like a strong tree weathers a storm.

**34. Finding your center:** Sit upright in a comfortable position and take several deep breaths. On the next exhale lean as far to the right as you can without falling over. Inhale and return to center. Then exhale and lean far to the left. Inhale to the center. Slowly start to repeat, leaning less and less every time. When you finally reach the middle, your center, take several deep breaths and notice what it feels like to be in balance.

**35. Seeking clarity:** Take a jar, fill it with water, and put in fine sand, glitter, or another substance that can be shaken up. Once the lid is tight, shake up the jar. Notice the chaos as the sand or glitter moves about the water, with the water being cloudy or unclear. Then, mindfully watch as everything slowly settles, ultimately bringing clarity to the water. Think about the parallels between Emotion Mind and chaos compared to Wise Mind and clarity.

**36. Yoga:** Take 5 minutes and assume simple yoga poses (check out a book or video on yoga). Notice your body and remember to breathe as you hold each pose. Just notice emotions, thoughts, and sensations that arise, clinging to none. With practice, this exercise is grounding and relaxing, and promotes regulation of body and mind.

**37. Mandalas and coloring books:** Mediate on the process of coloring, losing yourself in the activity.

**38. Simon says:** This game is all about focusing and sustaining attention. Remember to let go of judgments and have fun!

**39. Jenga:** Focus with one mind as you remove blocks and build the tower higher and higher. Notice your connection to removing and stacking the blocks, immersing yourself in the activity. When the tower tumbles, remember that this is the natural outcome of the game.

**40. Categories:** Pick a category such as animals or foods and list as many items from that category as possible. In a group setting, go around the circle with each person repeating the items already listed before adding to the category.

**41. Picnic game:** Start with the phrase "I am going on a picnic and I'm bringing. . ." Go around the circle with each person adding something they are bringing, but only after he or she has said all the

items that were mentioned before, in order. For an added challenge, this game can be played listing items from A to Z.

**42. Riddles:** Buy a book on riddles or search for them online. Contemplate possible solutions. An example: "I am an ancient invention that allows people to see through walls. What am I?"

**43. 20 Questions:** Play 20 questions with a friend, a child, or your family.

**44. Untie knots:** Start with string or a shoelace that has been tangled and knotted up. Start to untangle and untie the knots. What emotions come up. Frustration? Impatience? Breathe and practice acceptance as you mindfully complete this activity.

**45. Blow bubbles:** Blow bubbles and watch as they float through the air, eventually popping. Notice sensations, such as your breathing, the air you blow into the bubble, and any emotions that arise from the activity.

**46. Play catch:** Play this simple game with the goal of being in the moment.

**47. Play catch with categories:** Take one ball to throw around a group of people standing in a circle. Pick a category such as countries, music artists, or movie stars. Every time someone catches the ball, they add to the list. If a person cannot add to the list, he or she can create the next category and continue the game.

**48. Energy ball:** Imagine a ball as a source of negative emotional and mental energy. Hold on to the ball in your hand and take some time to process what it is like to hold on to your negative energy. Do you want to continue to hold on to it? Tell yourself that you have the choice to let the ball go and put it down. Alternatively, decide to bounce the ball off the floor or wall, imagining the negative energy leaving the ball with each bounce, until the ball becomes neutral again.

**49. I spy memory game:** Find a page in a magazine full of various objects and take 1 minute to mindfully look over the page. After the minute is up, close the magazine and write down all of the things that you remember.

**50. Write with your nondominant hand:** Create an encouraging or coping statement and write it out 10 times with your nonwriting hand. Notice any frustrations or judgments that come up and practice releasing them. Engage in the process, noting the level of focus needed to have the writing be legible.

**51. Attention to small moments:** Small moments in our lives include those that we do not typically notice and those we take for granted. A small moment may be having a cup of coffee or a cool glass of water, spending a moment with a child or pet, or performing any everyday activity that goes by without our attention. Enjoyment, peace, and serenity in life happen in the small moments. Each hour, orient yourself to the small moments that you might otherwise miss.

**52. Focus on senses:** Take time to notice what comes through your five senses: what you see, hear, smell, taste, and/or touch. Your senses are your gateway to the world. (See Self-Soothe in Module 3: Distress Tolerance.)

**53. Breathing:** We all breathe, and we can all breathe more effectively. Our breath is our anchor and is an excellent way to center ourselves. Take time to breathe mindfully in and out. Stay focused on the sensation of the air coming into your air passages and lungs, holding it, and then letting it out. Use a mantra, such as "in" as you breathe in and "out" as you breathe out, or count each breath from 1 to 10, starting over when you reach 10 or if you lose count.

**54. Breathing life cycle:** Another way to breathe mindfully is to notice the beginning, middle, and end of each inhalation and exhalation (like how you can hear the beginning, middle, and end of sounds—another mindfulness exercise). Concentrate on the life of each breath going in and out.

**55. Quiet/still time:** Set time aside each day to be quiet and to experience that quiet. Be One-Mindful with the stillness, finding your center and noticing comfort in the moment.

**56. Your favorite song (or album):** Listen to your favorite song or album with your full attention. Listen closely to the lyrics and their meaning. Be mindful of each word and phrase. Listen to the sounds of the different instruments. Pay attention to the guitar, bass, drums, vocals, or any other instrument that is central to the music. Notice the production values: Is the song basic or elaborate? Bare bones or highly orchestrated? Be mindful of things you have never noticed in music you have listened to many times.

**57. Your favorite show:** Watch your favorite TV show, paying attention to the small details. Notice what the actors are wearing, how the sets are designed and decorated, and other elaborate details that go into your show.

**58. The room you know so well:** Observe and Describe details that you never noticed about your bedroom, living room, office, or any other place in which you have spent a significant amount of time.

**59. 10 details:** Anyplace, anywhere, pause and Observe and Describe 10 details you would not have otherwise noticed.

**60. Turn down the noise (or embrace it):** Turn off all extra sources of noise in your home. If you are not mindfully listening to the radio or TV, turn it off. Work on being present without the competition for your attention. If you are unable to turn down certain noises, practice being mindfully aware of them, noticing them without judgment.

**61. People (or anything) watching:** Be a watcher of people, or of anything that might hold your interest. Remember not to judge what you see, but simply let it into and out of your experience like clouds floating through the sky.

**62. One chore/one task:** Do one chore or one task, such as washing the dishes or folding laundry, with all of your attention and care. Be One-Mindful with the experience without adding or subtracting.

**63. "Holding" a feeling:** Hold your present feeling like it is a baby. Calming a distraught baby involves compassion and One-Mindfulness. Babies can tell when we are either frustrated or do not want to be with them in the moment. Our feelings are like babies: They too can tell when we either reject them or are not fully present with them. Holding your feeling and being mindful of it will usually cause it to diminish in intensity. If not, consider distraction skills.

**64. Interconnection:** Contemplate how you are connected to all of the items around you, to your surroundings, to all of the people in your life, and/or to the universe in general.

**65. Relative thinking:** Contemplate the upsides and downsides of any judgment without sticking to any conclusions. See how "good" and "bad" depend on the circumstances and are not fixed.

**66. 5/60:** Plan 5 minutes out of every hour to engage in a mindfulness activity. This may include breathing, doing a scan of your body for tension and then relaxing, or one-mindfully accomplishing any task.

**67. Find your center:** Before engaging in thoughts and behavior, spend a moment to breathe and find your center. Know that finding your center helps you to access your Wise Mind. Practice the directives of the mantra: Pause, breath, center . . . enter.

**68. Write and release:** Write what you would like to let go of on paper and shred it, burn it, or place the paper under water and watch the ink wash away and disappear.

**69. Lie in the grass:** On a day with nice weather, find a patch of lush, green grass in your yard or a park. Lie down, close your eyes, and turn your attention toward the connection and sensations between your body and the grass, feeling yourself supported by the ground. Breathe in the sensations and stay there awhile. Following the exercise, notice what you are feeling. Alternatively, keep your eyes open and gaze at the sky, watching the clouds float into and out of your field of vision. Contemplate the connection between yourself, the earth, and the sky. Take your time in this place, and breathe.

**70. Practice compassion for yourself and others:** Sit or lie down in a comfortable spot, and turn your attention to your breathing. As you breathe say to yourself over and over, "May I experience peace and happiness." Once you have settled into mediating on this mantra, change the mantra to focus on another person by saying, "May (Person) experience peace and happiness." Continue to breathe as you meditate on this thought from your heart. Extra credit: Make the person you wish peace and happiness to someone you dislike.

**71. Report on your experience or surroundings:** Write or narrate what is happening right now with your emotions, thoughts, physical sensations, and/or behavior. In doing so, pretend that you are a reporter giving an objective account to your audience. Notice what it is like to Observe and Describe your experience in this somewhat detached manner.

**72. Explain a task (and then participate in it):** Take any daily task or chore, such as making coffee, sweeping a room, or watering plants, and break it down into its component steps. Imagine that you would have to explain how to do this to a child or even an alien, and go into minute detail. Now, actually engage in the task or chore, noticing each step and participating in it mindfully.

**73. Look through a new window:** Pick a window in your home, school, or office that you never (or almost never) look through. Sit down and spend 5 or more minutes gazing through the window, observing what is outside. Notice the scenery and whether anything is happening outside the window. Describe the scene and/or action to yourself and connect with it. Extra credit: Contemplate the "windows" in your life you do not or refuse to look through. What would you notice if you chose to look through one or more of these windows?

# Mindfulness 1: Sticky Judgments

**CORE CONCEPT:** Use this exercise to let go of sticky judgments.

Describe one sticky judgment about yourself, others, or situations:

Describe how that sticky judgment needlessly upsets you, weighs you down, or holds you back:

Describe how your life will be different without that sticky judgment:

Commit yourself to slowly (or radically!) getting unstuck from that judgment.

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition*. All rights reserved.

# Mindfulness 2: Daily Practice

**CORE CONCEPT:** Use this worksheet to track daily mindfulness practice.

Pick mindfulness exercises from the examples above (or from another resource) to use in your daily practice and to record on this worksheet. Notice how you feel and/or your urge level before and after each mindfulness exercise.

Exercise: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Exercise: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Exercise: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Exercise: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Exercise: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Exercise: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Exercise: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition*. All rights reserved.

# Mindfulness 3: 10 Days to a 10-Minute Meditation Practice

**CORE CONCEPT:** Use this simple and doable method to develop a meditation practice.

Carving out time to develop a meditation practice seems daunting for most people. Often, we feel either like we do not have the time or that it will not matter unless we commit a serious amount of time to it. Fortunately, 10 minutes can usually be found either by reorganizing our schedules or via the time-saving benefits of practice, which are less time stuck in mental health symptoms and more efficiency approaching the tasks in our lives. Further, research also shows that even brief amounts of meditation make real differences in life.

To get started, schedule a time and place to practice, perhaps setting an alarm on your watch or phone to remind you until it is a habit. The time can be whenever suits you, although some people prefer to start or end their day with it. In fact, one way to solve the time problem for busy people is to simply wake up 15 minutes early to have quiet time for the practice. That 15 minutes of lost sleep is a good trade-off for the benefits of meditation. Whenever the time is, do try to make it a quiet, less hectic time, although that is not essential if that is not possible in your environment. In terms of place, pick somewhere that is comfortable. It may be a chair where you can sit with an upright posture, or it may be lying down on the floor or bed. Remember that this is simple and doable meditation, so do not needlessly complicate the process!

When you sit or lie down during your meditation time, the only task is to close your eyes and focus on your breath, which has been waiting for you the whole time. Naturally, distractions will arise. You will notice emotions, thoughts (maybe a lot of them, including judgments), bodily sensations, and other distractions in your environment. When you notice these distractions, simply refocus on connecting with your breath, over and over again. If you so choose, you can add in a mantra to focus your attention on the breath. Perhaps you say silently to yourself "in" when you breathe in and "out" when you breath out. Be sure to set a timer so you do not have to think about time in a practical way (thoughts about time may still come up as distractions).

That's it! Do this and you are officially meditating. Follow this simple 10-day schedule below to build up to 10 minutes of meditation per day. Note that, if you would like to start smaller, you can simply halve the amounts of time (i.e., building to 5 minutes of meditation). Check in on your general distress or urge level before and after the meditation, and briefly journal about your experience if you choose. After 10 days congratulate yourself. You did it!

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition*. All rights reserved.

**Day one:** Meditate for 1 minute.

Distress or urge level: Before _____ After _____

Describe your experience:

_____

**Day two:** Meditate for 2 minutes.

Distress or urge level: Before _____ After _____

Describe your experience:

_____

**Day three:** Meditate for 3 minutes

Distress or urge level: Before _____ After _____

Describe your experience:

_____

**Day four:** Meditate for 4 minutes

Distress or urge level: Before _____ After _____

Describe your experience:

_____

**Day five:** Meditate for 5 minutes

Distress or urge level: Before _____ After _____

Describe your experience:

_____

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

**Day six:** Mediate for 6 minutes

Distress or urge level: Before _____ After _____

Describe your experience:

_____

**Day seven:** Meditate for 7 minutes

Distress or urge level: Before _____ After _____

Describe your experience:

_____

**Day eight:** Meditate for 8 minutes

Distress or urge level: Before _____ After _____

Describe your experience:

_____

**Day nine:** Meditate for 9 minutes

Distress or urge level: Before _____ After _____

Describe your experience:

_____

**Day ten:** Meditate for 10 minutes

Distress or urge level: Before _____ After _____

Describe your experience:

_____

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition*. All rights reserved.

# Mindfulness 4: Maintain Your Meditation Practice

**CORE CONCEPT:** Use this worksheet to maintain your meditation practice.

Track your daily meditation on this worksheet, noting how you feel before and after each meditation. Note that you can give yourself credit for shorter meditation times too.

Monday meditation

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Tuesday meditation

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Wednesday meditation

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Thursday meditation

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Friday meditation

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Saturday mediation

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Sunday meditation

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

# Distress Tolerance

## Introduction to Distress Tolerance

- ***CORE CONCEPT*:** Distress tolerance helps us cope with crisis without making our situation worse.

We sometimes cope with intense emotions in ways that make our situation worse or cause us to neglect our long-term priorities, goals, and values. This coping may work in the short term, but it sabotages our long-term Life Vision. For example, drinking, using drugs, or engaging in self-injury often relieves stress, tension, and emotional pain, but none of these ways of coping are sustainable in our lives. Further, ineffective coping behaviors often cause additional emotional intensity and pain in the long term. Distress tolerance skills provide alternatives to help us cope in the short term without making our situation worse, and they keep us true to our priorities, goals, values, and Life Vision.

One key to distress tolerance skills is making sure that we consistently practice them when we are not in distress. Skills work when we work the skills because practice is how we gain competency with skills. Trying to use skills in a crisis without previously practicing them would be like trying to hit a home run in a big ballgame when you have never picked up a bat. Fortunately, distress tolerance skills are often enjoyable to do in and of themselves, so practicing them does not have to feel like a chore.

Another key to distress tolerance is putting a proactive plan together. We often end up reacting to life situations rather than having a plan for how to respond to them. It is difficult to be effective when we react rather than respond, and the plan we create while in Reason Mind or Wise Mind provides needed balance and direction when in extremes of Emotion Mind.

Luckily, we can simply look to our past to make plans for our future. From our histories, we can identify our vulnerabilities and triggering situations and create a responsive plan that combines the effective coping behaviors we already do with the new skills we are learning. Note that your distress tolerance plan will include skills from the other modules too, as you have to combine skills from all modules to be most effective.

Once you have an effective distress tolerance plan, you can more easily strike the dialectical balance between mindful acceptance and tolerance of emotions (especially painful ones) and effective distraction. With that balance, you can validate your emotions while you also cope in healthy ways.

# Distress Tolerance: Guidelines for Use

***CORE CONCEPT***: Understand when and how to use distress tolerance to increase effectiveness.

Distress tolerance skills are more effective when the guidelines listed here are followed. Like other skills, the effectiveness of distress tolerance is based on knowing when to use these skills and on recognizing their limitations.

As a rule, distress tolerance is used when we cannot solve a problem. If we *can* solve a problem and it is an okay time to do so, solving it will usually be the best strategy.

However, there are times when we have the solution to our problem but it is not a good time to solve it. In these cases, we can use distress tolerance until we can solve the problem at a better time.

At other times, we need to use distress tolerance to soothe our emotions before we can solve a problem effectively. In other words, sometimes we know the solution and it is an okay time to proceed, except we are not in Wise Mind enough to be effective. In these cases, we might benefit from distress tolerance before problem-solving.

Ask yourself the following three questions to help you to decide between solving a problem and using distress tolerance:

- Am I able to solve the problem? Yes or no. If no, use distress tolerance.
- Is it an okay time to solve the problem? Yes or no. If no, use distress tolerance.
- Am I in Wise Mind enough to solve the problem? Yes or no. If no, use distress tolerance.

If you answer yes to all three questions, work on solving your problem instead of using distress tolerance.

If you answer yes to these three questions but avoid attending to and solving your problems, you will eventually end up overwhelmed. It is important to avoid the use of distress tolerance to distract from life, because excessive use of distraction leads to our problems piling up.

When we cannot attend to or solve our problems, distress tolerance skills replace unhealthy coping behaviors such as self-injury, drinking and drug use, and other behaviors that can damage self-respect or cause other short- and long-term problems.

Nonetheless, we are sometimes reluctant to give up our unhealthy coping behaviors even when we know they are destructive to ourselves or others. If you are unsure about giving up a behavior, you may start by simply increasing your options through learning and practicing distress tolerance skills. Over time, you may have the confidence to let go of your old ways of just surviving.

As you learn and practice these skills, remember that they are meant to be used in the short term. We need to have many distress tolerance skills ready to use in cases when a crisis lasts for a long time, so keep adding more of these skills to your "toolbox." The more we explore and practice the skills in this module, the more we can manage ourselves and our lives—maybe even proactively changing our vulnerabilities and emotions.

Finally, remember to use your mindfulness skills along with your distress tolerance skills. Distress tolerance skills are much less effective if we continue to focus mentally on our crisis. Mindfulness of the skills we use is the foundation for successful use.

As you start to use distress tolerance skills, it is helpful to consider the following dialectics: Attend to the problem versus distract from the problem, and be mindful of the emotion versus be mindful of the distraction. The key to navigating these dialectics is considering the most effective choice in the moment.

# Distress Tolerance 1: Crisis and Safety Plan

**CORE CONCEPT:** Develop a plan to manage crisis and safety issues.

Begin to fill out this plan and continue to add to it as you learn more skills. Treat this plan as a "living" document: It needs to be continuously reviewed, practiced, and updated.

Make several copies and always know where to find your plan. It is hard to know what to do when you are in the heat of the moment. That is why you have a written plan.

Give copies to the people in your support system and discuss your use of the plan proactively. Again, practice, practice, practice—practice makes you prepared to be effective in life.

**My reasons for managing crisis effectively and/or staying safe:** List all of your priorities, goals, values, and people that matter to you. These are your "whys" that motivate you to use the plan:

_____

_____

_____

**My strengths and resources:** List what you have going for you. Ask for help if you are unsure:

_____

_____

_____

**Warning signs:** These are the signals that you may be in crisis or unsafe or about to be in crisis or unsafe. Be as specific as possible. Look to your history for clues:

_____

_____

_____

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

**Feelings:** Ask yourself what you are/were feeling before or during this time:

**Thoughts:** Ask yourself what you are/were thinking before or during this time:

**Behaviors:** Ask yourself what you are/were doing and/or not doing before or during this time:

**Sensations:** Ask yourself what you are/were experiencing physically or in your body before or during this time:

**Environment:** Ask yourself what your environment is/was like and/or what is/was happening in your environment before or during this time:

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

**Key triggers:** Ask yourself what sets off a crisis and/or being unsafe for you:

**Barriers to skill use:** List what will get in the way of using your skills and this plan *and* list the skills you will use to address each barrier:

**Burn the bridges:** Write how you will remove the means to act on urges (be specific):

**Self-care skills to use:** List all of the ways you can care for yourself during this time:

**Distress tolerance skills to use:** List specific behaviors:

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

**My personal support system:** List names and numbers of people/resources you can call, when they are accessible, and the specific interpersonal and other skills you will need to use these supports:

_____

_____

_____

**My professional support system:** List names and numbers of people/resources you can call, when they are accessible, and the specific interpersonal and other skills you will need to use these supports:

_____

_____

_____

**My medications and dosages:**

_____

_____

_____

**My hospital of choice:**

_____

_____

_____

**My commitment:** I commit to practicing my plan proactively and during times of crisis. I further commit to be safe and call 911 or go to the hospital *before* acting on suicidal urges.

Signed by Client: _____ Date: _____

**Original to client; copy to chart**

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

# Distract with ACCEPTS

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Mindfully practice distraction skills when in high distress.

When we experience distress or a crisis or feel unsafe, we have a few choices. We can work on problem-solving, be mindful of our painful emotions, or work on distraction skills.

Use the acronym ACCEPTS to remember the building blocks (**A**ctivities, **C**ontributing, **C**omparisons, **E**motions, **P**ush Away, **T**houghts, **S**ensations) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

**Activities**

Activities help you to decrease depression, anxiety, and other symptoms and can create positive emotions. You need to plan activities as part of your daily routine and follow through with the plans. For ideas, consult the Activities List in Module 9: Building a Satisfying Life.

Activities work best when they engage you physically and/or mentally. Remember mindfulness skills (and the other distress tolerance skills, too) need to be used in connection to activities.

You may have difficulty with activities because you lack interest or energy. When writers have writer's block, they continue to write anyway, because inspiration finds us when we are at work. If we wait to be interested, we might wait a long time. You can control the choice to engage in activities, and in time interest and enjoyment will follow if you do not obsess on them. In other words, mindfully engage in activities without concern for being caught up in interest or enjoyment. Nonetheless, starting with activities that have been interesting and enjoyable in the past is a good strategy.

Use Opposite to Emotion when energy is low and/or DEAR MAN to get others to help you get kick-started. The first law of physics applies: A body at rest tends to stay at rest, and a body in motion tends to stay in motion.

Describe how you can use **Activities**:

---

**Contributing**

Contributing gets you out of yourself and your distress and into participating with others and in the world. We all need a break from ourselves sometimes. Contributing also helps you feel connected and less alone, and it creates positive feelings.

Contribute in small but impactful ways: Smile at others, give compliments, hold a door, or do a favor. Thoughtful and unexpected acts of kindness, random or not, fit the bill. Let someone else have a parking spot or move ahead of you in line. Assist others, be part of a team effort, and participate. Simply listening to others can be a great contribution, too. Also consider longer-term ways of contributing, such as volunteering.

Describe how you can use **Contributing**:

---

**Comparisons**

Comparisons bring perspective to your current situation. You can compare yourself to other times when you have dealt with more difficult problems or been less effective with skills. You can also compare yourself to others who struggle with even greater problems than you. It is important to remember to validate ourselves as we use comparisons—we can experience tough times *and* have perspective through this skill.

Describe how you can use **Comparisons**:

---

**Emotions**

Seek out activities, events, and thoughts that create feelings that are different from the painful ones you are experiencing. Remember that emotions can be influenced by what you choose to do and what you choose to think about.

Listen to music that creates specific emotions: loud and fast music when fatigued, calming music when anxious or upset, and uplifting music when sad. Watch favorite shows or movies, fondly remember fun times (without comparing them to your current situation), or work on a project.

Alternatively, sometimes we can use emotions to validate our feelings. For example, we can listen to melancholy music when sad. However, be careful not to get stuck! The concept is self-validation, not wallowing.

Describe how you can use **Emotions**:

---

**Push Away**

Put away distress by mentally locking it in a box and putting it on a shelf in a locked room. Make the imagery as vivid as possible, practicing it over and over. Say "this is a tomorrow problem" and then focus on something else. Or, write something down about the problem and put it away in a drawer or someplace where you will remember to find it when you are ready.

Remember to take out your distress or problem at a safe time in the future to attend to it. Putting and pushing away is a short-term strategy.

Describe how you can use **Push Away**:

---

**Thoughts**

Mindfully focus on distracting thoughts. You can only think about one thing at a time, and your distress may diminish when you think about something else. The classic example is counting to 100 when angry; thinking about something else (counting) allows us to cool down and be more rational.

Read a magazine or book, do Sudoku or other puzzles, or think about inspirational sayings and quotes. Bring your thoughts mindfully to other distress tolerance skills or activities.

Describe how you can use **Thoughts**:

---

**Sensations**

Sensations include anything that is physically vigorous or actively awakens your senses. The skill is different from the Self-Soothe skills in that it seeks to stimulate rather than relax.

Take a brisk walk or engage in exercise, such as running or weight-lifting. Get into a hot or cold bath or shower or splash cold water on your face. Engage your senses with loud music, bold colors, or strong tastes or smells.

Some people hold ice cubes or a frozen orange when in distress as a substitute for self-injury because the physical pain distracts from the emotional pain. These practices can work in a "harm-reduction" approach, meaning they can be used as safe step-down techniques when you are trying to stop self-injury but are not yet completely ready. Remember that ultimately the goal is to learn that you do not need physical pain to cope with emotional pain.

Describe how you can use **Sensations**:

---

# Distress Tolerance 2: Activities

**CORE CONCEPT:** Use this worksheet to monitor your activities and their benefits.

Activities provide healthy distractions and create enjoyment. Getting active alleviates the symptoms of mental illness and provides alternatives to ineffective behaviors. Use this worksheet to list activities you plan to do for each day of the week. Notice how you feel and/or your urge level before and after each activity.

Monday: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Tuesday: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Wednesday: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Thursday: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Friday: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Saturday: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Sunday: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

# Self-Soothe (SS)

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Create relaxation with a mindful connection to the senses.

Self-Soothe involves entering into the world around us through our five main senses individually or in a multisensory way. We can also soothe ourselves mentally and spiritually. Remember that Self-Soothe requires the use of mindfulness skills.

**Sight**

Notice what is around you and see the details. Look at pictures or take your own photos. Look at art or do your own drawing or another artistic pursuit that involves vision.

See people, pets, and your favorite possessions and be mindful of what is attractive or visually pleasing. Alternatively, see the beauty in "ordinary" objects or your everyday surroundings.

Look at nature and the landscape around you. See trees and leaves sway and blow in the wind. Look at the sky, the sun, the moon, and the stars. Watch a candle or fire.

Describe how you can self-soothe with **sight**:

---

**Sound**

Listen to sounds that comfort you, or notice complete silence. Concentrate on pleasant music, white noise, or the sound of a washing machine or dishwasher if those sounds please you. When listening to music, isolate and focus on each instrument or voice with intention.

Close your eyes, be still, and hear what is happening in your environment. Listen for novel sounds or for sonic patterns and rhythms you never noticed before.

Describe how you can self-soothe with **sound**:

---

**Smell**

Put on a favorite cologne or perfume and breathe it in. Smell clean and fresh laundry or sheets. Use incense or other scented products you enjoy. Close your eyes and inhale, choosing to linger on the smell.

Deeply inhale the smells of cooking or baking and your food before eating it or without eating it. Like with sound, noticing the absence of smells can be soothing for some people. Take a deep breath of fresh air (Willie Nelson (2006) says it is the greatest natural high).

Describe how you can self-soothe with **smell**:

---

**Taste**

Enjoy each small bite of food or sip of a drink mindfully. Eat one piece of candy or have a small treat with your full attention. Pretend it will be the last time you will eat something and savor each morsel.

*Do not* mindlessly eat to comfort yourself or eat excessively to self-soothe; these approaches are not skillful.

Describe how you can self-soothe with **taste**:

---

**Touch**

Touch and pet a dog or cat or other animal. Use DEAR MAN to ask for a hug or massage from someone, or rub and stroke your own neck or body. Put oils or lotions on your skin.

Wear comfortable clothing or get under a warm, soft blanket or clean, cool sheets. Mindfully notice what your body is in connection with and seek out what pleases it.

Describe how you can self-soothe with **touch**:

---

**Multisensory**

Integrate your senses into a rich experience. Make a special meal with nice dishes, place settings, candles, and relaxing music. Spend time outside, focusing on each sense, deciding what sense to attend to in the context of the total experience. Go to a movie with intricate sound and visuals while also noticing the smells of popcorn and the comfort of the seat.

While we can experience each sense individually, the idea here is to create a holistic sensory experience where you chose to attend to each element in connection to the whole. Notice how each sense can complement the others in a total experience.

Describe how you can self-soothe by **combining senses**:

---

**Mind sense**

Engage in those parts of your mental life that bring you relaxation and happiness. Examples include peaceful thoughts, affirmations, and meditations as well as daydreams and fantasies.

Describe how you can self-soothe through your **mind sense**:

---

**Spiritual sense**

Your spiritual sense is an individually defined sense of connection to a higher power, spirit, or nature. This sense, less tangible than the others, can create peace, serenity, and well-being.

We self-soothe with a spiritual sense through mindful reflections, rituals, and contemplation.

Describe how you can self-soothe through your **spiritual sense:**

_____

# Distress Tolerance 3: Self-Soothe Application

**CORE CONCEPT:** Use this exercise to overcome barriers to the practice of Self-Soothe.

For most of us, the concept of Self-Soothe is straightforward, but allowing ourselves to engage in these skills or addressing other barriers may be more difficult. Use this worksheet to identify Self-Soothe skills and other skills to overcome barriers.

Describe how you can use Self-Soothe skills:

Describe barriers to Self-Soothe skills (e.g., judgments about self, judgments about deserving, environmental factors):

Describe other skills you will use to address each barrier:

Describe how your life will be different when you practice Self-Soothe:

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

# IMPROVE the Moment

***CORE CONCEPT*:** Make the here and now better when in distress.

Like ACCEPTS, these skills provide healthy distractions.

Use the acronym IMPROVE to remember the building blocks (Imagery, Meaning, Prayer, Relaxation, One thing or step at a time, Vacation, Encouragement) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

### Imagery

Your mind is powerful. Think of times when you have distressed yourself with negative imagery. In contrast, you can harness the power of positive imagery to feel better and more relaxed. Concentrate on a scene in your mind (a beach, the forest, a safe and happy place). Your mind can convince your body that it is there.

Use guided imagery with a CD, app, or YouTube video. Enter a daydream. Consider practicing imagery before bedtime as part of your sleep routine. Practice skill use in your mind's eye (this has been proven to be effective in sports).

As distractions creep in, gently let them go and refocus.

Describe how you can use **Imagery**:

---

### Meaning

Validate that the cloud is there *and* find the silver lining. Is there an opportunity in this problem? What is the lesson or the learning that will come from your difficulties? Victor Frankl, renowned existential psychiatrist and concentration camp survivor, once said, "If you can find a why, you can tolerate almost any how." List your reasons for surviving crisis.

Describe how you can use **Meaning**:

---

### Prayer

Pray for strength and resolve in distressing times. Seek connection with and guidance from your higher power. Avoid "why me?" or bargaining prayers as those prayers tend to demoralize us rather than build us up.

As an alternative, "talk" to anyone important to you: A deceased relative you loved, a person you admire (whether you know him/her or not), or anyone who helps you feel connected outside yourself.

Describe how you can use **Prayer**:

---

**Relaxation**

Practice breathing exercises, self-soothe skills, progressive muscle relaxation with each major muscle group, or anything that calms you. Engage in activities you find relaxing every day.

Describe how you can use **Relaxation**:

---

**One thing or step at a time**

When overwhelmed, go back to the most important priority again and again. If you have many problems, pick the most important one to focus on or the one you have the most resources to solve. In the context of solving problems, taking one step at a time helps to manage your distress.

Describe how you can use **One Thing or Step at a Time**:

---

**Vacation**

Most of us cannot take a real vacation when in distress or maybe even at all. Vacation means taking a break when we are in distress or even before we are in distress. Step outside, breathe fresh air, and take a short walk. Spend 10 minutes listening to music or surfing the internet. Talk with a friend or coworker. "Take a load off." Plan some time for yourself as part of your routine.

Remember to keep these "vacations" brief. We want to take a break from problems but not let them continue to build.

Describe how you can use **Vacation**:

---

**Encouragement**

We all talk to ourselves, so we might as well say something positive! Validate your feelings and then encourage yourself like you would a close friend. Life is not impossible; it just feels that way sometimes. Be mindful of your self-talk and make it positive.

Describe how you can use **Encouragement**:

---

# Pros and Cons (P&C)

***CORE CONCEPT:*** The Pros and Cons skill leads us to Wise Mind decisions.

We can use Pros and Cons any time that we struggle with a decision. This skill allows us to weigh the options in light of expected results in both the short and the long term. Pros and Cons is proactive and leads us to Wise Mind before we commit to any action. Moreover, if we use Pros and Cons to decide whether we want to engage in a harmful behavior, often we will find that the urge has subsided by the time the exercise is complete.

To use this skill, start by identifying your basic choices. Examples include drinking or using drugs versus staying sober, using self-injury versus staying safe, and practicing an old behavior versus practicing a skill.

When you have identified the basic choices, plug them into the worksheet that follows. After you have determined both short- and long-term pros and cons, check to see whether you are in Wise Mind and make a decision. If you find that you are not in Wise Mind, table your decision and try another skill.

| Pros and Cons (P&C) Application Example | |
|---|---|
| **My Basic Choices Are:** Using self-injury versus using skills | |
| **Short-Term PROS of Self-Injury** | **Short-Term CONS of Self-Injury** |
| Numbed my feelings!<br>Worked<br>Blood grounded me | Missed chance to use plan<br>WORRIED about upcoming group<br>Had to hide it |
| **Long-Term PROS of Self-Injury** | **Long-Term CONS of Self-Injury** |
| None really | Lost trust<br>Lost self-respect<br>More scars<br>Shame sets me up |
| **Versus** | |
| **Short-Term PROS of Skill Use** | **Short-Term CONS of Skill Use** |
| No need to lie or cover up<br>Feel good if I make it<br>No hassle with blood and stuff<br>NO BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS!! | Hard and might not work<br>Don't know<br>Maybe more emotional pain |
| **Long-Term PROS of Skill Use** | **Long-Term CONS of Skill Use** |
| RESPECT!<br>Learn to handle life and get somewhere | More expectations?<br>Pressure, I don't know |

**My Decision:** Skills, I guess!!

# Distress Tolerance 4: Pros and Cons

| Pros and Cons (P&C) Application | |
|---|---|
| My Basic Choices Are _____ versus _____. | |
| Short-Term PROS of _____ | Short-Term CONS of _____ |
| | |
| Long-Term PROS of _____ | Long-Term CONS of _____ |
| | |
| Versus | |
| Short-Term PROS of _____ | Short-Term CONS of _____ |
| | |
| Long-Term PROS of _____ | Long-Term CONS of _____ |
| | |

**My Decision:**

_____

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition*. All rights reserved.

# Bridge-Burning (BB)

■ ***CORE CONCEPT:*** You cannot act on a harmful behavior if you proactively remove the means.

Bridge-Burning refers to proactively removing the means of acting on your urges to engage in addictive behaviors. The concept of Bridge-Burning recognizes that relapse into harmful behaviors happens more easily when there is the immediate opportunity to act on impulses. Eliminating the opportunities and/or inserting barriers between urge and action will result in more opportunities to practice skills.

**Bridge-Burning with substance use**

- Remove all alcohol and drugs from your home.
- Remove all alcohol- and drug-related objects and paraphernalia from your home (e.g., cocktail glasses, corkscrew, pipes, papers, lighters, and/or anything associated with use).
- Erase the numbers of using friends, associates, and dealers from your phone.
- Block the phone numbers of using friends, associates, and dealers from your phone or get a new number.
- Stay away from bars, liquor stores, and locations associated with use, changing your routines and routes to actively avoid them.
- Do not carry cash.
- Tell anyone and everyone that you have given up substances.
- Actively tell others when you experience urges to use.

List other ways of Bridge-Burning to substance use:

---

**Bridge-Burning with self-injury and/or suicidal urges**

- Remove razors, lighters, and other self-injury tools.
- Mix up and change rituals associated with self-injury.
- Remove the specific method of acting on suicide.
- Tell others when you are unsafe and need help.
- Spend time with others and in locations in which you would not harm yourself.
- Go to the hospital *before* acting on suicidal urges.

List other ways of Bridge-Burning with self-injury and/or suicidal urges:

---

**Bridge-Burning with spending**

- Cut up credit cards (if you need to keep one, freeze it in water so it will take longer to access it or have someone trustworthy hold it for you).
- Have someone trustworthy keep your excess money when urges are high.
- Establish a "waiting period" that you must adhere to before making a decision to buy any nonessential item.
- Stay away from stores, the mall, online shopping, and/or TV shopping.

List other ways of Bridge-Burning with spending:

---

**Bridge-Burning with unhealthy and/or hopeless relationships**

- Erase the other person's number from your phone.
- Block the other person's number or get a new number.
- Route emails from the other person to your junk mail folder or block them altogether.
- Tell anyone and everyone that you have moved on from the relationship.
- Fill your free time with activities and healthy people.

List other ways of Bridge-Burning with hopeless relationships:

---

**Bridge-Burning with overeating**

- Keep binge and "comfort" foods out of your home.
- Dish out your portions and put the rest away before eating.
- Avoid "all-you-can-eat" restaurants and buffets.
- Eat multiple times a day, mindfully, including healthy snacks.

List other ways of Bridge-Burning with overeating:

---

**Bridge-Burning with gambling**

- Avoid places where gambling occurs.
- Limit your access to cash and credit that can be used for gambling.
- Have someone trustworthy hold on to your money when urges are high.
- Block internet access to gambling websites.

List other ways of Bridge-Burning with gambling:

---

Bridge-burning works best in conjunction with other skills. When we remove the ability to act on harmful behaviors, we need to replace them with something new and skillful. *Be careful not to trade one unhealthy behavior for another.*

# Building New Bridges

■ ***CORE CONCEPT:*** Build bridges to new ways to meet your wants and needs.

Burning bridges removes the means of acting on your addictive behavior. As a rule, anytime you subtract a behavior from your life, you should look to add new behaviors to replace what was lost. This is where bridge-building comes in.

**If your addiction made you feel good (in the short term)**

- Increase opportunities to laugh (e.g., listen to comedy, watch a favorite sitcom, read a joke book and tell others your favorites).
- Practice Build Positive Experience.
- Boost your endorphins through movement, physical touch, or getting outdoors.
- Practice affirmations.

List other ways of feeling good:

---

**If your addiction relaxed you**

- Practice Self-Soothe skills.
- Practice deep breathing every hour.
- Schedule down time in which you can turn off your electronics and not be responsible for anything.
- Learn to let go of the "small stuff."

List other ways of practicing relaxation:

---

**If your addiction involved a ritual**

- Start a meditation practice.
- Develop a prayer routine.
- Create morning and bedtime rituals.
- Take morning or afternoon tea time.

List other ways of getting into rituals:

---

**If your addiction had social aspects**

- Go to a 12-step meeting.
- Get involved in a cause or advocacy group.
- Develop friendships with people who do not involve themselves in your addictive behavior.
- Make time for small talk with people as you go through your day.

List other ways of being social:

---

**If your addiction involved fun**

- Identify new hobbies.
- Get a do-it-yourself guide on something you're interested in doing or creating.
- Join a sports league (softball, bowling, kickball, flag football, etc.).
- Play music and sing and/or dance.

List other ways of having fun:

---

**If your addiction involved the excitement of risks or danger**

- Take up an exciting hobby such as trail running, snow-boarding, or rock climbing.
- Join (or form) a band.
- Invest a small amount in penny stocks (but do your homework and avoid scams).
- Work up a comedy routine and show up on amateur night.

List other ways of creating excitement through safe risks:

---

**If your addiction is a way to rebel and break rules**

Practice alternative rebellion by:

- Questioning commonly held beliefs
- Speaking your mind or writing a letter to the editor of a newspaper or other publication
- Supporting a fringe cause or political candidate you believe in
- Learning to stand out from the crowd in positive ways.

List other ways to rebel that do not hurt you or other people:

---

# Addictions 3: Bridge-Burning

**CORE CONCEPT:** Use this exercise to remove the means to act on your harmful behavior.

Describe how you can use the Bridge-Burning skill with a harmful behavior (e.g., self-injury, drinking or drug use, spending, promiscuous sex, overeating). Be specific about how the means to act will be removed:

Describe the new behaviors and skills you will use to replace the old behavior:

Describe how you and others will benefit from effective Bridge-Burning (e.g., how you and others will feel, how it will affect your self-respect, what other practical benefits will occur):

Describe how your life will be different when you burn bridges to your harmful behavior(s):

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition*. All rights reserved.

# Urge-Surfing (US): Ride the Wave

- ***CORE CONCEPT:*** Go with the ebbs and flows of urges without acting on them.

Urge-surfing is the nonjudgmental acceptance of urges, allowing you to simply notice and ride their ebbs and flows without reaction.

The essence of Urge-Surfing is to understand that urges are a part of our experience and are not commands for action. Often, instead of just watching our urges, we unwittingly intensify them. Judging and catastrophizing are two ways in which we make it harder to tolerate urges. We also have a natural tendency to want to escape urges by fighting them or acting on them. All of these approaches to urges ultimately intensify them.

Trying to fight urges is not unlike struggling to escape quicksand: Frantic efforts lead to sinking. Like fighting urges, escaping discomfort by acting on urges will also cause you to go under in time. This happens because relieving tension with unhealthy behaviors is reinforcing and feeds the cycle of addiction.

The secret is to not panic and react but to float. Riding the ebbs and flows requires us to be willing to have a nonjudgmental relationship with our urges, even when they cause intense discomfort. It may seem counterintuitive, but an acceptance-based relationship with urges, emotions, or any other uncomfortable experience will decrease the intensity of many of these experiences over time. Remember that acceptance is not resignation; instead it is a state of mind in which we acknowledge "what is," freeing up our resources to be responsive and effective.

Practice Urge-Surfing when your urges are at lower levels. Like real surfing, you learn to ride small waves before you can graduate to large swells, and you also learn when the waves are too intense to ride. Keep in mind that Urge-Surfing works well in combination with other skills, such as distraction. Be responsive and switch up skill strategies based on what works.

# Grounding Yourself (GY)

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Grounding exercises bring you back to the here and now.

Grounding exercises assist us when we drift from the present moment or when we struggle with dissociation, feeling unreal, or PTSD symptoms. Leaving reality is a skill when reality would be too painful for anyone bear. At the same time, leaving reality is less effective when we are distressed but not in imminent psychological and/or physical danger. In these situations, we need to develop more useful coping skills.

Practice these exercises proactively, and they will decrease symptoms of dissociation and derealization. Remember to bring your mindfulness skills along:

- Open your eyes and Observe and Describe your surroundings in detail.
- Who or what is around you? You are here, now. The more detail, no matter how minor, the better.
- Work your senses: Name what you see, hear, smell, and touch right here and now, again using as many details as possible.
- Use the Sensations skill from ACCEPTS. Practice the variations of Sensations.
- Observe your body in contact with your chair. Feel your back, behind, and back of your legs in connection with the chair. Feel your arms in connection with the armrests or your lap. Feel your feet firmly planted on the ground. Now think about how your body is connected to the chair, which is connected to the floor, which is connected to the building, which is connected to the earth.
- Breathe slowly and deeply, counting your breaths.
- Get up and stretch out, feeling your body and moving about.
- Repeat a mantra such as "this is now and not then."

List other ways to ground yourself:

# Radical Acceptance (RA)

***CORE CONCEPT***: Acceptance decreases suffering.

At times, we have great pain due to trauma, difficult life circumstances, and losses. Suffering is part of everyone's life.

If we are unable to accept situations that cause pain, the result is being stuck and trapped in chronic suffering. Refusal to have a relationship with our suffering creates unending suffering. Paradoxically, we decrease suffering by being willing to accept it and relate to it rather than fight it. We may still have pain to tolerate, but there will be a qualitative difference in our experience of it. Further, acceptance instead of resistance releases our resources to move forward.

When you find yourself in pain, you have four basic choices.

**1. Change the situation that is causing you pain**

This change may involve ending a hopeless relationship or leaving a dead-end job, or it might involve seeking medical advice or trying to solve some other problem. Changing the situation involves a realistic appraisal of what is and what the options are, grounded in values. Ask yourself: What would you be willing to do to end your suffering?

**2. Change how you see the situation or what you think about it**

Can you find the upside, silver lining, or meaning in the pain? Would more dialectical thoughts help? Remember that our minds can be powerful in overcoming obstacles, including suffering. Is it a tragedy or "good practice"? Is it a terrible situation or a situation to teach strength, patience, or resilience?

**3. Radically accept the situation**

Give up fighting reality and release your psychological and emotional resources to move forward. When you accept the situation, you might still have to tolerate pain but you are no longer adding to it. Radical Acceptance means you are willing to experience a situation or state without trying to change it, protest it, or escape it. You will be in a relationship with the pain.

**4. Stay stuck in suffering until you are ready to accept reality**

Radical acceptance springs from deep within ourselves and requires that we continually orient ourselves toward accepting.

Remember that acceptance is *not* approval, liking it, or giving in. When we recognize, acknowledge, and accept a problem or reality, we actually take control of our lives and emotional health. Acceptance is freedom because it allows us to be effective with what is rather than to stay stuck in denial. Acceptance is the prerequisite to change.

It is helpful to know that Radical Acceptance is a process similar to Kübler-Ross' (2005) stages of acceptance:

1. **Denial:** Not believing our loss, problem, or situation is real.
2. **Anger:** Being angry about why this has or is happening to us.
3. **Bargaining:** Trying to make a deal with someone or a higher power to change reality.
4. **Depression:** Feeling despondent as reality sets in.
5. **Acceptance:** Acknowledging reality without fighting.

These stages do not always happen in sequence. Instead, we often go back and forth in the process, sometimes getting stuck in one stage and/or skipping others. When you experience these stages and emotions, you are in the process of acceptance.

In the words of William James, "Be willing to have it so. Acceptance of what has happened is the first step to overcoming the consequences of any misfortune." Allow it to be so and experience the pain. *You are not and do not need to be the story of your suffering.*

# Distress Tolerance 5: Radical Acceptance

**CORE CONCEPT:** Use this exercise to practice Radical Acceptance in a painful situation.

Describe a situation that causes suffering:

Describe what you can realistically change through problem-solving and/or shifting your thoughts:

Describe what you may need to radically accept:

Describe other skills you may need to practice Radical Acceptance of this situation:

Describe how your life will be different when you have radically accepted this situation:

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

# Everyday Acceptance (EA)

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Adopting an accepting attitude each day will change your life.

Radical Acceptance is the skill used to deal with painful and difficult-to-accept situations. Starting to practice acceptance in everyday situations will orient you to the practice of Radical Acceptance when life gets extremely difficult. But what is meant by Everyday Acceptance? Consider the following examples:

- You have to wait in a long line.
- Your spouse, partner, or friend is in a lousy mood.
- The delivery person is 30 minutes late.
- Your coworker makes a mistake.
- A guitar string breaks.
- Homework is assigned.
- A friend cancels a date.
- Dinner is not your favorite.
- Your favorite sports team is losing.
- You run out of paper towels.
- The weather does not fit your plans.
- A task needs to be completed.
- Someone cuts you off in traffic.
- MTV shows only 10 seconds of your favorite video.
- You forget to save changes to a computer file.
- You step in gum.
- A dish breaks.
- Your toddler acts like a toddler.
- Gas prices have risen.
- Your partner forgot to pick up milk.

We often cause ourselves to feel frustrated, annoyed, anxious, and stressed out by these common inconveniences. Instead, we can save our resources by meeting these small realities with Everyday Acceptance rather than resistance.

Do not confuse this approach to life with giving in, being walked on, or remaining helpless. Many of these problems have solutions or interventions that are needed (e.g., using assertiveness, running to the store, changing the channel, setting a boundary). However, the use of Everyday Acceptance allows us to have the emotional balance to solve our everyday problems more effectively. Let it be so, and then deal with it effectively.

# Willingness (W)

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Use willingness versus willfulness when stuck.

Many of us learned that "where there is a will there is a way." In other words, our shortcomings come from a lack of willpower.

This belief system is the opposite of what DBT teaches. Sometimes we need to exert our will, but often Willingness is more effective. With willfulness, our options are limited, whereas with Willingness, options to reach goals and solve problems open up through our ability to be creative and flexible. Where there is Willingness there is a way.

This approach works because Willingness aligns us with the realities of a situation rather than pitting ourselves against them. Fighting reality (or anything) rarely creates an effective outcome. Think about power struggles and how ineffective they can be for everybody involved.

Meeting others and situations where they are at instead of where we wish they were frees us to be effective. The parallels to Radical Acceptance and Everyday Acceptance are apparent. Willingness also fits with Effectiveness in the Mindfulness module. Check your priorities, goals, and values to help find your Willingness!

When faced with a problem (and/or when stuck in willfulness), ask yourself what you are willing to do to:

- End your suffering
- Solve a problem—yours, someone else's, or a shared one
- Create a satisfying life.

With time and practice, you will find that Willingness allows you to be more peaceful and effective in life.

# Distress Tolerance 6: Skills Practice

**CORE CONCEPT:** Use this worksheet to monitor your use of distress tolerance skills and their benefits.

Many people develop a few distress tolerance skills and then quit actively exploring and practicing new skills. Just as carpenters, computer programmers, artists, mechanics, students, therapists, and other people work to acquire new tools and techniques, you need to continue to work on new distress tolerance skills to be effective in challenging situations. Use the checklist spaces below to list new distress tolerance skills to practice today or this week, and be sure to check them off after you have practiced them. Notice how you feel before and after each distress tolerance skill.

☐ Distress tolerance skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ Distress tolerance skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ Distress tolerance skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ Distress tolerance skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ Distress tolerance skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ Distress tolerance skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ Distress tolerance skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

# TIP

***CORE CONCEPT*:** Behaviors that tip your physiology can help you cope with intense emotions.

Intense emotions create intense physiological responses. For example, anger and fear create muscle tension, increased blood pressure, rapid breathing and heart rate, and the release of adrenaline. On the other end of the continuum, depression causes physiological responses such as body aches and pains as well as general loss of energy and fatigue.

Purposefully changing, or "tipping," your physiology can help you to tolerate or even change intense emotions. The acronym TIP describes these strategies. Some of these strategies "shock" the system, some of them use up or conserve energy, and some of them relax the body.

Remember that the TIP skills, like other skills, need to be used mindfully and carefully. The key is tipping your body chemistry and physiological responses in *healthy* ways. Avoid extremes of these strategies that could cause pain or injury.

Used thoughtfully and in balance, TIP skills will be an effective addition to your distress tolerance toolbox.

### Temperature

Step out into chilly or cold weather (climate permitting!); place an ice pack on your forehead; fill a sink with extremely cold water (using ice, ice packs, or frozen vegetables) and dunk your face or whole head. By submerging your face in cold water you can stimulate the "dive reflex," a natural set of physical responses that include slowing the heart rate and conserving energy.

Alternatively, you can affect body temperature by taking a hot shower or bath, going in a sauna, or wrapping yourself in warm blankets.

Note how changes in temperature affect emotional responses.

### Intense exercise

Walk briskly, run, or sprint; go for a fast bike ride; lift weights or work out with kettlebells; do jumping jacks, push-ups, or other exercises that do not require special equipment; dance.

Vigorously move your body!

### Progressive relaxation

Breathe deeply and mindfully for several minutes (or longer); one by one, systematically tense each major muscle group (face, shoulders, arms, hands, torso, buttocks, legs, and feet) for several seconds and then release the tension. Noticing the extremes between tension and release can deepen the sense of relaxation. You can also use guided imagery or search YouTube and the internet for some outstanding demonstrations in progressive relaxation.

# Emotion Regulation

## Introduction to Emotion Regulation

***CORE CONCEPT***: Emotion regulation lowers vulnerability and brings balance to your emotions.

Emotions serve many important functions. They provide information about ourselves in relation to other people, situations, and the environment, teaching us and influencing and motivating our behaviors. Emotions also provide the foundation for relationships, being essential for attraction, compassion, and being connected to other people. We would not have the motivation or desire to participate with family, friends, or other people without emotions and what they bring to our relationships. That said, intense and dysregulated emotions sometimes short-circuit their purposes and can be painful and lead to ineffective behavior. Consider these dialectical examples related to emotions:

- A low level of anxiety about a test might motive a person to study and be successful, but a high level of anxiety might paralyze the person and stymie success.
- Anger that is proportional and effectively directed can motivate people to solve issues in relationships or to champion a cause, but intense anger can destroy relationships or sabotage action related to a cause.
- Attraction can motivate you to initiate a healthy and respectful relationship, but sometimes attraction can keep you going back to a harmful relationship.
- Depression can be informative about what needs to change in your life, such as adopting a healthier lifestyle or making a life change, but intense depression can immobilize you and make change difficult.

To achieve balanced and regulated emotions that provide benefits, we use emotion regulation skills. Emotion regulation has several purposes. First, we want to identify our emotions and then, more importantly, we want to understand the process by which they happen. When we see how events and interpretations color our emotions, we can make changes that influence our emotions differently to release ourselves from negative emotional patterns.

Second, we want to learn how to change our relationship to our emotions. Instead of judging or attempting to "get rid" of negative feelings, we want to accept them and try to understand their messages. A curious and understanding approach to our emotions can replace fear and suffering, and, as we begin to relate to emotions differently, we can learn to "hold" them mindfully. Mindfulness of emotions reduces suffering because it does not involve adding to emotional pain, although we often need to dialectically balance this approach with other skills.

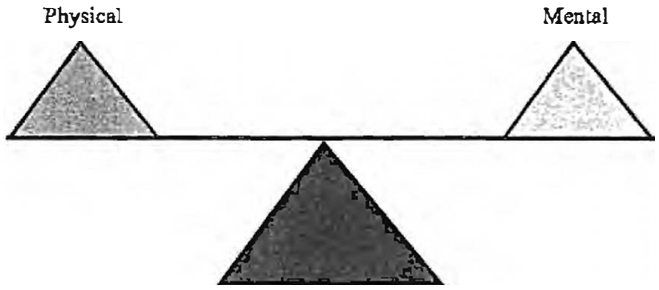
In addition to influencing emotions differently and changing our relationship with them, we can also work on decreasing our emotional vulnerabilities through more effective self-care skills and through scheduling positive experiences. Further, we can learn how to continue positive feelings through Mood Momentum and get unstuck from negative feelings through Opposite to Emotion.

To begin, understand that emotional health and well-being involve a dialectical balance between physical and mental health, and then start to practice self-care skills that decrease vulnerability to intense emotions through regulating them.

# Well-Being

- ***CORE CONCEPT***: Well-being is a balance between physical and mental health.

Well-being is a state characterized by feeling comfortable, content, healthy, and happy. Well-being does not just happen. Rather, it is created by taking a holistic approach to our health with the understanding that our minds and bodies are interconnected with profound mutual influence. It is difficult to have a general sense of well-being without prioritizing and balancing both physical and mental health.




The PLEASED skill in the next section teaches important self-care skills to improve and maintain physical health so we can feel better all around. As we learn PLEASED, we should consider how we can improve our well-being through our goals for both physical and mental health.

Describe your goals for improving **physical** health:

---

Describe your goals for improving **mental** health:

---

Describe how you see your goals for physical and mental health being interconnected:

---

Describe how your life will be different when you improve your well-being:

# Pleased (PL)

***CORE CONCEPT***: Self-care skills reduce emotional vulnerability and promote well-being.

Self-care is the foundation of feeling well and being ready to weather emotional storms.

Use the acronym PLEASED to help you remember the building blocks (Physical health, List resources and barriers, Eat balanced meals, Avoid drugs and alcohol, Sleep between 7 and 10 hours, Exercise 20 to 60 minutes, Daily) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

### Physical Health

Attend to your physical health to feel well. That means staying current on your health through regular medical checkups and engaging in proactive skills and behaviors that keep your body as healthy as possible. It also means treating illness when it arises and complying with medical advice. Take medications as prescribed, consult with your prescriber if medications are not working or side effects are intolerable, and make life changes to minimize use of medications with the advice of your physician. Always consider how your physical health may be impacting your mental health.

### List resources and barriers

Resources include skills you might already use (such as O2E, Pros and Cons, and Willingness), people who support you, having a growing knowledge base about health and wellness, and having practical means of increasing self-care (e.g., having a physician, owning exercise equipment, and having access to healthy food). Consider your resources for each part of the PLEASED skill.

Barriers also abound with PLEASED skills. Identify barriers that interfere with any part of effective self-care and develop a plan to use skills to address those barriers.

### Eat balanced meals

Eat three balanced meals plus a couple of healthy snacks mindfully throughout the day. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein are must-haves. Eat "whole" (unprocessed or minimally processed) or single-ingredient foods when possible. Drink eight full glasses of water a day. Avoid eating too much or too little and minimize sugars, saturated fats, and food or beverages with little or no nutritional value. Replace "diets" with lifestyle changes and keep current on reputable nutritional information. Start small and build on success. Consult with a physician or nutritionist if needed. Read the next section—Focus on Nutrition and Exercise—for more information.

### Avoid drugs and alcohol

The risks associated with drugs and alcohol, along with the emotional, physical, relational, financial, and other effects, can make their use problematic. If you find you need larger amounts to reach a "desired" effect and/or experience an inability to cut down or quit use, you probably need some help and support. Refer to the Addictions module for more information.

**Sleep between 7 and 10 hours**

Sleep is important to regulate our moods and to maintain physical health. Find an amount of sleep that works for you. Refer to the suggestions in the Sleep Routine section for more information.

**Exercise for 20 to 60 minutes multiple times weekly and move throughout the day**

Exercise for a minimum of 20 minutes three to five times per week. Balanced exercise will positively impact almost any symptom of mental illness. Find natural ways to move about, such as taking stairs, parking at the far end of a parking lot, gardening, cleaning, and playing with pets or children. Humans are not biologically designed to be sedentary, so movement is vital. Consult a physician if you have any concerns about starting an exercise routine. See the Focus on Nutrition and Exercise section for more information.

**Daily**

PLEASED skills need to be daily habits for you to reap their tremendous benefits. Record PLEASED skills on a diary card (see the Diary Card section in Getting Started) and/or include them in written routines and schedules.

# Focus on Nutrition and Exercise

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Use these guidelines to improve your nutrition and exercise habits.

Poor nutrition and a lack of exercise are leading causes of and contributors to illness and diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. While the links between nutrition, exercise, and mental and chemical health issues are less well established (but getting there), it is absolutely naive to think that what we put into our bodies and how we move (or do not move) our bodies has little effect on our well-being. In fact, the smart bet is that what we eat and the amount of movement we get have major and profound effects on how well we feel physically, psychologically, and emotionally. The good news is that, just as poor nutrition and exercise cause and contribute to problems, an emphasis on eating well and getting exercise can be healing and lead to better overall health.

The first step toward changing your lifestyle (some people call it a "healthstyle") is making a commitment to be in it for the long haul, for life. *There are no shortcuts. It takes effort and consistency.* But it is worth it. As the adage says, "If you do not make time for your health, you will have to make time for illness."

If you have a long way to go or are already suffering from obesity and/or other health problems, you should strongly consider seeing your physician and getting a referral to a dietitian or nutritionist as well as getting cleared for an exercise program.

Below are some tips and guidelines to get you started on better nutrition and exercise habits. These lists are not meant to be exhaustive, though following them consistently will get you on the road to wellness.

### Nutritional tips and guidelines

Humans were not biologically designed to eat many of the foods that are created, processed, and marketed to us, and we are certainly not designed to eat these foods in the qualities that they often get eaten. These tips and guidelines will get you on a better path:

- Drink at least eight glasses of water a day. Water detoxifies, is essential for our bodies, and is needed for physical energy and for mental attention and concentration. What if you don't like the taste of water? Remember that our tastes change with time and water might become your favorite drink. Alternatively, you can lightly flavor your water with cucumber, lemon, or another healthy addition. Avoid drinking calories in any form. Juices, sodas, and flavored coffees add needless calories with limited or no nutritional value. Black coffee and tea are ok in moderation, but be careful in regard to caffeine.
- Try to stick to whole and minimally processed foods. Can you picture where that food came from? There is no cookie, cracker, or jelly donut tree! Shopping on the exterior of the super market creates a focus on whole, single-ingredient foods. As a general rule, avoid foods in boxes.
- Cut out foods that have little or no nutritional value and/or are actively harmful. Examples include candy, pastries, donuts, and chips. Start to think about sugar that does not occur naturally in foods as *poison*. Research shows that excessive sugar consumption is a leading cause of obesity, diabetes, and liver disease. Other foods with little nutritional value that cause harm include fried foods and foods with a lot of

saturated fat, both of which cause heart disease. Stop eating fast food. Stop stocking unhealthy foods in your home.

- Eat at least six servings of fruits and vegetables a day. At most meals at least half of your plate should be fruits and vegetables. In time, you will come to enjoy these foods if you do not already. If you are on a budget then buy seasonal selections or buy frozen fruits and vegetables, which are much cheaper but retain the nutritional value. Eat these foods first to crowd out less healthy options.
- Eat starches and grains in moderation. These should not cover more than a fourth of your plate. Some of the most healthy choices are whole-grain cereals, whole-wheat breads and pastas, brown rice, and quinoa. Sweet potatoes and yams are also healthy choices.
- Limit dairy to no more than three servings a day, favoring low-fat milk, unsweetened yogurt, and lower-fat cheese such as mozzarella or cottage cheese.
- Limit meat to six ounces or less per day, favoring lean cuts of beef and pork or poultry without the skin. A serving of meat is about the size of a deck of playing cards and should take up no more than a fourth of your plate. Incorporate fish into your diet and consider meat alternatives such as lentils and tofu.
- Overall, maximize fruits and vegetables and increase fiber while you limit saturated and trans fats, sugar, and sodium. Follow the adage "eat not too much, and mostly vegetables."
- Have a "crowd out" instead of a "cut out" state of mind: Focus on healthy foods first and crowd out poor food choices. When you focus on eating what is good for you first, there is less temptation to eat much of what is not good for you. It works!
- Do not let yourself get too hungry. Preplan healthy snacks such as nuts, vegetables with hummus, or a piece of fruit.
- Consider taking a multivitamin and/or other supplements, but remember that they *supplement* healthy eating and cannot be a replacement for it.
- Create a meal plan to stay focused. Track your food choices and consumption. Worry less about calories and instead focus on the *quality* of food you eat. You can treat yourself from time to time with less healthy food, but the treats have to be the exceptions and not the rule. Obtaining and maintaining a healthy weight is roughly 80 percent what you eat and 20 percent movement and exercise.
- Use your mindfulness skills to slow down and be present while you eat. Enjoy your food, notice the flavors and textures, and stop eating before you are overfull. Be mindful of the portion sizes you choose to have and the amount of food you eat. Eat because you need the nourishment and not to soothe emotions or manage stress (with the exception of using Self-Soothe with Taste with a *morsel* of food).
- Remember that consistency and time are the keys to having a healthy lifestyle and enjoying the benefits of eating well.

**Exercise tips and guidelines**

Humans were not biologically designed to be sedentary. These tips will get you moving down a better path.

- Exercise for at least 20 minutes multiple days a week at a moderate intensity. Moderate intensity means that your heart rate is elevated but that you are still able to carry on a conversation. Break up the time if needed; three 10-minute sessions can have the same benefits as 20 minutes straight. Brisk walking, perhaps with occasional stretches of jogging or running, works for a majority of people. Schedule and prioritize your exercise time. Get a walking or workout buddy, and keep each other on track.
- Mix it up and have fun. Try biking, light weights, kettle bells, or yoga, or join a particular exercise class or even a sports league. Sign up for a fun run and set a personal goal. Reward your efforts.
- Use technology (e.g., a Fitbit, an online program, fitness apps, or a pedometer) to track and inspire efforts.
- In addition to scheduled exercise time, it is important to move around throughout the day. Every waking hour take 5 to 10 minutes to get up, do some light stretching, and walk around.
- Find natural ways of increasing movement. Take a walking break, park at the far end of a parking lot, take the stairs, carry your groceries, do housework, garden, or play with your children or a pet.
- Sometimes when you exercise your hunger spikes. Eat a healthy snack. Do not fall into the trap of thinking that exercise gives you a free pass with what you eat or that you can double your portions. *You cannot exercise yourself out of poor eating choices!*

# Emotion Regulation 1: PLEASED 1

**CORE CONCEPT:** Use this worksheet to problem-solve and establish PLEASED skills.

Describe your motivation to improve self-care skills (think of priorities, goals, and values):

Describe your strengths and resources in using PLEASED:

Describe your barriers to using PLEASED:

Describe the skills you will use to address your barriers:

Describe your action plan to start today (share your action plan with others and get started!):

Describe how your life will be different when you use effective PLEASED skills:

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

# Emotion Regulation 2: PLEASED 2

**CORE CONCEPT:** Use this worksheet to monitor your use of the PLEASED skills.

Improving your PLEASED skills significantly impacts how you feel and lowers your vulnerability to feeling negative and intense emotions. PLEASED skills also require daily attention and follow-through. Use the checklist spaces below to list your PLEASED behaviors and be sure to check them off when they are completed. Notice how you feel before and after each PLEASED skill.

☐ PLEASED skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ PLEASED skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ PLEASED skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ PLEASED skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ PLEASED skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ PLEASED skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ PLEASED skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

# Sleep Routine

***CORE CONCEPT***: A consistent sleep routine is essential to better sleep and health.

Often we try to solve sleep difficulties with medication without trying behavior interventions. While medications have their place, using them as a daily, long-term strategy without trying behavior interventions is probably a poor choice. Further, if you suffer from nightmares, developing a relaxing sleep routine to enable you to go to bed in a peaceful rather than stressed-out state is one of your best strategies. Also note that sleep avoidance will exacerbate nightmares because of what is called "REM rebound." REM rebound is the scientific finding that sleep-deprived people will eventually have a spike in dream sleep that is characterized by more intense and vivid dreams. Again, the remedy is avoiding avoidance and instead focusing on a relaxing and consistent sleep routine.

The following guidelines will greatly improve sleep for most people. However, to be effective, these guidelines must be used nightly for a period of weeks and maintained over the long term. Your efforts will reap benefits and will probably be enjoyable, too.

- Create a sleep routine that begins at least 1 hour before going to bed. Like landing an airplane, healthy sleep involves getting into a pattern and getting the landing gear down well ahead of time. A sleep routine should consist of relaxing activities that cue the mind and body for sleep. Deep breathing, muscle relaxation, and mindfulness work well in a sleep routine.
- Establish consistent sleep and wake times and stick to them, even on weekends. Avoid using the "snooze" button on your alarm clock.
- The bed should be for sleeping and intimacy only. Wakeful activities in bed confuse the mind and body, and the bed no longer becomes a cue for sleep and rest.
- Create a relaxing environment. A clean and uncluttered environment with fresh bed linens and comfortable blankets and pillows will help to create the conditions for sleep. Also, block out sources of light and keep the temperature at a comfortable level, preferably a few degrees cooler than during daytime.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine for 4 hours (or more) before bedtime.
- Avoid heavy meals and spicy foods before bedtime.
- Turn down your lighting and power off electronics at least 1 hour before bedtime.
- Avoid any stimulation before bedtime, including arguments or conflict, vigorous activity, or anything else that is likely to activate your mind or body.
- Get exercise during the daytime.
- Avoid daytime napping.
- Keep a notebook by your bed for ideas, concerns, or other thoughts you may want to remember tomorrow.
- Practice peaceful imagery or deep breathing as you are falling asleep.

- Minimize catastrophizing when you struggle with sleep. Use your mindfulness skills to refocus your thoughts.
- If you are unable to sleep after 20 minutes, get up and do something boring and/or relaxing until you are sleepy and ready to return to bed.

List other ways to create an effective sleep routine:

# Build Mastery (BM)

- ***CORE CONCEPT:*** Complete tasks to feel competent and in control.

We all have those daily tasks that lead us to feel competent and in control when they are completed. The flip side is that, when these tasks build up, we feel more overwhelmed and out of control.

For example, basic activities of daily living (see Using ROUTINE (RO) in Module 9: Building a Satisfying Life) often need our attention. The following brief list includes basic Build Mastery activities for many of us:

- Hygiene (e.g., brushing teeth, cleaning self, wearing clean clothes)
- Doing the dishes
- Shopping for food and necessities
- Cleaning whatever needs it
- Doing laundry
- Accomplishing important tasks or chores
- Opening mail and/or paying bills
- Completing homework or work tasks
- Tending to our children and/or pets
- Maintaining a certain level of organization
- Answering emails and voice messages.

Describe daily tasks that help you feel competent and in control when completed:

_____

_____

_____

Build Mastery skills also include taking on realistic challenges and working toward goals. Here are some examples:

- Practicing virtually any skill
- Developing a hobby
- Exercising
- Taking steps to resolve a problem

- Accomplishing tasks outside your comfort zone
- Dealing with an interpersonal issue
- Standing up for yourself
- Volunteering
- Doing your best in a tough situation.

Technically, any attempt to be effective or any accomplishment could be a Build Mastery technique.

Describe other ways you can Build Mastery:

_____

_____

_____

Be mindful of your efforts and give yourself due credit. We frequently dismiss those things in life that we "should" be doing or are expected to do. We invalidate ourselves by saying those efforts are no big deal and are not worthy of recognition. Alternatively, we minimize their importance or get into judgments about what we did not do as a way to erase our efforts.

As a rule of thumb, if you tend to judge yourself when you think you have not made enough of an effort or have not accomplished something, then you deserve credit for the effort or accomplishment when you do try and when you get something done. Using Build Mastery skills helps us feel better, decreases our emotional vulnerability, and increases our self-respect.

# Emotion Regulation 3: Build Mastery

**CORE CONCEPT:** Use this worksheet to monitor the use of your Build Mastery skills.

Certain activities and behaviors lead to us feeling competent and in control (or overwhelmed and out of control when we neglect them). Build Mastery behaviors may vary day to day or week to week. Use the checklist spaces below to list your Build Mastery behaviors for today or this week, and be sure to check them off when they are completed. Notice how you feel before and after each accomplishment.

☐ Build Mastery behavior: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ Build Mastery behavior: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ Build Mastery behavior: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ Build Mastery behavior: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ Build Mastery behavior: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ Build Mastery behavior: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ Build Mastery behavior: _____

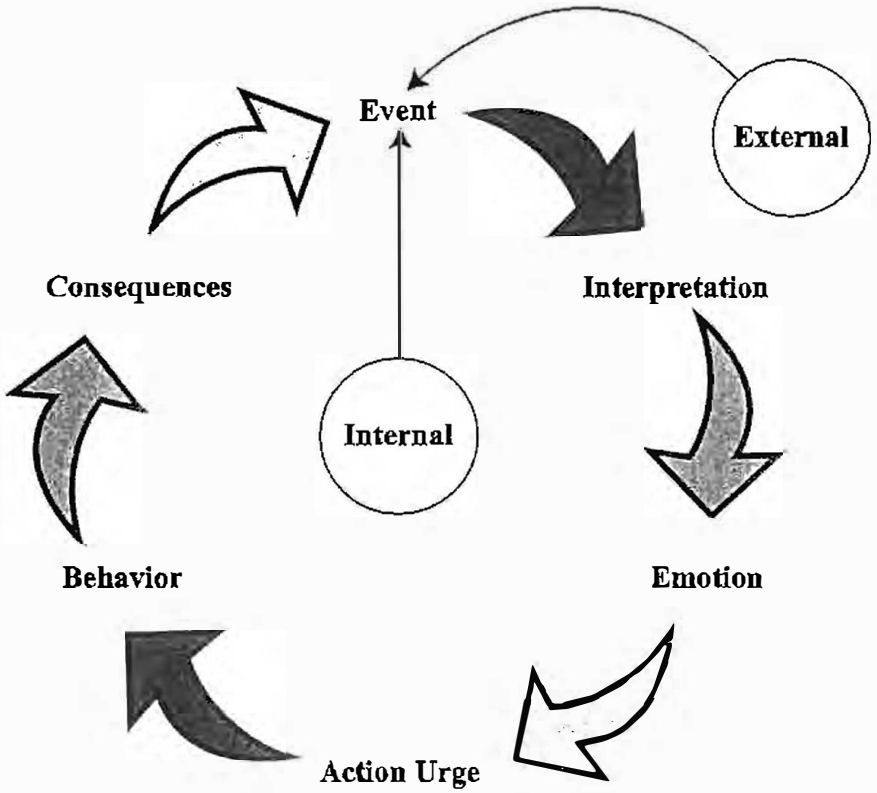
Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

# Model of Emotions

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Knowing how emotions happen helps us influence them.

Emotions seem to happen out of the blue for many people, complete with ineffective and reactive behaviors that flow from those emotions. Fortunately, you can learn to influence and even change many emotions and resulting actions by understanding how emotions happen in the first place. The model of emotions below will assist your efforts. At any given time you can stop and use your mindfulness skills to reflect on this model and how it relates to your emotions, and then make any necessary changes.




**Event**

Events begin the cycle of emotion, and they can be internal (within us) or external (in our environment). Use your mindfulness skills to connect an emotion to its source.

**Interpretation**

How we interpret events has a tremendous influence on what we feel. Step back and Observe and Describe the available facts to check your interpretation (also called self-talk or automatic thoughts) of the event. Ask yourself whether the interpretation works in the situation, and consider other ways of looking at the situation. Is the interpretation from Wise Mind? Is Nonjudgmental Stance needed? Are there dialectical alternative interpretations?

### Emotion

Use Observe and Describe to notice your emotional experience. What is happening in your body (e.g., muscle relaxation or tension, heart rate)? What is happening externally with your body (e.g., facial expressions, posture)? What are you communicating both verbally and nonverbally? Use the available information to name your emotion. Remember to Observe and Describe the emotion nonjudgmentally.

Also, try to see whether another feeling is underneath what you Observe and Describe on the surface. For example, hurt or embarrassment might underlie anger or guilt, and shame might underlie depression. Getting to the emotions underneath the surface emotion increases understanding, and increased understanding creates more options.

### Action urge and Behavior

What is the emotion urging or pulling you toward? Or, is a behavior already happening? From what state of mind are your action urges and behaviors flowing? Remember to validate your emotion(s) and choose behaviors from a centered, Wise Mind place. Participate with Effectiveness and respond rather than react. Delay your behavior if you anticipate that it will be ineffective.

Note that some action urges can be effective and it is important to act on those, but other actions should not be acted on because they will be ineffective. Can you think of examples of each?

### Consequences

Observe and Describe what consequences result from your behavior. Evaluate what worked and what did not work, and learn from your experience.

Emotions and choices in response to them influence what happens with subsequent events, perpetuating the cycle. Use this knowledge to continue positive emotions with Mood Momentum or break out of ineffective emotions with Opposite to Emotion.

# Emotion Regulation 4: Feelings Model

**CORE CONCEPT:** Use this worksheet to discover how emotions (and emotional patterns) happen.

Describe the **event**: What happened; who, what, when, and where?

Describe your **interpretation**: What judgment, evaluation, self-talk, or belief was activated?

Describe your **emotion**: What is happening physically? What body language do you detect? Put a name on the emotion; using a feeling chart if needed. Identify underlying emotions, too, if possible:

Describe your **action urge**: What action, inaction, or communication are you being emotionally pulled toward? Would it fit Wise Mind? This is a moment of CHOICE:

Describe your **behavior**: What action or inaction can be made? Participate using Effectiveness:

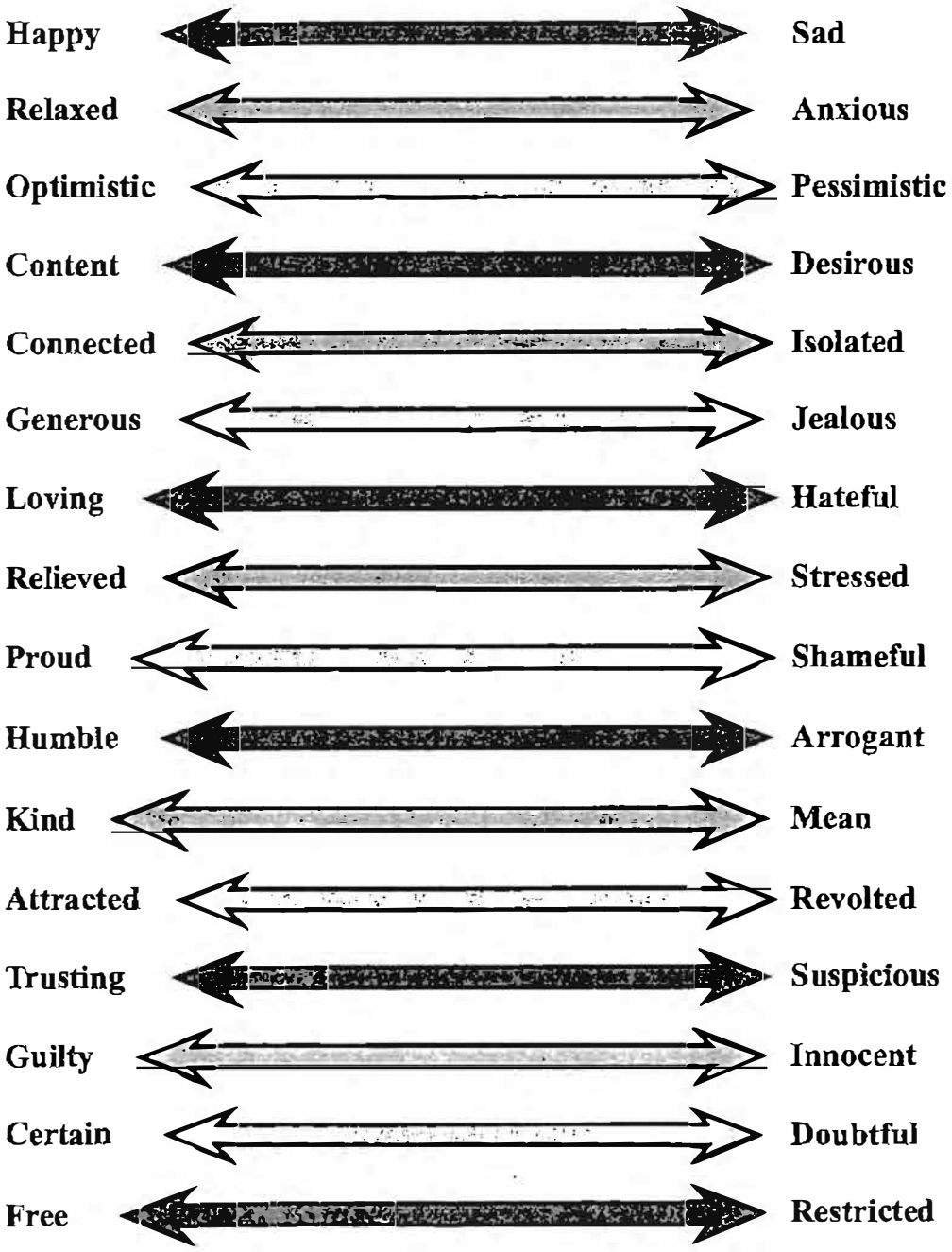
Describe the **consequences**: What consequences occurred? Include other emotions, thoughts, actions, and inactions, and their effect on relationships and situations. How did the results set up the next event (e.g., did a pattern continue or did the cycle change?):

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

# Basic Emotions and Their Opposites

☐ ***CORE CONCEPT***: Emotions have dialectical opposites with intensities on a continuum.

Following is a list of basic emotions and their opposites. Start to think about and discuss emotions to gain a better understanding of them, using the diagram below.




Note that we use Mood Momentum to continue or increase the emotions we want to keep around and Opposite to Emotion to decrease the emotions we want to change.

# Continuum of Emotions

Emotions have different intensity levels. When we notice lower-intensity feelings, we can be proactive and more effective with skills use. If you struggle with intense emotions, use this chart to help you identify when those feelings happen at lower intensity levels, prompting you to use skills and your skills plans. With positive emotions, be mindful and appreciate them at all intensity levels, and be aware of the events and interpretations that create those feelings.

BASIC FEELING: **SAD**

Unhappy → Sad → Blue → Depressed → Despondent → Hopeless → Black

BASIC FEELING: **ANGRY**

Annoyed → Frustrated → Mad → Angry → Pissed → Outraged → Vengeful

BASIC FEELING: **HAPPY**

Glad → Satisfied → Content → Happy → Joyful → Excited → Euphoric

BASIC FEELING: **LOVING**

Liking → Caring → Fond → Attracted → Infatuated → Loving → Passionate

BASIC FEELING: **FEARFUL**

Nervous → Worried → Anxious → Dreadful → Fearful → Panicky → Terrorized

BASIC FEELING: **GUILTY**

Sorry → Regretful → Remorseful → Guilty → Shameful

If you have trouble identifying different feeling words, rate a basic emotion (e.g., depression, anxiety, or anger) on a continuum from 1 to 10 (low to high) or simply observe it as low, medium, or high. Then think about how to cope effectively with that emotion.

# Changing Your Relationship to Emotions

- ***CORE CONCEPT:*** Making an attempt to understand emotions changes our relationship to them.

Emotions are not good, bad, right, or wrong. The first step to changing our relationship to emotions is to become curious about them and use Nonjudgmental Stance. What purpose do they serve?

Emotions exist so we can connect and relate to other people and create meaningful relationships. They allow us to share joy and love with those around us and to be compassionate and empathic with others. Our emotions also communicate quickly to people around us without needing words. Emotions bring us together.

Emotions motivate us not only in relationships but also in other aspects of life. Often, they provide us with intuitive information that motivates our behavior without our thought. This emotional guidance can be highly effective in certain situations. It can even enable us to overcome seemingly impossible obstacles.

When our emotions seem to cloud our lives, such as when we are depressed or anxious or angry, it is important to remember that those emotions are still giving us important information. Rather than judging our emotions, we want to practice acceptance of them and open our minds to listen to their messages. When we reject emotions or try to "get rid" of them, it often has the effect of intensifying them; the message is not getting through, so it needs to get louder.

When others invalidate our emotions, those emotions often become more intense. Self-invalidation has the same effect. Practice nonjudgmental acceptance of your emotions and listen to their messages. Also, remember that emotions are not facts and that a healthy relationship to emotions comes from Wise Mind.

# Mindfully "Hold" Emotions to Soothe and Reduce Suffering

***CORE CONCEPT*:** Mindfulness of our emotions can soothe them.

When we try to get rid of, fight, or judge our emotions, we risk adding suffering to emotional pain. Like any rejection, these approaches create a negative counter-response. Our emotions are a part of us with information to share, and refusal to accept them increases their intensity.

Willingness to be with your emotions soothes them. It is like truly listening to a friend's concern or sitting with another person's distress without having to fix it. *Not* trying to fix your emotions and instead simply being present with them is a solution. Even strong emotions often do not require immediate action.

You can be present and "hold" your emotions through mindfulness. Holding emotions means that you recognize them as a part of your experience while also recognizing that they are not you. When we simply *be* with our emotions, we open ourselves to their ebbs and flows nonjudgmentally and usually find that the intensity subsides.

Observe your emotions without getting stuck, and practice Radical Acceptance when they are painful. If you do find your emotions to be overwhelming in the moment, change strategies and use distress tolerance skills. You can go back to mindfulness of your emotions when their intensity subsides a little.

You will find that emotions have important information for you, and they soothe themselves when we listen to them. Be open to relating to and learning from what your emotions have to say.

# Build Positive Experience (BPE)

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Positive events create positive emotions.

Emotions such as happiness do not just happen but are a byproduct of what we think and what we do: Positive events build positive emotion. As straightforward as this concept seems, it can be difficult to put into action when you are experiencing difficult times. Nonetheless, the bottom line is that *you have to invest in positive behaviors to have positive emotions.*

A lack of interest and energy can be barriers that prevent us from engaging in positive events. It is important to know that you cannot wait to feel interested and energetic. Instead you have to throw yourself into positive events in spite of these difficulties, and interest, energy, and enjoyment will eventually follow in time. This process works best when you invest in positive experiences without a strong desire or need to control the outcome and let positive emotions happen organically.

Other barriers sometimes exist too. For example, if you feel like you do not deserve positive experiences, if you worry about expectations, or if you dread the end of a positive experience, then treat these issues like distractions and use mindfulness to instead focus on the positive experiences.

Take a moment to look at your barriers and make a plan for how you will address them.

Describe your barriers to using Build Positive Experience:

---

Describe the skills you will use to address each barrier:

---

We can think of using Build Positive Experience in a few ways. We have positive experiences that are possible right now, positive experiences that we can plan and look forward to in the short term and positive experiences that we work toward step by step in the long term.

**Positive events right now**

What can be a positive event in the here and now or immediate future? Maybe it is a conversation, hearing or telling a joke, or helping someone. It might be taking a break, taking a quick walk, or taking a few minutes to practice mindfulness. You may find that the positive event is simply soaking in some sunshine, seeing rain wash everything clean, or feeling a warm breeze.

There is an enormous number of positive events that are possible now, sometimes occurring naturally around you without any effort on your part. You just need to turn your mind toward them and be open to participating in the experience with your full attention.

**Positive events planned in the short term**

These positive events can include a regular family meal, an outing alone or with a friend, a Friday movie night, or anything you can plan and schedule over the short term.

Start by listing the interests, hobbies, and activities you like to do (or used to do) and add activities to try from the Activities List in Module 9: Building a Satisfying Life. If you have a short list, you may have to develop some additional interests through trying out a lot of new activities with an open mind. Plan time for these positive events in your schedule and follow through with them.

Short-term positive events need to be regular occurrences and planned daily to be effective. Having regular positive events to look forward to moves you toward a satisfying life.

If interest and energy are low, it may take weeks to experience the benefits. Do not give up on the process or enter into judgments about not getting the desired outcomes right away. Participating in the journey will eventually get you to the destination.

**Positive events to work toward in the long term**

Make a list of your long-term priorities and goals. It may be going to school, learning a craft, making a career change, taking up an instrument, being in great physical shape, or having a vision for making a difference in the world.

Pick something from your list and break it down into manageable steps. Plan and schedule time to work on that first step, and follow through on it. As you accomplish each step, give yourself credit and plan the next step. A thousand-mile journey starts with a single step.

Your work toward long-term positives is a major part of building a satisfying life. Remember that some steps can be hard or frustrating. Do not give up, and stay focused on what you want in the long term.

**Positive event planning, scheduling, and your routine**

You may not know what to do to Build Positive Experience or how to plan these experiences. As stated earlier, first, you should identify possible positive experiences and schedule them, or they are less likely to happen (see the Activities List and Using ROUTINE (RO), both in Module 9: Building a Satisfying Life). Then you have to follow through with your plan using Opposite to Emotion when needed.

**Mindfulness and positive events**

Using Build Positive Experience requires your mindfulness skills to be effective. Stay focused on the event and not when it will end, how your expectations might change, or anything else that could take away from the experience.

Describe how your life will be different when you effectively use Build Positive Experience:

# Emotion Regulation 5: Build Positive Experience

**CORE CONCEPT:** Use this worksheet to monitor the use of Build Positive Experience.

Identify at least one positive experience for each day this week, including the details of where and when you will participate in those experiences. Also record your distress and/or urge levels before and after the mindful participation in each positive experience. Notice how positive experiences tend to be beneficial to improving emotions and managing urges. Check off the completion of your daily use of Build Positive Experience (BPE).

☐ **Monday** BPE: _____ Where and when: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ **Tuesday** BPE: _____ Where and when: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ **Wednesday** BPE: _____ Where and when: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ **Thursday** BPE: _____ Where and when: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ **Friday** BPE: _____ Where and when: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ **Saturday** BPE: _____ Where and when: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

☐ **Sunday** BPE: _____ Where and when: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

# Attend to Relationships (A2R)

- ***CORE CONCEPT:*** Use Attend to Relationships to keep relationships healthy and to create positive emotions.

Life events, problems, and symptoms can disrupt our relationships. We may have neglected friends and family or have simply lost track of those connections. At other times, we may have actively damaged relationships or burned others out with our struggles. We may be lonely, and isolation tends to create and maintain unwanted emotions.

Attending to relationships is a way to Build Positive Experience that tends to create positive emotions over time. When you use this skill, remember to also use the skills in the Interpersonal Effectiveness module, Nonjudgmental Stance, and Opposite to Emotion.

Remember that we get out of relationships what we put into them. Actively invest in friends, family, co-workers, neighbors, etc., and the dividends will follow.

# Emotion Regulation 6: Attend to Relationships

Start with two lists of people: those who are currently in your life and those from the past who you would want in your life again. Only list people with whom you currently have or previously had an overall positive connection. *Do not list unhealthy people or people with whom you have had hopeless relationships.*

These people are in my life now:

Describe how you can better attend to each person and how you can repair relationships if needed:

These are people from my past with whom I would like to be reconnected:

Describe how you can reconnect with at least one person on this list, how you can attend to that person, and how you can repair the relationship if needed:

If you find that your lists are short, you are not alone. Many of us need new people in our lives for a variety of reasons; start thinking about making new relationships.

Describe your resources and places where you might reach out for new relationships:

Describe the other skills (in addition to Attend to Relationships) you will use to start making new relationships:

Describe how your life will be different when you effectively use Attend to Relationships:

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

# Mood Momentum (MM)

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Notice positive moods and choose skills and behaviors to keep them going.

We influence emotions with the behaviors we choose. When we Observe and Describe an emotion that we want to continue to experience, we can use Mood Momentum. This skill directs us to stay involved in events and thoughts that keep our positive emotions around so we can benefit from the momentum of already feeling well.

Emotions tend to unconsciously draw us to behaviors that are congruent or fit with them. Mood Momentum is a mindful effort to choose these mood-congruent behaviors when they will be helpful. Ways to continue positive moods include the following:

- Engage in using Build Positive Experience.
- Balance using Build Positive Experience with using Build Mastery.
- Use mindfulness to reflect on a positive emotion.
- Engage in using PLEASED.
- Balance active positive events with relaxing positive events.
- Engage in healthy relationships.
- Work on a responsibility and stay mindful of your efforts and accomplishments (and distract from judgments).
- Practice mindfulness exercises.
- Work on a hobby or project or try something on the Activities List in Module 9: Building a Satisfying Life.
- Think of other ways you can use Mood Momentum.

An important aspect of Mood Momentum is to pick from a variety of positive experiences, activities, and behaviors to keep it interesting. Even the most fun or relaxing event will eventually reach the point where it no longer creates a positive effect. We benefit most from Mood Momentum when we take a balanced approach, switch up our strategies, and keep it fresh.

# Opposite to Emotion (O2E)

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Use Opposite to Emotion (also known as Opposite Action) to get unstuck from ineffective behaviors that arise from certain emotional states.

We get stuck in negative or ineffective emotional states partly as a result of mood-congruent behavior. Mood-congruent behavior occurs when, without awareness, we fall into behavior patterns that keep certain emotions around. For example, when we feel depressed, we may perform the following actions or inactions:

- Get isolated (e.g., be disconnected from relationships, not answer the phone, miss social engagements and appointments)
- Be inactive (e.g., stay in bed or on the couch, not participate in hobbies or potentially positive experiences, let the chores at home and other responsibilities pile up)
- Engage in stuck thinking (e.g., focus only on the negative, ruminate, want to die)
- Neglect self-care and hygiene
- Eat and sleep too much or too little
- Decide to stop therapy and medications
- Engage in other behaviors that perpetuate negative emotional states.

Unfortunately, these automatic reactions to depression keep us depressed and may even make it worse. This is where Opposite to Emotion is helpful. This dialectical skill directs us to act in ways that are the opposite of the behaviors toward which our difficult emotions pull us. For the depressive examples just given, we would use Opposite to Emotion to:

- Reach out to others with whom we have relationships for help and positive experience
- Get moving by doing activities, hobbies, and important tasks; use ROUTINE, the Activities List in Module 9: Building a Satisfying Life, Build Positive Experience, or Build Mastery, or engage in distress tolerance skills
- Practice dialectics, take a Nonjudgmental Stance, or use Encouragement
- Use PLEASED
- Go to therapy appointments and discuss medication issues with your prescriber before making changes
- Use other skills to address additional behaviors that perpetuate negative emotional states.

See the following explanations and examples for ways to use Opposite to Emotion to address common difficult emotions.

### Opposite to Emotion with anxiety or fear

We tend to avoid when we feel anxiety and fear. We also tend to ruminate on anxious thoughts. Avoidance gets reinforced because it protects us from distress. However, the more we avoid, the more our anxieties build over time and the more we end up feeling overwhelmed. In addition, avoidance results in our world getting smaller and smaller.

Using Opposite to Emotion means approaching our fears one step at a time and learning to tolerate the distress that comes with it. To do this effectively, we use mindfulness to desensitize ourselves and distress tolerance when we feel too overwhelmed. The more we approach rather than avoid, the more our nervous system learns to be "bored" and the less anxious we feel.

With some fears we might not go one step at a time, instead choosing to jump fully in. Going all in to approach a fear is like jumping into a cold swimming pool: At first it is shocking, but then your system acclimates. Whether you take on a fear one step at a time or go all in depends on the situation, so choose your strategy according to what will be most effective for you.

Last, we can also learn to accept our anxious thoughts rather than fight them or catastrophize about them. This approach takes the power out of the thoughts.

### Opposite to Emotion with anger

We often want to lash out with words or behavior when we feel anger, and we may replay the situation we are angry about over and over in our minds. Using Opposite to Emotion includes avoiding the person you are angry with until you calm down while also being kind and compassionate to others, choosing to spend quality time with our pets, friends, and/or family, and being careful to be gentle and not to displace our anger onto others.

Additionally, we might imagine compassion for the person we feel anger toward (which is difficult to do sometimes). Remember that most people (including ourselves) do not want to make mistakes and do not want others to be angry at them, no matter how unskillfully they act. Compassion can be dialectically balanced with accountability.

We can also distract ourselves from angry thoughts and from replaying situations that cause anger by using the Thoughts skill. Count to 100 or recite the alphabet, or focus on thoughts that are the opposite of angry thoughts.

However, Opposite to Emotion with anger does not mean denying or stuffing anger, because this sets the stage for rage. After you have calmed your anger by using Opposite to Emotion, see whether the emotion fits Wise Mind and use interpersonal effectiveness skills to address the situation with others if needed.

### Opposite to Emotion with guilt and shame

We feel guilt when we have done something to hurt ourselves or others or when we make mistakes. Often we try to avoid or hide from others when we feel guilt, or we try to blame or otherwise avoid accepting responsibility for our actions.

Using Opposite to Emotion means addressing what we did or the mistake that we made with whoever was affected. We apologize and try to make the situation better if possible. If we cannot make the

situation better, we try to do something better somewhere else; this is a symbolic way to right a wrong. Be committed to not repeating the same mistakes and develop a plan to act differently in the future.

Remember that a genuine apology is for the benefit of the other person and not a means of avoiding consequences. Other people may still be upset for a time after your apology. Be patient with the process. Accept consequences with grace unless they do not fit the situation as evaluated in Wise Mind. *Do not participate in guilt or consequences that are out of proportion with the situation.*

After you have completed the steps listed here, let go of the situation and the thoughts that caused the guilt. Use Radical Acceptance.

Sometimes guilt does *not* fit Wise Mind. For example, we have a right to say no and to have boundaries, and we do not need to feel guilty for exerting this right. At other times, we experience guilt in the absence of wrongdoing for a variety of reasons. Examples include feeling guilty for practicing Self-Soothe skills, for having a good time, or for taking time for ourselves. This type of guilt leads us to avoid behaviors such as saying no, setting boundaries, and participating in beneficial activities.

When we have guilt that does not fit Wise Mind, the opposite to Emotion is to approach rather than avoid. Keep practicing saying no, setting boundaries, and participating in activities until you no longer feel guilty. Remember to use REASON and Encouragement to address your thoughts and judgments that prompt guilt. We need to coach ourselves in these situations!

We feel shame when guilt is not addressed, when we have done something serious, or when something serious has happened to us. Shame involves experiencing judgments about being damaged, unlovable, or unforgivable as a person.

We can also feel shame for how we look or who we are as people even when it does not fit Wise Mind. This type of shame frequently originates from others' judgments and from being mistreated. Shame causes us to hide, and hiding keeps the shame around.

Using Opposite to Emotion with shame involves coming out of hiding and talking about what causes us shame with *someone safe, nonjudgmental, and accepting.* As we work through shame, we can often open ourselves up to more and more supportive people and begin to heal. The process of working through shame also requires a Nonjudgmental Stance and distress tolerance skills.

### Opposite to Emotion with other emotions

We can use Opposite to Emotion with other emotions too. For example, you might feel attraction or love toward someone who is not worthy of it or who mistreats you, and those emotions keep you engaging in the ineffective relationship. In this case Opposite to Emotion would involve avoiding this person, blocking his or her advances to engage in the relationship, and reminding yourself why the person is not healthy for you. You might also approach other relationships.

As another example, we have times when we feel jealous and go on the offensive toward the person we are jealous of or try to overcontrol the people involved in the event causing the jealously. In this situation the Opposite to Emotion would be avoiding going on the offensive and letting go of the tendency to control others.

A last example is feeling unmotivated or like you do not "feel like" doing a behavior that you know will be helpful. You consequently avoid doing what you know to be effective, whether that is doing the dishes, going for a walk, engaging in a conversation, or doing whatever is needed. We all have these moments, usually every day. Of course you can use mindfulness to explore the reasons you don't feel

like doing the thing you are avoiding, but the Opposite to Emotion is to follow the Nike slogan and 'just do it'. An oversimplification? Maybe, but there is a reason that this almost 30-year-old slogan resonates with so many people.

In your use of Opposite to Emotion, consider one final note. Whether or not your emotion or the intensity of it is justified depends on the situation, the facts, and other potential factors. Opposite to Emotion is not meant to invalidate the real emotions we experience. Instead, Opposite to Emotion is intended to get us unstuck from prolonged and overly intense emotional states by recognizing behaviors that do not work and instead choosing those opposite behaviors that are more effective. In other words: Do less of what does not work and more of what does in order to change your emotions.

# Emotion Regulation 7: Opposite to Emotion

**CORE CONCEPT:** Use this worksheet to practice Opposite to Emotion.

Describe your current emotion:

Describe what actions (or inactions) this emotion is pulling you to do (what is mood congruent?):

Describe the predicted outcomes from these actions (or inactions):

Describe how you can use Opposite to Emotion:

Describe the predicted outcomes from your use of Opposite to Emotion:

Describe how your life will be different when you effectively use Opposite to Emotion:

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition*. All rights reserved.

# Do your A-B-Cs: Accumulate Positives, Build Mastery, and Cope Ahead

*CORE CONCEPT:* The A-B-Cs keep you balanced in the present and immediate future.

The A-B-Cs capture important elements for emotion regulation and health. We do better emotionally when we focus on positives, take care of important tasks and responsibilities, and develop coping plans for troubles we can anticipate. Of course you will also notice the parallels between A-B-Cs and Build Positive Experience, Build Mastery, and developing skills plans.

Use the acronym A-B-C to remember the building blocks (Accumulate positives, Build Mastery, and Cope ahead) of this skill. The building blocks of this skill are described in the following paragraphs.

### Accumulate Positives

Positives are consistently around us if we open ourselves to them. However, we often hold on to a negative and let it overshadow our other experiences. For example:

- We remember one person who treats us rudely and fail to recognize several people who treat us with kindness and respect.
- We stay fixated on a problem and do not notice what has gone well or according to plan.
- We overfocus on negatives and fail to notice positives happening naturally in our environment.

The first part of accumulating positives is to recognize the positives that go unnoticed. Add those up!

Next, involve yourself in activities and build positive experiences that you can do right now. Check the Activities List in Module 9: Building a Satisfying Life, choose an activity and do it, or use the Build Positive Experience skill. Engage in what is happening around you, including attending to people and relationships with the Attend to Relationships skill. Be mindful and participate in the moment.

Longer term, think about your priorities, goals, and values. What is important to you and what do you want to work toward? Work on the Building a Satisfying Life module.

### Build Mastery

Do what makes you feel competent and in control. Take care of your home environment or throw yourself into completing a task that has gone undone. When you have completed a chore or task or when you have taken a step toward a larger goal, take a few moments to appreciate the accomplishment and give yourself credit. See the Build Mastery skill for more details.

## Cope Ahead

Most of us have hot-button situations in which we are vulnerable to ineffective behaviors. Think of one of these situations. Next, imagine yourself in this situation, but, instead of imagining your ineffective reactions, picture yourself responding and coping with your skills. Continue to replay the coping response to the situation over and over in your mind. This is called "imaginal rehearsal." After you have visualized how to cope ahead, write down the details of your hot-button situation and the skills you imagined using to deal with it effectively.

Take the information and skills you imagined and formulate a written plan for coping that you can refer to later.

# Your Emotions and Your Body: Discovering the Connection

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Your emotions and body communicate and influence one another.

Our minds, including emotional experiences, and our bodies are connected and can influence one another for better or worse. The good news is that, when you are aware of the connection, you can mindfully influence your emotions for the better. Consider the following examples:

- Depressed people frequently slouch and avoid eye contact. Sitting up straight with a confident posture and making eye contact are incompatible with depressed emotions. Changing how you hold your body and making eye contact can make a difference in the level of depression you feel.
- When life is difficult you can adopt a serene expression on your face, often referred to as a half-smile. The half-smile communicates acceptance to your mind, making changes in the emotional impact of your difficulties. Alternatively you can look in the mirror, make a "V" with your first and second fingers, and push up the corners of your mouth. Maybe this is a silly example, but give it a try. Doing something silly can be a great break from feeling an intense emotion!
- Anxious or angry people can decrease the intensity of these emotions through practicing muscle relaxation, deep breathing, and being mindful of how they are holding or communicating with their bodies.

Of course positive emotions are also reflected in our bodies. Any time you are aware of your emotions, or your body, check in on how they are influencing one another and make adjustments accordingly.

# Interpersonal Effectiveness

## Introduction to Interpersonal Effectiveness

- ***CORE CONCEPT:*** Interpersonal skills lead to healthy relationships.

Interpersonal effectiveness enables us to make and maintain relationships, resolve conflict when it occurs, and get our and others' wants and needs met effectively in a balanced manner.

This module has three main sets of skills: FAST, GIVE, and DEAR MAN. FAST skills build self-respect. You have a relationship with yourself, and the way that you talk to yourself and the behaviors you choose affect how you feel about yourself. FAST skills orient us to make choices and act in relationships in ways that increase our self-respect. Self-respect is based on actions grounded in our priorities, goals, and values. Respecting yourself provides the foundation for skill use in your relationships with others.

GIVE skills are other-focused. We want to treat others with care, interest, validation, and respect. This approach allows us to form and nurture meaningful relationships that will enrich our lives. GIVE also enables us to be dialectic in conflicts so we can resolve them effectively.

DEAR MAN is assertiveness that is self-focused. We use DEAR MAN to get our wants and needs met more reliably, to say no, to set boundaries with others, and to negotiate when needed.

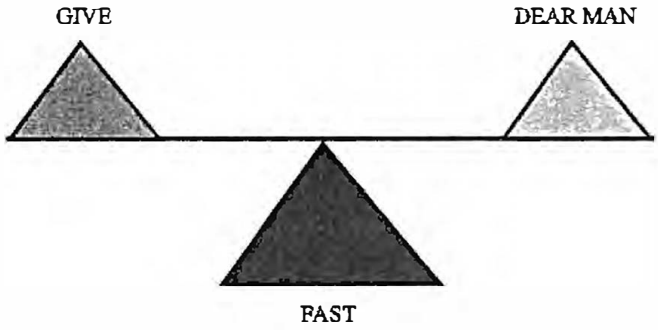
We use all three sets of skills to be effective in our relationships. Remember to role-play and practice these skills consistently.

# Interpersonal Effectiveness Dialectics

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Relationships require balance and working the middle ground.

Dialectics are central to healthy relationships. Being too other-focused or too self-focused leads to unmet wants and needs and conflict. Instead, we attempt to find balance in relationships, and that balance differs based on the nature of the relationship along with the context of the situation.

Think of GIVE and DEAR MAN existing on a dialectic:




At times we need to focus on others and at other times we need to focus on ourselves. In practice, we are most effective when we blend both sets of skills. The blend between thinking about others versus ourselves is grounded in FAST. We use our values to guide us in relationships to enhance our self-respect and others' respect for us.

To find interpersonal balance, ask yourself three questions when working the dialectic in relationships:

1. What does the other person need in this interaction (GIVE)?
2. What do I need in this interaction (DEAR MAN)?
3. What is needed in this interaction to maintain or build my self-respect (FAST)?

The answers to these questions will be a reliable guide. Remember that all healthy relationships are based on reciprocity. Be willing to balance give and take and to be there for others if you want them to be there for you.

# FAST (F)

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Self-respect and healthy relationships start with you.

FAST skills are focused on our priorities, goals, and values so we can make choices that build our self-respect. Self-respect is the foundation to liking ourselves, and it creates a solid base for us to build and maintain relationships with others.

Use the acronym FAST to remember the building blocks (Fair, Apologics not needed, Stick to values, Truth and accountability) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

### Fair

Be just and take a Nonjudgmental Stance with yourself and others. Avoid extremes and ground yourself in Wise Mind in interactions with others. Think of fair weather as being neither too hot nor too cold and without storms. Keep a moderate climate with others without whipping up bad weather. Use respectful words and actions with yourself and others. Others do *not* need to earn your respect. We treat others with respect because it builds our own self-worth. Respond rather than react in relationships.

### Apologies not needed

Do not engage in unneeded apologetic behavior. Do not apologize for having an opinion or for your own viewpoints. You are allowed to disagree. Do not apologize for being you. Avoid apologies for things over which you have no control. Chronic, unnecessary apologies erode self-respect and devalue apologies that are genuinely needed. Note that "no apologies" does not apply to situations that require an apology (e.g., hurting someone).

### Stick to values

Use your priorities, goals, and values as guides and ground yourself in them. Choose behaviors and have interactions with others that build your self-respect. Identify what is important to you and stick to it. Know what values are non-negotiable and, when values conflict, work to resolve the conflict through Wise Mind. Live your life grounded in values.

### Truth and accountability

Be honest and accountable with yourself and others. Sometimes we avoid the truth because we are afraid of the consequences, but trying to deceive others destroys self-respect and often causes greater problems. Even if you have a great memory and can keep from getting tangled in a web of lies, *you* will still know the truth. Being accountable is more effective in most cases.

In addition, act in a manner that respects your true abilities and avoid feigned helplessness, exaggerations, and an excuse orientation to life. Take responsibility for yourself.

# Interpersonal Effectiveness 1: Values Application 1

**CORE CONCEPT:** Identify values and how to express them through behavior.

This is a partial list of values. You might have a value that is not on the list or notice some overlap between values. Review the list and circle your top 10 values. Use your selected values in the exercise that follows.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Acceptance | Cleanliness | Discipline |
| Achievement | Closeness | Discretion |
| Activity | Comfort | Diversity |
| Adaptability | Commitment | Drive |
| Adventurousness | Compassion | Duty |
| Affectionateness | Confidence | Education |
| Altruism | Connection | Effectiveness |
| Ambition | Consistency | Empathy |
| Assertiveness | Contentment | Encouragement |
| Attentiveness | Contribution | Endurance |
| Availability | Cooperation | Energy |
| Awareness | Courage | Enjoyment |
| Balance | Courteousness | Enthusiasm |
| Belongingness | Creativity | Excellence |
| Bravery | Credibility | Exploration |
| Calm | Decisiveness | Expressiveness |
| Capability | Dependability | Fairness |
| Caring | Determination | Faith |
| Challenge | Devotion | Family |
| Charity | Dignity | Fidelity |

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition*. All rights reserved.

Financial independence
Firmness
Fitness
Freedom
Friendship
Fun
Generosity
Giving
Grace
Gratitude
Happiness
Harmony
Health
Honesty
Honor
Hopefulness
Humility
Humor
Hygiene
Imagination
Independence
Integrity
Intelligence
Intensity
Intimacy
Joy
Kindness
Knowledge
Leadership
Learning
Love
Loyalty
Mindfulness
Modesty
Motivation
Neatness
Openness
Optimism
Order
Passion
Peace
Persistence
Playfulness
Pleasantness
Pleasure
Popularity
Practicality
Pragmatism
Privacy
Professionalism
Prosperity
Relaxation
Reliability
Religion
Resilience
Resoluteness
Respect
Restraint
Sacrifice
Security
Self-control
Self-reliance
Sensitivity
Service
Sharing
Simplicity
Sincerity
Spirituality
Spontaneity
Stability
Strength
Structure
Success
Support
Teamwork
Thankfulness
Thoughtfulness
Trust
Truth
Usefulness
Warmth
Willingness
Wisdom

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

Once your values are identified, you can describe specific behaviors that you can practice to live your values with intention. The following are examples of how you can complete this exercise:

I value: Truth

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

1. Fill out my diary card more accurately
2. Tell important others when I make a mistake
3. Stop hiding liquor bottles in the garage

I value: Friendship

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

1. Return phone calls from my friends
2. Respect Tammy's boundaries
3. Practice GIVE skills in group

I value: Peace

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

1. Not yell at my wife and kids when I am angry
2. Practice MINDFULNESS exercises in the morning and at bedtime
3. Use RADICAL ACCEPTANCE to stop beating myself up for mistakes

I value: Giving

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

1. Give my group feedback on what they are doing well
2. Donate possessions that I have not used for a year
3. Be present in my relationships

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

Now it's your turn.

I value: _____

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

_____

I value: _____

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

_____

I value: _____

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

_____

I value: _____

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

_____

I value: _____

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

_____

I value: _____

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

_____

I value: _____

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

_____

I value: _____

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

_____

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

# Interpersonal Effectiveness 2: Values Application 2

**CORE CONCEPT:** Identify values and decide which ones you want to express more through your behavior.

This exercise illustrates how values get expressed in your life through behaviors you choose. Each value on the list has two corresponding statements, one that endorses that you already "live" the value and one that endorses a desire to express the value to a greater degree.

For each value your options are to:

- not check either of the statements under the value, meaning that the value is not important in your life
- check only the first statement under the value, meaning that you already express the value in your life
- check only the second statement under the value, meaning that you do not express the value in your life but would like to, or,
- check both statements under the value, meaning that you already express the value in your life *and* would like to express the value even more.

For each statement you check, consider (and perhaps write down) what behaviors you engage in that demonstrate to yourself and others that the value is important in your life. Try to increase behaviors in your life that reflect your core values. Values plus behaviors that reflect them equate to self-respect.

**Acceptance**

☐ I practice acceptance in my life.

☐ I would like to practice more acceptance in my life.

**Achievement**

☐ I work toward achieving my goals.

☐ I would like to achieve more of my goals.

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

**Activity**

☐ I involve myself in activities.

☐ I would like to be more involved in activities.

**Adventurousness**

☐ I am adventurous and take safe chances.

☐ I would like to be more adventurous and take more safe chances.

**Affectionateness**

☐ I show affection toward other people.

☐ I would like to be more affectionate with other people.

**Assertiveness**

☐ I can be appropriately assertive with other people.

☐ I would like to be more appropriately assertive with other people.

**Belonging**

☐ I feel like I belong in my family, at work, and/or with people important to me.

☐ I would like to feel more like I belong in my family, at work, and/or with people important to me.

**Calm**

☐ I am calm with other people and in stressful situations.

☐ I would like to be more calm with other people and in stressful situations.

**Capability**

☐ I have the skills and abilities to accomplish tasks.

■ I would like to develop my skills and abilities to accomplish tasks.

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

**Caring**

☐ I show caring toward myself and others.

☐ I would like to be more caring with myself and/or other people.

**Commitment**

☐ I show commitment to my goals and to other people.

☐ I would like to be more committed to my goals and/or other people.

**Confidence**

☐ I am confident in my abilities and show confidence to other people.

☐ I would like to develop confidence in my abilities and to show it to other people.

**Consistency**

☐ I follow through with expectations and tasks consistently.

☐ I would like to follow through with expectations and tasks more consistently.

**Contribution**

☐ I contribute to those around me and my community.

☐ I would like to contribute more to other people and my community.

**Cooperation**

☐ I am cooperative and work with other people.

☐ I would like to be more cooperative and work with other people.

**Creativity**

☐ I have creative pursuits and/or can solve problems in creative ways.

☐ I would like to have more creative pursuits and/or show more creative problem-solving.

**Decisiveness**

☐ I am able to make decisions with relative ease.

☐ I would like to make decisions more easily.

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

**Dependability**

☐ I am dependable and people can count on me.

☐ I would like to be more dependable to other people.

**Determination**

☐ I am determined in reaching my goals.

☐ I would like to show more determination toward reaching my goals

**Diversity**

☐ I appreciate diversity in culture and/or ideas.

☐ I would like to be more appreciative of diversity in culture and/or ideas.

**Education**

☐ I engage in learning new ideas and skills.

☐ I would like to engage more in learning new ideas and skills.

**Empathy**

☐ I understand and share in the feelings of other people.

☐ I would like to better understand and share in the feelings of other people.

**Fairness**

☐ I act without bias and in an evenhanded way with other people.

☐ I would like to act with less bias and in a more evenhanded way with other people.

**Family**

☐ I place a high priority on family.

☐ I would like to prioritize my family more.

**Financial independence**

☐ I adequately support myself (and my dependents) financially.

☐ I would like to better support myself (and my dependents) financially.

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition*. All rights reserved.

**Fitness**

☐ I maintain good physical health.

☐ I would like to achieve better physical health.

**Friendship**

☐ I am a true friend to other people.

☐ I would like to be a better friend to other people.

**Fun**

■ I regularly have a good time in life.

☐ I would like to have more good times in life.

**Generosity**

☐ I am unselfish and give toward other people.

☐ I would like to be more unselfish and give more to other people.

**Grace**

☐ I approach people and situations with grace.

☐ I would like to be more graceful in how I approach people and situations.

**Gratitude**

☐ I am thankful for other people and what I have.

☐ I would like to be more thankful for other people and what I have.

**Happiness**

☐ I experience a sense of well-being and contentment in life.

☐ I would like to experience a greater sense of well-being and contentment in life.

**Health**

☐ I take care of my health.

☐ I would like to take better care of my health.

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

**Honesty**

☐ I am an honest person.

☐ I would like to be more honest.

**Humility**

☐ I am humble about my accomplishments.

☐ I would like to show more humility about my accomplishments.

**Independence**

☐ I am able to do things on my own and take care of myself.

☐ I would like to be more able to do things on my own and take care of myself.

**Kindness**

☐ I treat others in a nice and concerned way.

☐ I would like to treat others more nicely and with more concern.

**Knowledge**

☐ I have information and facts in regard to a number of different areas.

☐ I would like to have more information and facts in regard to a greater number of areas.

**Leadership**

☐ I am able to guide other people through my positive example.

☐ I would like to better guide other people through my positive example.

**Love**

☐ I share mutual attraction and affection with other people.

☐ I would like to have more mutual attraction and affection with other people.

**Loyalty**

☐ I show faith and devotion to people around me.

☐ I would like to show more faith and devotion to people around me.

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

**Mindfulness**

☐ I practice being in the moment, on purpose, nonjudgmentally.

☐ I would like to practice being in the moment, on purpose, nonjudgmentally, more often.

**Peace**

☐ I have calm, tranquility, and quiet in my life.

☐ I would like to have more calm, tranquility, and quiet in my life.

**Persistence**

☐ I work toward goals without giving up until I accomplish them.

☐ I would like to work toward goals until I accomplish them without giving up.

**Relaxation**

☐ I take time to unwind and relax.

☐ I would like to take more time to unwind and relax.

**Reliability**

☐ I am dependable and follow through consistently with other people.

☐ I would like to be more dependable and follow through with more consistency with other people.

**Resilience**

☐ I am able to cope with the ups and downs of life.

☐ I would like to be better able to cope with the ups and downs of life.

**Respect**

☐ I show respect to myself and other people.

☐ I would like to show more respect to myself and other people.

**Self-control**

☐ I am in control of my words and behavior.

☐ I would like to have more control of my words and behavior.

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

**Service**

☐ I place importance on doing things for other people and/or important causes.

☐ I would like to place more importance on doing things for other people and/or important causes.

**Simplicity**

☐ I keep my life uncomplicated.

☐ I would like to make my life less complicated.

**Spirituality**

☐ I involve myself in a spiritual practice.

☐ I would like to be involved or more involved in a spiritual practice.

**Stability**

☐ I keep myself mentally, emotionally, and behaviorally healthy.

☐ I would like to be more mentally, emotionally, and behaviorally healthy.

**Trust**

☐ I am seen as reliable, good, and honest by other people.

☐ I would like to be seen as more reliable, good, and honest by other people.

**Willingness**

☐ I am flexible and do what is needed with other people and in situations.

☐ I would like to be more flexible and to better do what is needed with other people and in situations.

**Wisdom**

☐ I am seen as knowledgeable and experienced, with sound judgment, by other people.

☐ I would like to be seen as more knowledgeable and experienced, with sound judgment, by other people.

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition*. All rights reserved.

# Interpersonal Effectiveness 3: Values Conflict Application

**CORE CONCEPT:** Use this worksheet to resolve value conflicts.

Most of us know the phrase "that person has their priorities mixed up." It implies that a person's values are in conflict and that an ineffective course of action has been taken. In other words, the person is making choices without considering important priorities, goals, and values.

We frequently have these conflicts. When they happen, we try to decide what will best meet the demands of the situation while still maintaining our self-respect. Use the following exercise to help you resolve value conflicts.

Describe the situation nonjudgmentally:

---

Describe the priorities, goals, and values that are in conflict:

---

Rank these priorities, goals, and values from most to least important:

---

Describe options that either follow your top-ranked value(s) or that show adequate respect across values:

---

Evaluate the options (see Pros and Cons and SOLVED). Describe a course of action from Wise Mind that maintains or builds self-respect:

---

Note: Occasionally we must make choices that sacrifice important values. Make these decisions from Wise Mind and only when the outcome is essential.

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition*. All rights reserved.

# GIVE (G)

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Focus on others to build and maintain relationships.

GIVE skills focus on others. We build and maintain relationships by balancing our own wants, needs, and desires with those of the people around us. Everyone benefits from healthier relationships grounded in genuine interest and validation. GIVE is also key to resolving conflicts.

Use the acronym GIVE to remember the building blocks (Genuine, Interested, Validate, Easy manner) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

### Genuine

Be honest, sincere, and real with others. Speak and act from your heart with caring and use mindfulness to be with others in the moment. Let others know that you value them and treat them with respect.

### Interested

Interest comes from efforts to connect with a person. Let others have the focus. Listen intently to others and pause to make space before responding. Ask questions and listen to the answers.

Be mindful of your nonverbal communication. Our nonverbals communicate a great deal of information to others, both intentionally and unintentionally. Send the nonverbal messages that you want to send to others. Nonverbally, interest is communicated by looking at the person, making appropriate eye contact, and keeping your mannerisms and posture open and relaxed.

### Validate

Validation is the nonjudgmental acknowledgment of others' feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and experience. To validate you "walk a mile in someone else's shoes" and see life from his or her perspective. We validate when we find others' truth and how their experiences make sense given their life circumstances and the situation. Remember to validate *yourself*, too.

### Easy manner

Remember the idiom "you catch more flies with honey than with vinegar." Having an easy manner means treating others with kindness and a relaxed attitude. It also means not being heavy handed with our judgments, opinions, and viewpoints. Allow space for others.

Remember that we can always raise our interpersonal intensity if necessary but that it is often more effective to start out in a relatively relaxed and laid-back manner.

Last, learn and use polite manners. Being easy-going and polite is kind to others, and actually opens a lot of doors for you too!

# Listening (L)

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Listen in order to demonstrate that you care.

Listening is a skill that requires mindfulness and practice. To listen well, we must let go of distractions, especially our own thoughts, and focus our attention on what is being said in the moment. We also need to practice Nonjudgmental Stance to listen accurately. When we Observe ourselves being defensive or planning what to say in response, we have probably lost some of the accuracy of our listening. Go back to listening using One-Mindfulness and attend to what others are saying.

Many of us have an unconscious resistance to listening. When others say, "listen to me," there is often an implied "agree with me" or "follow my directions." These unconscious assumptions can get in the way. Remember that listening does not have to mean agreement or compliance.

Reflective listening is an effective way to practice listening and to validate. With reflective listening, we mirror (or reflect) back what the other person said, either exactly or by paraphrasing the central themes. Our reflective responses can be brief. The goal is to stay attentive in the conversation and make sure we hear others, sometimes listening to what is "behind" the words.

Reflective listening is a skill that can feel awkward at first. Practice reflective listening in role-plays and in conversations. When using this skill, resist the urge to respond with your own material and instead keep the focus on others through reflection. With time and practice, you will notice that effective listening creates positive changes in relationships and maybe a decrease in conflicts.

# VALIDATION (V)

▣ ***CORE CONCEPT*:** Use validation to connect to others.

Validation is a complicated skill. Use this expanded teaching to learn a more advanced approach to the validation component of GIVE.

Use the acronym VALIDATE to remember the building blocks (Value others, Ask questions, Listen and reflect, Identify with others, Discuss emotions, Attend to nonverbals, Turn the mind, Encourage participation) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

### Value others

Seeking the inherent value in others is essential to validation. Adopt an attitude of acceptance toward others. Demonstrate your caring and concern, and let others know they are important to you.

### Ask questions

We ask questions to help clarify others' experience. Ask specific questions about what others are feeling. Ask about thoughts and beliefs. Be genuinely curious about what is behind behaviors. Use questions to draw out others' experience.

### Listen and reflect

Listen to others' answers to your questions and reflect back the major themes. Invite others to confirm your understanding (or lack of understanding). Continue to question, listen, and reflect for clarity.

### Identify with others

Work to see the world through the eyes of others. How do relationships and the world make sense to *them*? Seek to understand others, identifying when you can and accepting differences when you cannot.

### Discuss emotions

Talk about others' feelings and how they affect them from *their* perspective (not how their feelings affect you). Acknowledging the impact of others' experience on them demonstrates understanding.

### Attend to nonverbals

Notice others' nonverbal communication to give you information about their experience. Do they look open or closed? Are they making eye contact? Read facial expressions and body language to identify feelings, and then check out your observations with others for accuracy.

### Turn the mind

Validation does not mean that we agree with others. Validation means that we nonjudgmentally accept what they feel, think, and experience and how behaviors make sense given their context. Turn the mind toward validation, especially when it is difficult to relate. Turning the mind is especially important in conflicts.

### Encourage participation

Validation can be a difficult process at times, so we need to encourage ourselves and others to be engaged with each other. Do not give up, even when understanding is hard, when you feel disconnected, or when you are in conflict with others.

# What Validation Is Not

***CORE CONCEPT***: These interactions can be confused with validation.

Validation is complex and takes practice. Another way to improve this skill is to understand interactions that are not experienced as validation. The following ways of relating with others often get confused with validation. Some of these ways of relating can work, but we want to minimize their use or use them in balance with accurate validation.

### Personalizing others' experience

Keep the focus on the other person. One or maybe two self-statements that communicate your similar experience can be validating, but, when we start to tell our own story, the focus leaves the other person.

### Getting too absorbed

Validation is about connection with others' experience *but not getting absorbed into it*. We can validate without taking on others' distress. *Be with* others in distress without *being* their distress. Also avoid taking on someone as a "project." We can show concern and connection without being responsible for the feelings of others.

### "Fixing," offering solutions, or giving advice

These strategies are effective in some situations, but they are on the opposite end of the dialectic from validation. Most of us do not need our situations to be fixed, or we already know how to do it ourselves. Instead, we are looking for acknowledgment and understanding.

### Cheerleading and encouragement

These approaches can be effective in balance with validation, but they can feel dismissive or condescending if a person has not been validated first.

It is also useful to avoid looking on the bright side, stating that the situation could have been worse, or one-upping others to try to put their issues into perspective (or accomplish something else). These approaches do not usually work well. Even if what the other person is saying does not seem like a big deal to you, remember that it may be a big deal to him or her.

### Agreeing or giving in

You can validate others' experience even if you disagree, are in conflict, or want a change to happen. Validation can be a starting point for change.

# DEAR MAN (DM)

- ***CORE CONCEPT:*** DEAR MAN is used to get wants and needs met.

The DEAR MAN skill focuses on us. We use DEAR MAN to get our wants and needs met, to say no, and to set boundaries. This skill is the DBT version of assertiveness. Before describing the components of DEAR MAN, it is important to establish some assumptions and guidelines to increase the effectiveness of this skill:

- **Others cannot read your mind:** This includes your closest friends and family. Assume that others are oblivious to you and that they cannot tell how you are feeling or know what you want or need. It often feels personal when others have no clue what we want or need, and we may get frustrated and blame others. However, we need to proactively and clearly *ask* for our wants and needs, say *no* when appropriate, and *maintain* our own boundaries.
- **Effective communication of your wants and needs requires words:** Do not sigh, sulk, cop an attitude, get destructive, withdraw, or otherwise communicate without thoughtful words *and* expect it to work effectively. It is true that our behaviors communicate volumes, just not clearly.
- **DEAR MAN does not always work, even when done effectively:** DEAR MAN increases the probability that you will get your wants and needs met, but it does not guarantee it.
- **You must be mindful of your DEAR MAN goals before you begin:** Decide what is important and what is negotiable before you use DEAR MAN.
- **Remember to balance DEAR MAN with GIVE grounded in FAST:** Attending to others (GIVE) makes them more willing to assist, accept it when you say no, and respect your boundaries. Keep track of priorities, goals, and values in relationships (FAST).

Use the acronym DEAR MAN to remember the building blocks (Describe, Express, Assert, Reward, Mindful, Appear Confident, Negotiate) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

### Describe

Use Observe and Describe to outline the situation in nonjudgmental, descriptive language. Identify the facts that will support your request, your reason for saying no, or your need for a boundary. Stick to facts when you describe the situation.

### Express

Share your opinions and feelings if they are relevant and will help others to understand the situation. Sometimes you may choose not to include this step.

**Assert**

Ask clearly for what you want or need, say no, or set your boundary. Establish your DEAR MAN goals up front so you know what you want out of the situation and work to be straightforward and matter of fact. The Assert step is essential. Otherwise, no one will know what you want or need.

**Reward**

Let others know what is in it for them. How will meeting your wants and needs, accepting your refusal, or respecting your boundaries benefit the relationship? Try to focus on rewards rather than threats. Create opportunities for others to feel positive about their help or respect for you. However, sometimes we need to discuss consequences instead of rewards. Again, be matter of fact, but avoid ultimatums that will box everyone in, and especially ultimatums you cannot or will not follow through with.

**Mindful**

Stay focused on your DEAR MAN goal(s). Others will often try to change the subject or throw in comments to derail you. When this happens, one strategy to consider is a "broken record" approach, which means repeating your request or limits over and over again. (Notice how children do this effectively with their parents.) Also be aware of when the broken record technique is not working or is inappropriate to the situation, and switch strategies accordingly.

**Appear Confident**

Act as if you feel confident even if you do not. Pretend you have the confidence you have seen someone else model. Use an assertive tone of voice, make eye contact, and use confident body language. Be mindful of your facial expression (keeping it relatively neutral) as well as your posture and overall personal appearance. Use nonverbal communication to your advantage. Write down and practice your DEAR MAN skills before using them so you feel more confident in the actual situation.

**Negotiate**

Negotiation means that we strike compromises and are willing to give to get. Decide what compromises make sense if you cannot meet your desired DEAR MAN goal(s). If you get stuck, turn the issue over to the other person for options to solve it; for example, say, "What do you think will work?" Turning the tables shifts the dialectical balance and can get the process moving again.

Negotiation is a dialectical strategy to get wants and needs met by meeting someplace in the middle. In some cases, you may decide in Wise Mind that negotiation is not an option.

Note that, while the building blocks of DEAR MAN work together, some of the components can also be used independently in certain situations. For example, you can Assert without using any other DEAR MAN building blocks. Use as much or as little of DEAR MAN as is required by the situation.

# DEAR MAN Alternative: ASSERT

***CORE CONCEPT:*** ASSERT provides an alternate model for assertiveness.

In addition to DEAR MAN, assertiveness can be taught through a variety of models. The following model may be more straightforward for some clients to learn or may provide a supplement to the DEAR MAN skill.

Use the acronym ASSERT (**A**sk or **S**et boundaries, **S**ay what is needed, **E**ye contact, **R**espectful, **T**iming) to remember the building blocks of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

### Ask

You cannot be assertive without speaking up. You need to ask clearly for what you want and/or need. Do not hint or beat around the bush. Be direct and confident in your request. Or. . .

### Set boundaries

Say "no" and set other interpersonal boundaries when necessary. Do not expect others to know or recognize your boundaries. Again, be direct and confident.

### Say what is needed

No more or less. Some situations may be benefited by you sharing your feelings, opinions, or detailed explanations. Other situations do not require elaboration. Tailor the amount you share to the context at hand, based on what will be most effective.

### Eye contact

Look others in the eye when you speak without staring or having too intense a gaze. Eye contact communicates interest, confidence, and respect in Western cultures. However, be sensitive to other cultures and religions that view eye contact differently. Adjust the amount of eye contact you use accordingly.

### Respectful

Choose respectful words, have a respectful tone, and be polite. Disrespectful words and tone will sabotage your efforts to be assertive and reach your goal(s).

### Timing

Be thoughtful about timing. Some assertive statements need to happen in the moment, and others will be more effective when you choose timing that benefits your assertiveness goal(s). Generally, address issues that require assertiveness when you and others are in a Wise Mind place.

# DEAR MAN: Factors to Consider

*CORE CONCEPT:* These factors can increase your effectiveness with using DEAR MAN.

The effectiveness of DEAR MAN relies on many different factors. The factors below will assist you in fine-tuning your DEAR MAN skills.

### Be in Wise Mind

Wise Mind is essential for the effective use of DEAR MAN. If you are not in Wise Mind, consider soothing your emotions before using DEAR MAN in most cases. (Sometimes using DEAR MAN when in Emotion Mind is needed—for example, if safety is an immediate issue.)

### Use GIVE first

Start an interaction with GIVE to increase your effectiveness. Others are more receptive when you consider their feelings, point of view, and situation. GIVE can open doors to use DEAR MAN.

### Think about timing

It's been said that "timing is everything." They also say, "there's no time like the present." Dialectically, both of these sayings have truth. Consider whether the timing seems to favor the use of DEAR MAN, but do not use timing as an excuse to put off using DEAR MAN when you need to, especially if the situation is time sensitive.

### Direct DEAR MAN appropriately

Make sure you speak to someone who can actually respond to your use of DEAR MAN. Sometimes it is difficult to predict whether someone will respond well to your use of DEAR MAN. Start where you can and be respectful at all times, then move on to a different person if your use of DEAR MAN is not working. Remember that, even if one person may not be able to grant your DEAR MAN request, he or she might have influence with the next person you address.

### Do not give up

DEAR MAN is a difficult skill that varies in its effectiveness. Practice it in everyday situations and you will improve your overall assertiveness.

# Your DEAR MAN Bill of Rights

***CORE CONCEPT:*** We have DEAR MAN rights that we can exercise with responsibility.

Review the bill of rights below. Refer to it to encourage yourself to use DEAR MAN. Also, remember that rights require responsibility, so use DEAR MAN mindfully and effectively. Choose your DEAR MAN moments wisely.

- I have the right to be treated with respect.
- I have the right to my own opinions.
- I have the right to express my feelings.
- I have the right to stand up for my values.
- I have the right to disagree with others.
- I have the right to understand a request before agreeing.
- I have the right to ask for information.
- I have the right to take time to think about a request.
- I have the right to say no without guilt.
- I have the right to ask for my wants and needs.
- I have the right to set healthy boundaries with others.
- I have the right to be in Wise Mind before I get into a discussion.
- I have the right to disengage from a conflict.
- I have other rights related to my needs and wants.

List other DEAR MAN rights:

# Conflict Resolution

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Conflict resolution takes a balance of interpersonal effectiveness skills.

We all have conflicts with others, but often we struggle to resolve them effectively or we may even avoid them altogether. Use the following steps to guide you through conflicts.

1. Address issues proactively with DEAR MAN to keep the potential for and intensity of conflicts lower.
2. When in conflict, step back and see whether you and others are in Wise Mind. If you want to win or be "right" more than you want to seek understanding and resolution, you are probably not in Wise Mind. When in Emotion Mind, conflicts are rarely effective. If you or the other person are not in Wise Mind, disengage and discuss the issue later. Use distress tolerance skills before getting back into the issue(s).
3. Consider the relevant issues. Use Wise Mind to consider whether this is a conflict worth having right now with this person. Consider your priorities, goals, and values and the nature of the conflict. Pick your conflicts wisely.
4. Use FAST throughout any interpersonal situation and especially with conflict. Lowering yourself to another's "level" will decrease your self-respect and will rarely result in an effective outcome.
5. Start with listening and GIVE. Think about companies with great customer service. They avoid arguing and listen instead, and then let you know they understand your problem. This approach frequently defuses conflicts.
6. Use Nonjudgmental Stance and you might find that you agree with at least some of what the other person has to say. Breathe and give some space before you respond. Many conflicts escalate because of a mutual lack of listening coupled with rapid-fire responses.
7. Use DEAR MAN effectively. Be clear about your wants and needs, saying no, or setting boundaries. Do so in a matter-of-fact way without name-calling, labeling, judging, or getting into extremes.
8. Use Radical Acceptance when conflicts are not resolved or when others are upset and angry. Not all conflicts have an immediate resolution. Sometimes we need to step away and let it be. When resolution seems unlikely or when the conflict is escalating, gently disengage yourself and agree to revisit it later.

Remember that negotiation and making Wise Mind concessions are useful. Stay away from all-or-nothing approaches and work the dialectic.

# Interpersonal Intensity

***CORE CONCEPT*:** Begin your use of DEAR MAN skills at an effective intensity level.

Effective use of DEAR MAN sometimes depends on our level of intensity. Assertiveness is a dialectical concept, with passivity on one end and aggressiveness on the other:

**Levels of Intensity**

There are times to be more passive or more aggressive, but the most effective level of assertiveness is usually someplace in the middle. When we are too passive, it is easy for others to dismiss us. However, when we are too aggressive, others get defensive and resist our demands. Use Observe and Describe to make a Wise Mind assessment in regard to the intensity needed in each unique situation.

It works well to start at the low-middle end of the dialectic in most situations. From the low-middle end, you can dial up the intensity if needed; it is typically less effective to start out too intense and then try to dial it down.

Consider your baseline interpersonal style when applying interpersonal intensity. If you are normally passive, an effective DEAR MAN level will probably feel uncomfortably aggressive. If you are normally aggressive, an effective DEAR MAN level will probably feel uncomfortably passive. Closely Observe others' reactions and responsiveness and adjust your interpersonal intensity accordingly.

# Interpersonal Effectiveness 4: DEAR MAN Application

**CORE CONCEPT:** Use this worksheet to develop your DEAR MAN skills.

Describe what you want or need, what you need to say no to, or the boundary you need to set:

Describe (stick to facts):

Express (your opinions and feelings if needed):

Assert (be direct and specific):

Reward (what is in it for the other person?):

Describe how you can appear confident:

Describe negotiations you are willing to make:

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition*. All rights reserved.

# Making Friends

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Making friends takes positivity, time, and consistency.

Most of us want to have at least a couple of good friends, and a lot of people struggle with how to create lasting and meaningful friendships. Here are some suggestions for creating friendships to get you started.

### Meet people who share similar values and interests to yours

People tend to make friends with other people who are similar, although sometimes quite different people become fabulous friends, so do not limit yourself either. If you have a particular hobby or interest (e.g., music, woodworking, scrapbooking, ham radio, politics), maybe there is a club, group, message board, or another meeting place for people into the same thing. If you have children, seek out other parents with children of a similar age group, or, if you have dogs, visit a dog park or area where people commonly walk their dogs (or take an obedience class; your dog might need it and you will get to learn more about behaviorism).

Get active in your community or involved in particular causes (e.g., social justice, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, issues in your own community). We have to get involved to meet other people.

### Meet people around you

People commonly become friends based on proximity. Getting to know the people who live close to you, who you work with, or whose paths you frequently cross is an effective way to develop friendships. These people do not have to be a lot like you as the familiarity that comes with getting to know people over time often bridges differences. However, as mentioned above, you have to get involved with those around you to make friendships.

### Be curious, show interest in others, ask questions, and really listen

Most people enjoy it when others take an interest in them. Learning about others is a great way to get to know them and they may reciprocate interest. When taking an interest in others, be mindful of their nonverbal communication and whether they are taking part in the interaction. Also be mindful of boundaries and do not overreach in asking questions. Stay clear of potentially controversial topics such as politics and religion at least at first, unless the context of the conversation or situation naturally leads to these topics.

### Practice give and take in relationships

Healthy relationships are based on give and take. Those who take without giving burn out friends. Those who give without getting in return feel hurt and resentful. Strive to have balance in relationships. Be the kind of friend to others that you want them to be to you.

### Be a rewarding person to be around

Consistent with behaviorism, your presence around others needs to be sufficiently rewarding or others will disconnect and avoid you. Work on being pleasant and enjoyable to be around, and others will respond. That does not mean that every interaction needs to be positive, or that you cannot rely on others for support from time to time, but if others do not feel at least intermittent rewards, it will be hard to maintain friendships. That is behaviorism.

### Do not share too much or too little

People who immediately share their story or intimate, private details of life often scare off others. On the other end of the dialectic, people who are too private can take too much effort to get to know for other people, or others may interpret a private disposition as disinterest (accurately or not). Aim for the middle ground with what you share in relationships.

### Realize that people have different social wants and needs

People are a lot like plants. Some need a lot of light and others thrive in shade. Some need only a bit of water, and others need a lot. Some plants have deep roots, and others do not. Plants are diverse, as are people. Think about yourself and people you know. Some are "people persons" and others have fewer people needs. Some people like to get to know others intimately, and others like to keep relationships more superficial. Match yourself to others in ways that work, finding people with similar people needs and accepting differences when they exist.

### Take your time

While some people become friends quickly, most friendships develop over time. Be patient. Focus on being a consistent friend to others, and in time friendships with others will materialize.

### Build respect over "liking"

If you behave in a respectful manner that leads others to respect you, others will also like you most of the time. However, if you place "liking" above respect, others might like you but there is no guarantee that they will respect you. Strive to earn others' respect in order to build friendships.

# TRUST (T) and Relationships

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Learn how to develop trust in relationships.

People who have been hurt or betrayed and/or who have experienced inconsistent relationships commonly struggle with trust. It is difficult to have rewarding friendships and other relationships if trust does not develop. The information below will help you decide whether people are trustworthy and will assist you in becoming more trustworthy yourself.

Use the acronym TRUST to remember the building blocks (**T**ruthful, **R**espectful, **U**nderstanding, **S**table, and **T**ime) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

### Truthful

Trustworthy people tell the truth, even when it is inconvenient, difficult, or will result in consequences. Do not give your trust to other people whom you know to be dishonest, and do not erode others' trust in you by being dishonest.

### Respectful

Being respectful means that others (and oneself) are treated fairly and with dignity. People who shout, intimidate, bully, are aggressive, or are otherwise disrespectful are not trustworthy.

### Understanding

People who care enough to understand others and take their perspectives, wants, and needs into account tend to be more trustworthy. It is difficult to trust those who cannot look outside themselves to care for others too.

### Stable

Trustworthy people are stable and consistent, and others can rely on their predictability. By contrast, erratic, unstable, and inconsistent people can be too hard to predict and have poor follow-through, both of which erode trust.

### Time

Time is one of the best ways to gauge trustworthiness. Trust should not be automatic; it should be developed over time. For people who have destroyed trust, working the other components of the TRUST acronym over time will help in repairing it.

# Boundaries

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Boundaries keep relationships healthy and safe.

Boundaries exist to define how we are separate from others. A goal in relationships is to be in healthy contact with others without getting too enmeshed or being too disconnected.

It is important to be connected with others while also maintaining our own emotional, psychological, and physical space. Boundaries are dialectical in nature, as we strive to balance our interpersonal needs and comfort zones with those of others. Healthy boundaries allow us to have meaningful relationships without taking on others' distress and problems and without being isolated and alone. Boundaries define who we are as individuals in relation to others and the world.

Like types of fences (e.g., invisible versus picket versus razor wire), boundaries vary based factors such as personality, family, culture, locale, situation, and setting, among other factors, as well as how defined we need to be in relation to others. Our experience, what we Observe and Describe, and our priorities, goals, and values inform us about what types of fences to put up.

Boundaries are complex, and it is difficult to recognize and practice healthy boundaries if we have not seen them modeled by others. We will therefore begin with basic definitions of boundaries as a step toward developing healthy ones.

# Definitions and Types of Boundaries

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Define boundaries in order to practice them.

### Physical

Physical boundaries include your body and the space that surrounds it (i.e., your personal space). Physical boundaries can be defined in terms of who is allowed to touch us and in what areas. These boundaries include all levels of physical intimacy and all sexual practices. Additionally, physical boundaries include what goes into us, such as food and drink, and anything else that affects our physical being.

### Psychological

Psychological boundaries include information about yourself, your thoughts and beliefs, and your values. These boundaries might include topics of conversation and anything that occupies your "mental" space. Who knows about your inner life and how it is shared (if at all) constitute psychological boundary issues.

### Emotional

Emotional boundaries include your feelings and their ability to be leveraged or manipulated (e.g., emotional "hostage-taking" or guilt-tripping). Emotional boundaries also include not taking on others' distress or expecting them to take on yours. Like psychological boundaries, who knows about your feelings and how they are shared (if at all) constitute emotional boundary issues.

### Spiritual

Spiritual boundaries include your ability to choose your own religion, higher power, or spiritual life or lack thereof. Who knows about your spiritual life and how it is shared (if at all) constitute spiritual boundary issues.

### Biographical

Biographical boundaries have to do with your history and life story. What to tell others about your life depends on many factors. Of course, psychological, emotional, and other boundaries intersect with biographical boundaries.

### General

Anything that defines and differentiates you as separate from others (and others from you) is a boundary, and anything needed to keep you healthy and safe interpersonally and in the world constitutes a boundary issue. General boundaries might be where you live, where you work, who your friends and family members are, and other general information about you.

# BOUNDARY (BO)

- ***CORE CONCEPT:*** This skill guides healthy boundaries.

Healthy boundaries are the foundation of safe and respectful relationships with others, but many people do not know where to start in terms of developing boundaries. The BOUNDARY skill establishes a system to develop effective boundaries.

Use the acronym BOUNDARY to remember the building blocks (Be aware of self, Observe others and the situation, Understand your and others' limits, Negotiate sometimes, Differences exist, Always Remember your values, Your safety comes first) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

**Be aware of self**

Use Observe and Describe to notice what you are sharing and what you are doing. Does your behavior fit the situation and your relationships with others? Does your behavior feel comfortable? Notice whether your boundaries are at either extreme, being too closed or too open for the situation and the relationships.

**Observe others and the situation**

What is happening in the situation and with others? Notice the level of interest, the information shared, and the behavior of others. Do the sharing and the behavior of others seem healthy and respectful? Note that observing others does not mean *copying* others. Keep your self-respect in mind and act accordingly. Observe and Describe what you are sharing and doing in the context of others, and understand that your boundaries exist in relation to those of others.

**Understand your and others' limits**

We all have important boundaries or limits. Be aware of your boundaries and maintain them from Wise Mind based on the needs of the situation and the relationships between you and others. Also be aware of others' boundaries and respect them.

**Negotiate sometimes**

In important relationships, we sometimes negotiate our boundaries. Negotiations happen from Wise Mind and rarely involve extreme changes. Avoid negotiating boundaries in unimportant relationships, in new relationships, or to be liked. Put your self-respect above being liked by others.

You may also negotiate your boundaries if there is a benefit in adjusting them. If your boundaries can be too undefined, work on developing tighter limits. If your boundaries can be too rigid, work on developing more flexible limits. Again, make adjustments from Wise Mind.

**Differences exist**

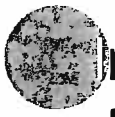
Negotiating boundaries is effective at times, but we need to balance negotiations with a healthy respect for individual differences, too. Differences in boundaries happen due to personality, personal history, culture, religion, situations, settings, and other reasons. Sometimes it is not about negotiating boundaries but maintaining your boundaries while being respectful of others' boundaries. Use Radical Acceptance or Everyday Acceptance with individual differences and learn not to take those differences personally (this is a boundary, too).

**Always Remember your values**

The decision to negotiate and adjust your boundaries or to maintain them needs to be grounded in your priorities, goals, and values. Use your values as a compass to guide your boundaries and do not compromise boundaries at the expense of self-respect.

**Your safety comes first**

People sometimes compromise boundaries to be liked or to fit in with others. Avoid situations that can harm you emotionally, psychologically, physically, spiritually, or in other ways.



# Interpersonal Effectiveness 5: BOUNDARY Application

**CORE CONCEPT:** Use this worksheet to define boundaries.

Describe your **physical** boundaries:

Describe your **psychological** boundaries:

Describe your **emotional** boundaries:

Describe your **spiritual** boundaries:

Describe **general** boundary issues important to you:

Describe what boundaries may be negotiable in some situations:

Describe what boundaries are non-negotiable to you:

Describe how establishing and maintaining boundaries can build and maintain your self-respect:

Describe how your life will be different when you establish and maintain effective boundaries:

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

# Dialectics

## Introduction to Dialectics

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Dialectics are syntheses of opposites that lead to a balance in life.

Dialectics refers to a philosophy that recognizes the tensions and conflicts that happen within us, between us, and in the world at large. In dialectics, we seek to synthesize and resolve these opposite tensions to achieve more balance in thought and behavior.

To use a straightforward example, many of us view situations as cut and dried, or black and white. However, life is typically more complicated than the all-or-nothing dichotomies we get caught in. Using dialectics, we see the relative truth on both sides and the resulting synthesis moves us away from the extremes of black and white into shades of gray. We then discover the middle ground and/or what we previously missed in our thinking, in our behavior, and in how we relate to others. This discovery leads us to more effective behavior.

A few basic assumptions make up dialectics:

- We experience opposing tensions, often perceived as contradictory. As noted above, these dialectical tensions can be internal or can happen between people, and they may arise only in certain situations. For example, many people in therapy experience tension between doing what is familiar (staying the same) and doing something new (change).
- Each position in tension or conflict has its own truth or validity, depending on the vantage point. There is no such thing as absolute or complete truth, and even the most contradictory ideas or forces have their own validity and are interrelated. No one position can exist without a relationship to another, with each part making up a larger whole. In the present example, there are valid reasons to stay the same and valid reasons to change, and all of those reasons are intertwined.
- Resolution of dialectical tensions or conflict occurs when one opposing force gradually or suddenly overcomes another, creating movement, change, a new synthesis, and ultimately a new dialectical tension. In this "stay the same versus change" example, each resolution point between the tensions leads to a movement of one type or another. Choosing to try something different, such as using a skill, is an easily seen change. But even choosing to stay the same creates change too, though it is not always as easily seen. For example, resisting change and continuing to do what is familiar may lead to an escalation of a problem. As the problem escalates, the push for change might become more pronounced, creating a new dialectical tension.
- We all continually experience opposing tensions that evolve, and we make the most effective choices when we seek to understand the dialectic nature of these conflicts,

carefully consider our options, and remain open to adjusting our course with the winds—controlling what we can while accepting what we cannot.

As you proceed through treatment, you may experience a couple common dialectical tensions.

**Self-acceptance versus making personal changes**

The inter-relatedness of these concepts is apparent. Self-acceptance is often the prerequisite to making personal changes (and is change itself). There are times and places for both. DBT therapists consider the movement between acceptance and change to be the most fundamental dialectic in DBT.

**Doing your best versus needing to do better**

At any given time you (and others) are doing the best that you can with what you have. When you allow this assumption, you find compassion and self-acceptance. Yet doing your best is dialectically counterbalanced by the need to do better. That is the reason you are practicing skills: to create a more satisfying life.

Confusing? Like any philosophy, dialectics can be difficult to understand. The following pages continue to detail basic principles of dialectics, list frequent dialectical conflicts, highlight dialectics in other DBT skills, and provide opportunities for understanding and practice. In time you will be thinking and acting dialectically!

# Dialectical Principles

▣ *CORE CONCEPT*: Following these dialectical principles will lead to dialectical thought and behavior.

**Step out of the black and white**

Thinking in black and white is characterized by extremes in which we take on either one position or the opposite, or bounce back and forth between them. It is either–or, all or nothing. Try to avoid extremes unless an extreme response fits your priorities, goals, and values and the needs of the situation as viewed from Wise Mind (this will be rare). Examples of extremes include:

- You either intensely love or hate your partner, friend, coworker, etc.
- You think you or someone else is all bad or all good.
- You approach others in an overly strict or overly lenient manner.
- You do not start a task or change unless you think you can do it all at once.
- You separate viewpoints into right and wrong categories.

I am black and white with the following people and/or in the following situations:

---

**Move into shades of gray in thoughts, behaviors, relationships, and situations**

Thinking in shades of gray is characterized by understanding other perspectives and adopting middle-ground behaviors. Exploring the "grays" can seem risky when you are used to black and white, but discovering the complexity of people and the world is part of dialectics. Examples of moving into the gray include:

- You show respect and love and/or regard to your partner, friend, coworker, etc. even when he or she performs behaviors you do not like.
- You recognize that you and other people have both positive and negative qualities.
- You approach others in a centered manner, observing and respecting boundaries and being appropriately flexible as needed.
- You start tasks and initiate changes that you are able to do now.
- You avoid separating viewpoints into right and wrong categories and notice the relative truth of different viewpoints. You seek to understand rather than judge.

I can move into shades of gray with the people and situations listed above by:

---

**Be flexible and adaptable**

Meet other people and situations where they are at and learn to do what is needed. Recognize and respect that there are many ways of seeing things and many ways to approach the same situation, bringing options to your life. Without losing your center, practice bending from time to time, just as a strong tree bends in heavy winds. To illustrate flexibility and adaptability:

- You decide to "go with the flow" instead of trying to control everything.
- You let other people have their way at times and/or compromise.
- You try a new or novel way to accomplish a task or goal.
- You listen and find the validity in a viewpoint you disagree with (i.e., you find something to agree with about the viewpoint).
- You remain open to what each moment has to offer.

I can be more flexible with people, in situations, and in life by:

_____

_____

**Act from your values and do what works!**

Although dialectics often call for entering the grays, being flexible, and finding the middle ground, *true balance comes from maintaining a solid core*. Dialectics do not mean being wishy-washy, being a chameleon, or having an "anything goes" attitude. Remember to stay centered within yourself and in relation to other people and the world through connecting with your values and doing what is effective for the moment, in both the short and the long term. This includes practicing dialectical abstinence with harmful and/or addictive behaviors.

# Dialectics 1: Conflicts 1

**CORE CONCEPT:** Identify shades of gray in common dialectical conflicts.

The following are common examples of dialectical tensions. For each conflict, identify what is valid about each side of the dialectic and then identify middle options. You can write notes here, write on a separate sheet of paper, or plug a conflict into the worksheet Dialectics 2: Conflicts 2. If a conflict does not seem to apply to your life, imagine how it might in a different situation or for a different person.

Self-acceptance versus change:

Wanting a different life while resisting change:

Being the real you versus being vulnerable to others:

Structure versus freedom:

Novelty versus predictability:

Fear of needing people conflicting with fear of being independent:

Desire to succeed while actively destroying your progress:

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

Setting goals that are too easy or goals that are too hard:

Caring for others and still maintaining boundaries:

Balance focusing on yourself versus focusing on others:

Letting go of control to gain control:

Seeing only pros or only cons of a situation:

Not being a doormat and not being demanding:

Asserting your values while respecting the values of others:

Being too passive or too aggressive:

Both being capable and asking for help:

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition*. All rights reserved.

Being too private versus being an open book:

Doing your best and needing to do better:

Balance of "old" self with "new" self:

"Want-tos" versus "have-tos":

Taking a situation personally when it is not about you:

Wanting perfection and knowing you are human:

An all-or-nothing approach to anything:

Picking your battles:

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

# Dialectics 2: Conflicts 2

**CORE CONCEPT:** Use this worksheet when stuck in a dialectical conflict.

Describe your conflict (be specific):

Describe the other skills you need to be dialectical (e.g., Wise Mind, Nonjudgmental Stance, FAST, GIVE, DEAR MAN):

Describe your current "place" on the dialectic and how it makes sense (find the context and validate it!):

Describe the opposite (or another) position and how it makes sense (find the context and validate it!):

Describe the balance or synthesis of both positions and how this dialectic makes sense:

Describe your specific dialectical action plan (your movement toward change):

Describe how your life will be different when you resolve this conflict:

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

# Dialectics 3: Exercises

**CORE CONCEPT:** Practice these exercises to be more dialectical in your life.

The following exercises can bring about dialectical balance and assist you in seeing options in your life. Remember that in dialectics we can see both sides: Experiencing a difficult problem or crisis does not mean that we are hopelessly stuck, and seeing another side of the problem or crisis does not invalidate how serious or painful it is to you. Remember to validate yourself and look across the dialectic.

**Dialectical exercise 1: What is going right?**

Often we focus on what is wrong and neglect the other side of the dialectic. Asking what is going right, well, or in your direction, however small, helps to bring another perspective and balance.

**EXAMPLES:**

- Someone does poorly on a test but also has an opportunity to use a tutor or complete an assignment to gain extra credit, or may be doing well in another subject or area.
- A significant problem occurs at work but you have the knowledge and/or support to address it effectively.
- Your child has a disability but shows resiliency and a positive attitude.

*If you feel down, what is going right, well, or in your direction?*

**Dialectical exercise 2: What are your resources?**

We often think of our limitations and overlook the resources that will help us reach our goals.

**EXAMPLES:**

- You are out of shape but have running shoes, exercise equipment, a gym membership, or a safe place to walk.
- You experience depression but have a therapist, self-help books, and DBT skills to practice.
- A person cannot currently get ahead in his or her current job but has access to classes to advance his or her career or has in-demand job skills and can look for new employment.

*With any particular problem, what are your resources?*

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

**Dialectical exercise 3: Is there a silver lining?**

Few things in the world are all good or all bad. When a painful situation occurs, consider whether there is a silver lining. Sometimes problems and even tragedies reveal opportunities.

**EXAMPLES:**

- A person is served divorce papers and now has the opportunity to reinvest in hobbies and other interests given up during the marriage or has the opportunity to find a more suitable mate in time.
- You lose your house in foreclosure and find relief in not struggling to make a high mortgage payment every month.
- You change schools but have the chance to have a fresh start and make new friends.

*Pick a current problem you are experiencing. What is the silver lining?*

**Dialectical exercise 4: The dialectics of control**

Some people have more of an external locus of control. They think that things happen to them, they frequently blame others, and they miss opportunities to make effective changes that are actually under their control. Other people have more of an internal locus of control and believe that they have influence over their environment and can take charge of their choices and lives.

**EXAMPLES:**

- One person believes he will fail a test no matter how hard he studies whereas another person believes that her preparation will make a significant difference in the outcome.
- One person thinks she cannot ever be happy and does little to try to improve her life whereas another person invests himself in creating a happy life.
- You blame others for the problems in your life instead of taking responsibility for your choices and behavior.

*Think about a problem you have. Where is your locus of control and would you be more effective if you shifted it?*

**Dialectical exercise 5: All or something!**

Often we get in all-or-nothing places in regard to change. All or something means that, if you cannot totally throw yourself into the change process, at least do something that moves you closer to a goal. Some movement is preferable to no movement!

**EXAMPLES:**

- A person who wants a healthier lifestyle overhauls his diet and starts exercising every day.
- You are overwhelmed by a dirty and disorganized home so you clean one part of one room.

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

- One person fills out and practices a skills plan to solve a problem while another person starts reading and thinking about skills to practice someday.

*Think about a problem you have. How can you throw yourself totally into change or at least do something toward the change?*

**Dialectical exercise 6: Compassion for others**

We can often be harsh in our assessments of others, holding them to high standards and being judgmental. Sometimes compassion is a better route for both others and ourselves. Note that being compassionate does not mean that people automatically get a "pass" for ineffective behavior. We can be both compassionate and accountable, which is dialectic.

**EXAMPLES:**

- You get cut off in traffic. Rather than getting angry, you think that the offending driver may be having a bad or stressful day.
- Your child is having a tantrum and you remember that being a toddler is no walk in the park.
- A person's boss is critical of her employees. That person recognizes that the boss is overwhelmed by too much responsibility and wants the business to do well.

*Think about a person with whom you are struggling. How can you be compassionate toward this person?*

**Dialectical exercise 7: Movement through scaling techniques**

Sometimes it is difficult to imagine big changes happening in your life. When you struggle with thinking about large changes, you can conceptualize smaller changes using scaling techniques. Start by listing the severity of your problem from 10 (extreme problem) to 0 (no problem). After you have rated your problem, consider what you would be doing differently in terms of behavior if the problem improved by one or more points. Then commit yourself to your new behavior(s) to create the incremental change.

**EXAMPLES:**

- An overweight person rates his problem as an 8. He concludes that when his problem is at a 6 he will be going to his local health club at least three times a week. He commits to going to the club.
- You are depressed and rate your depression's severity at a 10. You think that at a 9 you will be actively sharing and talking in your program group. You start to talk more in program.
- A parent has a child with behavior problems rated at a 7. The parent says that when the problems are below a 5 she will be having more fun with her child. The parent starts engaging in more playtime with her child.

*Think about a problem you have and rate it from 10 to 0. What behavior(s) will you be doing when the problem improves by two points? Remember to do what you identify!*

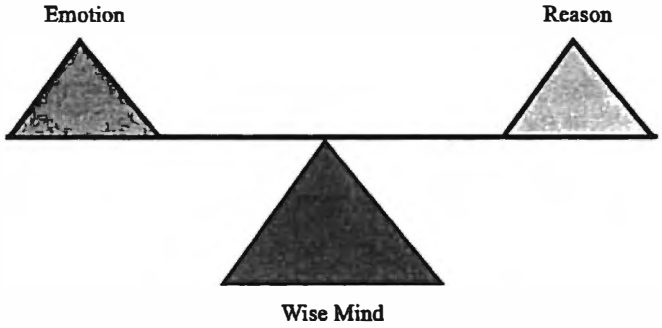
Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

# Dialectics Applied to Other Skills

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Dialectics are central to DBT skills.

We can apply dialectics to many of the skills and concepts learned in DBT. Even when dialectics are not explicitly mentioned, it may be useful to think about how they apply.

In the Mindfulness module, balancing emotion and reason to enter Wise Mind is a dialectic.




It is common for emotions and reason to conflict with one another, and finding the balance between emotion and reason in a given situation depends on what works. When we go too far in one direction—way into Emotion Mind or way into Reason Mind—the need for the opposite is created. To reach a resolution we need to respect both emotions and reason, and creating balance between the two is what brings us to Wise Mind, that centered place where we can validate our emotions *and* make effective choices.

Another example in the Mindfulness module is the dialectical balance between attending to emotional (or other) pain in life versus redirecting attention to a pleasant distraction. There are times to relate mindfully to your pain and times to turn your mind to other people, to your environment, or to a skill from another module. Again, what we chose to be mindful of is based on effectiveness: Attend to what is needed in the moment without judgment.

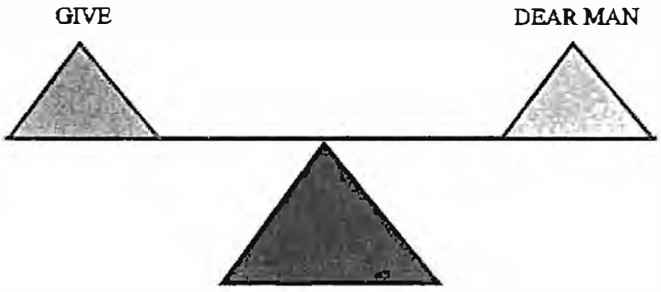
In the Distress Tolerance module there is a basic dialectic tension between tolerating a problem and surviving it through the use of distress tolerance skills versus actively working on solving the problem. Distraction is helpful when you cannot solve the problem in the short term, but it becomes counterproductive if it becomes overused and you continue to distract from problems you are actually able to resolve. In other words, there are times to distract yourself from problems and times to get down to solving them.

There are other dialectics in the Distress Tolerance module too, such as using distress tolerance skills that are energizing versus using distress tolerance skills that are soothing, or getting into distress tolerance skills that are self-focused versus getting into skills that focus on other people. Yet another example from distress tolerance is the Pros and Cons skill, which is a dialectical exercise in and of itself. The very nature of Pros and Cons highlights how choices can have both upsides and downsides to consider when resolving conflicts, making choices, and solving problems.

In the Emotion Regulation module, dialectics can be seen in achieving balance through self-care skills that include regulating diet, sleep, and exercise. To use self-care, we frequently have to make difficult choices that involve compromise. Choosing a healthy diet may result in giving up certain foods you

love, getting enough sleep may mean going to bed early and missing out on other activities, and engaging in exercise often requires prioritizing it over other demands. Some emotion regulation skills also strike natural dialectical balances, such as Build Positive Experience (fun) counterbalancing Build Mastery (responsibility) and Opposite to Emotion (acting opposite to ineffective behaviors that emotions pull you into) counterbalancing Mood Momentum (continuing to engage in behaviors that generate positive emotions that you want).

Next, dialectics underscore the skills in the Interpersonal Effectiveness module. In particular, the skills GIVE and DEAR MAN require a dialectical balance in order to be effective.




The balance between others' wants and needs (captured by the GIVE skill) and our wants and needs (captured by the DEAR MAN skill) is important for successful relationships. If you get too focused on others or too focused on yourself, conflicts are likely to arise. To resolve those conflicts, you will need to reestablish balance in your relationships. To find an effective balance, we often we rely on our FAST skills (e.g., being fair and sticking to values) to guide how much GIVE versus DEAR MAN we use in relationships.

The examples mentioned above just scratch the surface. As you work through this book, try to notice how dialectics apply to other skills and their use too.

# Using Behavior and Solution Analysis to Create Change

***CORE CONCEPT:*** Behavior and solution analysis helps you to understand and change problem behaviors.

**Behavior analysis** (also called chain analysis or change analysis) is a tool used to understand what precedes and follows a behavior, usually called a "problem behavior" or "target behavior." The more we understand about our behaviors, the more options we have for changing ineffective ones. It should be noted, though, that behavior analysis can be used to understand more about effective behaviors too: what helps to prompt them, and how the results of performing those behaviors differ from the consequences of target behaviors. Understanding more about our effective behaviors can lead us to strengthen them.

Do not be intimidated by behavior analysis. Although it can get quite detailed, the simplest behavior analysis is "A-B-C." What are the **A**ntecedents leading to the **B**ehavior of interest, and what **C**onsequences follow it? When a sequential, step-by-step picture of the antecedents and consequences of any behavior is established, you can look at each step to problem-solve with skills or actions that will create positive change. These problem-solving steps are called "solution analysis."

Behavior analysis starts by identifying the specific target behavior. Examples might include drinking or getting high, self-injury, not participating in therapy, missing an appointment, not taking medications, or breaking a program rule. After the behavior is identified, the prompting event, or what triggered or set off the behavior, is described. Then, leading up to the prompting event, it is necessary to investigate what made you more vulnerable to acting on the target behavior in the first place. For example, did you experience poor sleep, miss medications, get into a fight, or leave open opportunities to engage in unskillful behavior?

Once the target behavior, vulnerabilities, and the prompting event are well defined, you can begin to establish the links that bridge the prompting event to the target behavior. Potential links include emotions, thoughts, physical sensations, and other behaviors leading up to the target behavior. This step slows down the action so that you can see everything that comes between a prompting event and a behavior, building awareness of what is often missed unless explored in detail.

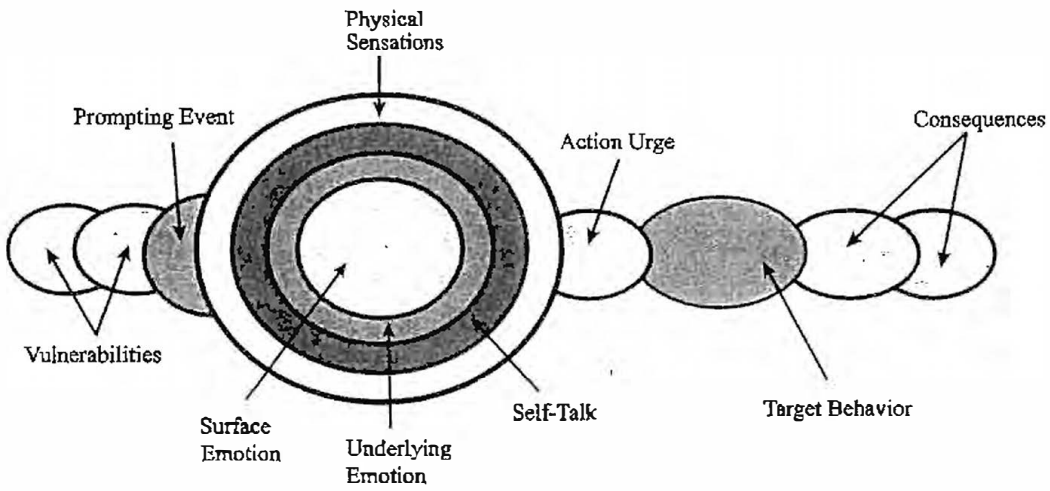
The last part of the behavior analysis is identifying the consequences of the target behavior. Consequences involve the impacts of the behavior on you, on other people, and on the environment. Some consequences reinforce the target behavior while most other consequences are detrimental. It is also important to see whether certain consequences become vulnerabilities for future target behaviors. For example, if a consequence was feeling shame, that feeling could make one vulnerable to escaping that painful emotion through a target behavior such as self-injury.

With the sequence from vulnerabilities through consequences established, you can then develop the solution analysis for each step, starting with skills to reduce vulnerabilities and ending with skills for dealing effectively with the consequences, including making appropriate amends with others by repairing mistakes and correcting whatever harm was done.

As you complete a behavior and solution analysis, remember to be nonjudgmental and yet accountable to yourself. The goal of this tool is to help you apply your skills so you can be more effective next time.

The following pages contain sample behavior and solution analyses. Use the form or forms that work best for you. Also note that many of the worksheets in this manual follow the basics of behavior analysis: building awareness of what comes before and after particular behaviors in order to problem-solve with skills.

## Visual Behavior and Solution Analysis




### Directions

The more you understand about behaviors you want to change, the more you can be effective in the use of your skills to meet that goal. Start anywhere on the behavior and solution analysis and work forward and/or backward to figure out each link, then identify other skills you could use or choices you could make with your new awareness. Remember to be *nonjudgmental* with yourself, the situation, and others. The following explains each identified link, but remember that you can add as many links as you need to understand what happened and that *every link presents an opportunity for change*. Also, look for skills that you might already have been using but not have noticed or for which you need more practice. The chances are you have been using skills!

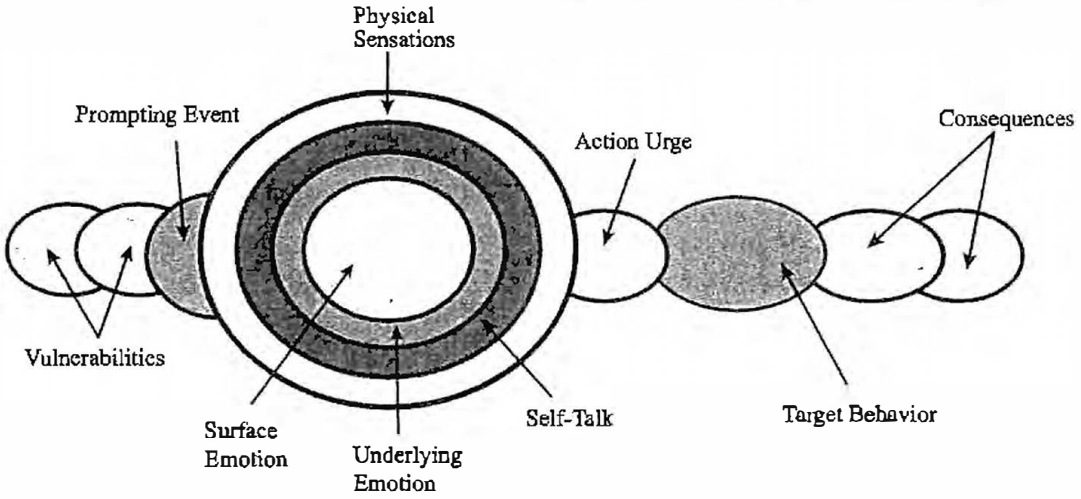
- **Vulnerabilities:** What made you vulnerable to acting on the prompting event with the target behavior? Examples might include not doing self-care, having a tough day, getting into a conflict, or other stressors. Be as specific as possible.
- **Prompting event:** What triggered or set off the target behavior? Describe in nonjudgmental, descriptive words.
- **Surface emotion:** What emotion(s) occurred after the prompting event that was/were most easily noticed?
- **Underlying emotion:** Was/were there an emotion or emotions further below the surface? Examples might include feeling hurt or embarrassed underneath anger or feeling guilty underneath depression.
- **Self-talk:** What automatic thoughts or beliefs were happening that fed your emotions and the following action urge?
- **Physical sensations:** What was happening in and with your body?
- **Action urge:** What did the emotions and other factors motivate or pull you to do? This link is a critical moment of choice in changing the behavior, knowing that we do not need to act on our urges.

- **Target behavior:** This is the behavior you want (and need) to change. You will want to develop skillful alternatives to this behavior, but remember that using skills at earlier links might effectively short-circuit the behavior too.
- **Consequences:** What happened after the behavior? What did you gain and/or lose, in both the short term and the long term? Did the outcomes cause a new vulnerability or stressor and/or cycle back to the beginning again?

**Solutions**

At each step, brainstorm skills or choices that could create behavior change and more effective consequences. Also plan for how you can deal skillfully with the consequences you are experiencing, *including how you may need to make amends with others.*

# Visual Behavior and Solution Analysis




Describe your vulnerabilities:

Describe the prompting event (what triggered or set off the target behaviors?):

Describe your emotion on the surface (the one mostly easily noticed):

Describe any underlying emotions (the ones hidden underneath):

Describe your self-talk:

Describe your physical sensations:

Describe the action urge:

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

Describe the behavior:

Describe the consequences:

Solutions:

Fill in alternative skills and choices that would be more effective at each step.

Consider how these alternatives would have altered the consequences for you and for other people.

Describe how you will use skills effectively to deal with the consequences that exist:

Describe who else was affected by your choice(s):

Describe how you will make amends with these people (if appropriate):

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition*. All rights reserved.

# Behavior and Solution Analysis: Short Form

Name:_____ Date:_____

**PURPOSE:** To get your needs met more effectively through problem-solving ineffective behaviors and planning for skillful behaviors.

What was the target behavior? Be specific.

_____

What led up to the target behavior? Give specifics of what made you vulnerable and each factor (e.g., emotions, thoughts, behaviors, sensations, situations) that came before the problem behavior.

_____

What did you gain or expect to gain by making the choice you did? How did you think it might help or benefit you? Did it meet your needs?

_____

What were the negative consequences of your choice for you and others?

_____

What skills could you use to meet your needs more effectively next time (in the short term and long term)?

_____

Short-term plan:

_____

Long-term plan:

_____

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition*. All rights reserved.

# Behavior and Solution Analysis: Long Form

Name: _____ Date: _____

**PURPOSE:** To get your needs met more effectively through problem-solving ineffective behaviors and planning for skillful behaviors.

**Step 1:** Describe the target behavior

What did you do?

_____

How did you do it?

_____

Where did you do it?

_____

When did you do it?

_____

Who else was involved?

_____

**Step 2:** Identify what was going on in your life before the target behavior

What event set off the target behavior?

_____

_____

What were the events leading up to the event that set off the target behavior?

_____

_____

Which of the events leading up to the target behavior were the most important?

_____

_____

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition*. All rights reserved.

What were you feeling prior to and during the target behavior?

What were you thinking prior to and during the target behavior?

What need(s) were you trying to meet with the target behavior?

At what point did you make your decision to use the target behavior?

**Step 3:** Identify the consequences of the target behavior

How may you have benefited from the target behavior (in the short and long term)?

How may you have been hurt by the target behavior (in the short and long term)?

What changes happened with the following (in the short and long term):

Emotions:

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition*. All rights reserved.

Thoughts:

Physical sensations:

Behaviors:

Events around you:

The way others treat you:

**Step 4:** Identify what DBT skills you could use to be more effective in a similar situation (Review steps 1, 2, and 3, and look for ways to insert DBT skills at each step and substep.)

What DBT skills could you have used or could you use next time when similar events take place?

What consequences (or potential consequences) to the target behavior might help you to control or avoid that behavior in the future?

How can you remove access (i.e., burn the bridge) to the target behavior?

What else might you do to get your needs met in an effective way that would not hurt you, others, and/or your treatment?

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

**Step 5:** Summarize the problem-solving in Steps 1-4

What were the most important events leading up to the target behavior?

What was the target behavior?

What were the consequences of the target behavior?

What DBT skills can you use and at what stage could you use them to get your needs met more effectively when similar events happen?

What is the earliest point at which you could insert skills?

**Step 6:** Identify resources/assets you have to implement DBT skills instead of using the target behavior

What resources/assets do you have available that will assist your DBT skill use?

Additional input from your therapist, group, or significant other(s):

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

# Problem-Solving

## Introduction to Problem-Solving

***CORE CONCEPT:*** A systematic approach promotes effective problem-solving.

Problems of various types and levels of difficulty frequent our lives. If we do not actively work to solve our problems, they grow in number and size, and we end up chronically overwhelmed or even paralyzed by them.

Unfortunately, many of us do not have a method for solving problems. We try to solve them by trial and error or in a haphazard manner. These approaches sometimes work but tend to be ineffective overall.

Another difficulty many of us have is Emotion Mind "problem-solving." We place disproportionate importance on our feelings and the information that comes from them. In turn, we neglect information and facts that would give us a more balanced approach to problem-solving based on more complete information. Therefore, it is beneficial to balance our emotions with our reason to reach a Wise Mind place to work through problems and difficulties. In Wise Mind, we can validate our feelings *and* connect with our priorities, goals, and values to engage in an effective approach to problem-solving.

Problem-solving starts with being aware of problems as they come up and developing a willingness to address them effectively.

# Basic Principles of Problem-Solving

■ ***CORE CONCEPT*:** Use these principles when you approach solving a problem.

### Take one problem at a time

Most people have more than one active problem at any given time. It is overwhelming to have many problems, but the reality is that you can only solve one at a time. Start somewhere. You might start with your easiest problem to solve or your most important problem to solve, or you might need to address problems sequentially (i.e., you might need to solve a certain problem first in order to solve a related problem).

### Understand and define the problem

Once you pick a problem, specifically define the problem with nonjudgmental, descriptive language. If you do not understand the problem and cannot define it, then it may be difficult to figure out a solution. Be as precise as possible in your definition of the problem.

### Research the facts

To better understand and define your problem, you need to do your homework. What information do you need or are you missing? Information is power and is the difference between being uncertain or paralyzed in the face of a problem and seeing a clear pathway to a solution.

### What is the cause of the problem?

Identifying and addressing the cause of the problem is sometimes necessary to solving it. Stay nonjudgmental and be sure that identifying the cause of the problem does not lead you to blaming. Getting stuck in "blaming mind" is seldom productive and can often make the problem worse. However, if you are able to be skillful to decrease or eliminate the cause(s) of your problem, do so.

### What works (or has worked)?

Have you solved this problem (or one like it) before? If so, what did you do that worked? Do more of the solution behavior(s). In a similar vein, what is different about your behavior, others' behavior, or the environment when the problem is not happening? Do more of what is working when the problem is not happening. From Wise Mind, do what you think is needed to solve the problem with a focus on Willingness and Effectiveness.

### What does not work (or has not worked)?

Have you done anything that has contributed to the problem or has not worked in bringing about a solution? What are you doing, or not doing, when the problem is happening? Do less of or eliminate behaviors that have contributed to the problem or have not worked toward finding a solution.

**Can you take it one step at a time?**

Some problems, especially large or complicated ones, need to be solved sequentially or in steps. Break your problem down into steps that will enable you to reach a solution, and take the first one.

**Use Willingness, cooperation, commitment, and follow-through!**

Often what is needed to solve a problem does not fit with our preferences. Be willing to put aside your preconceived notions of how you think things should happen in order to do exactly what is needed. Be willing to cooperate and be part of solutions and not part of problems. Work with and not against others in seeking a solution; offer and seek help as needed. Once your action steps toward a commitment are identified, commit yourself to following through.

# Using SOLVED (SO)

- ***CORE CONCEPT:*** Use this systematic approach to solve problems.

Use the acronym SOLVED to remember the building blocks (**S**tep back and be objective, **O**bserve available options, **L**imit barriers, **V**alues driven, **E**ffectiveness first, **D**ialectical thought and action) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

### Step back and be objective

Observe and Describe from Reason Mind or Wise Mind. What is the problem in nonjudgmental terms? Stick to the facts: who, what, where, when, how, and why. Write it down.

### Observe available options

Brainstorm and list as many options as you can, and then determine what options are available. Remember to accept the realities of both the problem and the possible solutions. Also list the resources you can use at this step. Use DEAR MAN to ask for ideas, help, and guidance if needed.

### Limit barriers (emotional and environmental)

Remove barriers that stand between you and a potential solution. Do not get in your own way. Use Radical or Everyday Acceptance, Willingness, and Nonjudgmental Stance. Do not amplify or minimize your problems. Gauge the level of your problem and address it in a manner-of-fact way. Identify whether barriers exist in your environment and address them as needed. Again, use DEAR MAN to ask for ideas, help, and guidance if needed.

### Values driven (what are your priorities and goals?)

Use your priorities, goals, and values as your compass. Values will not lead you astray in the long term. They will be the foundation of solutions that work. From your available options, pick the solution that best solves the problem while building or at least maintaining your self-respect.

### Effectiveness first

What will work? The most effective solutions will not always be your preferred solutions. Accept that life has problems and solve this one so you can get on to the next one.

### Dialectical thought and action

Solutions often involve compromise. Be dialectical with thoughts and actions and remember that effective, values-driven solutions often come from the middle ground.

After following this process, make a decision and take action. Evaluate the outcomes and use the SOLVED process to readjust your approach and the solution to your problem if needed.

# Problem-Solving 1: SOLVED

**CORE CONCEPT:** Use this worksheet to solve problems.

Step back and describe your problem from Wise Mind:

Brainstorm and then describe the options and resources available to you:

Describe your barriers and the skills that you will use to address them:

Describe your priorities, goals, and values and how they can guide your solution:

Use the above information to describe what will work:

Describe your solution and action plan:

Describe how your life will be different when you solve this problem:

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

Module 9

# Building a Satisfying Life

## Introduction to Building a Satisfying Life

- ***CORE CONCEPT:*** Routines and structure lead to a satisfying life.

Every life is worth living, but many of us find our lives unsatisfying, unenjoyable, or even miserable at times. Life is more satisfying when we develop routines that include predictable and enjoyable relaxation and fun balanced with responsibilities.

Routines do not need to be complicated. In fact, most of us benefit from mindful simplicity in life. Mindful simplicity means connecting to and experiencing the routines that define and structure our days.

Consider that the Dalai Lama (2009) describes a daily routine that includes meals, meditation, studying scripture, mending watches, gardening, working, and watching a little TV before bed. Our routines do not have to be spectacular. Peace and enjoyment can come with predictability.

Also consider that what works for children generally works for adults. Many of us make the mistake of believing that we no longer need the structure and predictability that children do. In some cases, we never had structure or predictability as children, so we never had the opportunity to continue having it in adolescence or adulthood.

One of the first tasks of building a satisfying life is establishing a routine. Before beginning, consider the following dialectic: *want to* versus *have to*. Our routines need balance between what we want to do and what we have to do, and we need to have a middle ground between enjoyable activities and responsibilities. Dialectically speaking, going too far in either direction creates the need for balance with the opposite. We need to rework our routine when we are stuck on one side or the other.

Two other dialectics to consider are *structure* versus *flexibility* and *predictability* versus *novelty*. Remember that structured routines benefit us, but, if they become too rigid, we may feel trapped by them. Obviously, the other extreme of excessive flexibility may result in too much unpredictability or chaos, which stands in the way of developing a satisfying life.

Too much flexibility leaves us unsure about what we need to be doing, and that causes distress. The middle ground is creating a routine that is solid but includes opportunity for change and flexibility based on the demands of the day.

A predictable routine allows us to feel settled and safe and to have a "home base" from which to operate. At the same time, too much predictability leads to feeling stifled. We also need to experience novelty and change in our routines. Every day does not need to be the same. Planning open times and free days can be part of establishing the balance.

Remember that building a routine will take time but will reap great rewards.

# Using ROUTINE (RO)

■ ***CORE CONCEPT:*** Develop a schedule to get your life on track.

Use the acronym ROUTINE to remember the building blocks (**R**esponsibilities, **O**ngoing structure, **U**se of skills, **T**raditions, **I**nterests included, **N**ovelty, **E**nvision a satisfying life) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

### Responsibilities

We get overwhelmed when our responsibilities are not taken care of daily. Break bigger responsibilities down into daily steps. Make a list of both major and minor responsibilities and fill them into the My Routines and Schedule worksheet (below).

### Ongoing structure

Routines are about structure that is ongoing, predictable, and repeating. Structure keeps us from getting stuck in symptoms and is the foundation for building a satisfying life. Use the My Routines and Schedule worksheet (below) to structure your days, and be sure to follow it.

### Use of skills

Remember that you need to learn and practice all of your skills as a part of your routine, just like someone in school or college does daily homework. Include reminders for the skills you specifically want to practice on a given day. Also remember that other skills might be needed to follow your routine, such as Opposite to Emotion.

### Traditions

Traditions give meaning to our lives and those of others. Part of a satisfying life is developing traditions that you and the people around you enjoy.

Many of us think of traditions as being tied to seasons and holidays, and those can be fun to establish, but traditions can also be as simple as a family bowling night, a specific dinner on a certain night, or celebrating accomplishments (yours or others') with something special. You can get back into traditions you have valued or use your imagination to create new traditions for yourself and your loved ones.

### Interests included

Routines that do not include our personal interests are difficult to maintain. Be sure to build in what you like to do. If you are unsure what you are interested in, pick some options from the Activities List (see below) and plug them into your schedule. Remember to approach a new interest or activity with a Nonjudgmental Stance.

## Novelty

Be careful not to build too much structure into your routine. Routines also need space for flexibility and novelty. Make sure you explicitly leave space to try new activities or be spontaneous. Consider scheduling a free morning, afternoon, evening, or day into your routine.

## Envision a satisfying life

Routines, schedules, and structure take time to get established. Remember not to give up on building habits toward living a more satisfying life. Stay mindful of how your routine will help you with your priorities, goals, and values. Do not give up!

# Everyday Care

■ ***CORE CONCEPT:*** Basic physical and mental self-care need to be part of a daily routine.

Basic physical and mental self-care are needed every day to establish a foundation on which to build. As we learn more skills, we might develop (or you may already have developed) more elaborate and effective self-care. For most of us, we need to revisit the basics at least occasionally, and all of us need to have these basics be part of our daily routine.

Refer to the lists that follow and then describe the other tasks you would like to attend to each day.

**Routine physical self-care**

Brush teeth

Wash face and/or bathe or shower

Put on clean clothes

Take medications, vitamins, etc.

Eat a balanced meal at least three times a day plus healthy snacks

Move around, stretch, and exercise

Have a bedtime routine

Describe other routine **physical** self-care tasks you need daily:

---

**Routine mental self-care**

Mindfulness (breathing or relaxation)

Identify positives and gratefulness

Encourage yourself

Plan positive activities

Connect with family, friends, and support

Nurture your spirit

Describe other routine **mental** self-care tasks you need daily:

---

Describe how your life will be different when you effectively practice physical and mental self-care:

---

# Building a Satisfying Life 1: Activities List

**CORE CONCEPT:** Use this list to plan activities in your schedule.

We need to have pleasant activities scheduled every day. Below is a list of pleasant activities, many of which are free. Add pleasant activities that you enjoy to the list. Make sure to schedule at least three pleasant activities each day. Also, remember to use mindfulness skills with each experience.

1. Dress up or down.
2. Play board games.
3. Have a snack mindfully.
4. Appreciate a favorite actor or act yourself.
5. Read a text of your religion.
6. Advocate for the National Alliance on Mental Illness, a political cause, or the environment.
7. Stargaze, find constellations, or wonder about the universe.
8. Read about animals or visit the zoo.
9. Appreciate the arts or create your own artworks.
10. Play badminton.
11. Redecorate or rearrange your house.
12. Join a group.
13. Have a conversation with a friend or a stranger.
14. Watch or play baseball or softball.
15. Make crafts.
16. Watch, read about, or fly an airplane or build a model.
17. Watch or play basketball or play HORSE.
18. Bathe or shower mindfully.
19. Relax at (or imagine being at) the beach; look for shells or clean the beach up.
20. Do beadwork.
21. Beatbox, rap, or sing.
22. Ring a bell.
23. Breathe mindfully.
24. Write a short story.
25. Bike.
26. Feed or watch birds.
27. Blog or visit blogs.
28. Boat.
29. Bowl.
30. Bet a small amount of money.
31. Start a fantasy football league (or join one).
32. Play checkers.
33. Help the disabled.
34. Contribute at a food pantry.
35. Bake a cake and decorate it.
36. Go geocaching.
37. Do calligraphy.
38. Camp.

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

39. Make candles or ice candles.
40. Canoe.
41. Have a picnic in your home.
42. Read about cars or go for a drive.
43. Do some cheerleading.
44. Take a nap.
45. Watch one TV show mindfully.
46. Window-shop (without spending).
47. Play chess.
48. Go to a place of worship or engage in associated activities.
49. Watch clouds.
50. Make a sand castle.
51. Collect coins.
52. Go to an antique shop to browse.
53. Collect artwork.
54. Collect vinyl or CDs or look at and listen to old ones.
55. Compose music or lyrics.
56. Look at architecture in magazines or around town.
57. Enjoy perfume or cologne.
58. Do computer activities.
59. Cook.
60. Crochet.
61. Cross-stitch.
62. Do a crossword puzzle.
63. Dance anywhere.
64. Play darts (not lawn darts).
65. Look at your collectibles.
66. Bowl with friends or in a league.
67. Daydream.
68. Juggle.
69. Play dominoes or set them up to let them fall.
70. Draw.
71. Eat out or fix a special meal at home.
72. Take a community education course or educate yourself on a new topic.
73. Tinker with electronics.
74. Do embroidery.
75. Entertain others.
76. Exercise: aerobics, weights, yoga.
77. Go fishing.
78. Watch or play football.
79. Take a hot or cool shower.
80. Tell jokes and laugh.
81. Go four-wheeling.
82. Paint a wall.
83. Enjoy or maintain an aquarium.
84. Play Frisbee or disc golf.
85. Mend clothes.
86. Have a spirited debate (without needing to be right).
87. Join a club.
88. Play games.
89. Garden.
90. Swim.

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition*. All rights reserved.

91. Keep a dream journal.
92. Hug a friend or family member.
93. Visit garage sales.
94. Be intimate with a loved one.
95. Be a mentor.
96. Build a bird house.
97. Do genealogy.
98. Walk your (or a neighbor's) dog.
99. Visit an art museum.
100. Go to the movies or watch a favorite movie.
101. Golf.
102. Practice putting.
103. Give yourself a facial.
104. Paint a picture or finger-paint.
105. Watch funny YouTube videos (or post one).
106. Find an activity listed more than once on this list.
107. Go go-kart racing.
108. Play Texas Hold'em.
109. Volunteer at an animal protection organization.
110. Write a letter to an editor.
111. Light a candle and enjoy the smell or the flame.
112. Play video games.
113. Scrapbook.
114. Become a pen pal.
115. Support any cause.
116. Play guitar.
117. Write a handwritten letter.
118. Hike.
119. Do home repair.
120. Breathe in fresh air.
121. Build a home theater system.
122. Record your favorite shows and watch them back to back.
123. Air drum or air guitar to a cool song.
124. Ride a horse.
125. Write a thank-you letter.
126. Hunt.
127. Surf the internet.
128. Fix a bike.
129. Make jewelry.
130. Browse your favorite store.
131. Put together a jigsaw puzzle.
132. Build a fort with your kids.
133. Journal.
134. Juggle.
135. Kayak.
136. See life like a young child.
137. Say a prayer.
138. Build or fly kites.
139. Knit.
140. Tie knots.
141. Sing a silly song.
142. Pick flowers.

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

143. Learn anything new.
144. Learn a foreign language.
145. Practice telling a joke.
146. Learn an instrument.
147. Listen to music.
148. Macramé.
149. Color with kids (or without).
150. Smile at someone.
151. Be affectionate.
152. Do a magic trick.
153. Meditate.
154. Use a metal detector.
155. Teach a child something.
156. Build models.
157. Ride or look at motorcycles.
158. Play with children.
159. Go mountain biking.
160. Work with a team.
161. Plant an herb garden.
162. Go to a community center.
163. Grow a Chia pet.
164. Climb a mountain.
165. Make a root beer float.
166. Lie in the grass.
167. Scrapbook.
168. Practice a musical instrument.
169. Make an item of clothing.
170. Read reviews on a topic of interest.
171 Do origami.
172. Play Trivial Pursuit or any trivia game.
173. Clean out a closet and donate unneeded items.
174. Plan a movie marathon.
175. Look at StumbleUpon.com.
176. Join a chat room.
177. Play paintball.
178. Go to a water park.
179. Pass on something thoughtful found on the internet.
180. Go to a video arcade.
181. Indulge in a guilty pleasure.
182. Email friends and family.
183. Join a drum circle.
184. Rollerblade.
185. Swing at a playground.
186. Go to the mall to walk or browse (without spending).
187. Water your plants.
188. Make a collage.
189. Hang with a friend.
190. Listen to music and read the lyrics.
191. Try a new recipe.
192. Paint your nails.
193. Sit by any body of water.
194. Go to the library.
195. Organize a neighborhood garden.
196. Groom a pet.

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

197. Watch a sunrise or sunset.

198. Take a walk.

199. Go to a health club or YMCA.

200. Go to a coffee shop.

List the activities you like (or have liked) to do:

_____

_____

_____

Circle at least 10 new activities from the list that you are willing to try.

Describe how your life will be different when you schedule and involve yourself in activities:

_____

_____

_____

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

# Building a Satisfying Life 2: My Routines and Schedule

**CORE CONCEPT:** Develop your routines and daily schedule.

Get a calendar or an appointment book and commit to a routine by filling out a weekly schedule. Begin by scheduling regular wake and sleep times and fill in the hours in between starting with your non-negotiable appointments and obligations. Then, fill in times for self-care and positive activities.

Use ROUTINE, the Everyday Care section (above), and the Activities List (above) to outline the days in a typical week for you. Also, consult the Small Routines worksheet (below) for other ideas.

Follow your schedule and fine-tune it weekly based on what works and what needs change. Remember that mindfully following a balanced and predictable routine will be a huge step toward building a satisfying life.

**Day of The Week:** _____

| Time | Activity |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

# Building a Satisfying Life 3: Small Routines

**CORE CONCEPT:** Develop small routines that reap big benefits.

Start to develop small routines in life and be consistent with what works. Note the examples, but be sure to individualize your routines. Be sure you make time for these small routines in your daily schedule above. Also remember to practice mindfulness with your routines.

Describe your morning routine (e.g., get up, take medications, use bathroom, make tea, eat breakfast, shower/bathe, journal, meditate/relax, prepare to leave or transition to next routine):

_____

Describe your work (or school, volunteering, etc.) routine (e.g., arrive, get organized, listen to voicemail and check emails, check in with coworkers, set goals for the day, get started):

_____

Describe your evening routine (e.g., check mail and complete tasks, make dinner and eat, clean up kitchen, socialize, read, watch TV, relax):

_____

Describe your bedtime routine (e.g., brush teeth, wash face, put on pajamas, lay out clothes for tomorrow, write down positives and gratefulness and goals for tomorrow, practice mindfulness and relaxation):

_____

Describe other small routines (e.g., leisure, relaxation) that are important to you:

_____

Describe how your life will be different when you effectively and mindfully follow routines and schedules:

_____

Copyright © 2017 Lane Pederson. *The Expanded DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition.* All rights reserved.

Appendix 1

# Master Skills List

**Life Vision (LV):** To focus on the life you are working toward

**Wise Mind (WM):** To dialectically balance emotion and reason so you can respond rather than react

**Observe (OB):** To just notice experience

**Describe (DE):** To put words on experience

**Participate (P):** To get into your experience

**Nonjudgmental Stance (NJS):** To not attach strong opinions or labels to experience

**One-mindfulness (OM):** To focus your attention on one thing

**Effectiveness (EF):** To focus on what works

**Teflon Mind (TM):** To not let things "stick to" you

**ACCEPTS**

**Activities (AC):** To keep busy and involved
**Contributing (CON):** To do something for others
**Comparisons (COM):** To see that others struggle too
**Emotions (EM):** To do something that creates other emotions
**Push Away (PA):** To shelve your problem for later
**Thoughts (T):** To think about something other than your distress
**Sensations (S):** To do something physically engaging

**Self-Soothe (SS):** To relax yourself through the senses

**Urge-Surfing (US):** To ride the ebbs and flows of emotions and urges without reacting

**Bridge-Burning (BB):** To remove the means to act on harmful urges

**IMPROVE the Moment**

**Imagery (IM):** To relax or practice skills visually in your mind
**Meaning (ME):** To find the "why" to tolerate a difficult time
**Prayer (PR):** To seek connection and guidance from a higher power
**Relaxation (RE):** To calm the mind and body
**One Thing or Step at a Time (OT):** To focus on one thing or one step when life is overwhelming
**Vacation (V):** To take a brief break
**Encouragement (EN):** To coach yourself with positive self-talk

**Pros and Cons (P&C):** To weigh the benefits and costs of a choice

**Grounding Yourself (GY):** To use OB and DE to come back to the here and now

**Radical Acceptance (RA):** To acknowledge "what is" to free yourself from suffering

**Everyday Acceptance (EA):** To accept daily inconveniences that occur in life

**Willingness (WI):** To remove barriers and do what works in a situation

**SOLVED (SO):** To apply a values-based system to solving a problem

**PLEASED (PL):** To use a system of self-care skills

**Build Mastery (BM):** To do things to help you feel competent and in control

**Build Positive Experience (BPE):** To seek out events that create positive feelings

**Attend to Relationships (A2R):** To connect with meaningful people in your life

**Mood Momentum (MM):** To perform balanced behaviors to maintain positive moods

**Opposite to Emotion (O2E):** To do the opposite of the action a negative emotion pulls you to perform

**ROUTINE (RO):** To use a system for developing routines and schedules that help build a satisfying life

**TRUST (T):** To use a system to learn how to develop trust in relationships

**BOUNDARY (BO):** To use a system for observing limits and boundaries in your relationships

**FAST (F):** To use a system for acting in a way that builds your self-respect

**GIVE (G):** To use a system for acting in a way that builds and maintains relationships

**VALIDATION (V):** To nonjudgmentally acknowledge someone's experience

**DEAR MAN (DM):** To use a system for asserting yourself, saying no, or setting a boundary

**REASON (RE):** To apply a system for shifting thoughts when needed

# Section 4: DBT Materials from Dr. Marsha Linehan

# GENERAL HANDOUT 1

## Goals of Skills Training

## GENERAL GOAL

To learn and refine skills in changing behavioral, emotional, and thinking patterns associated with problems in living, that is, those causing misery and distress.

## SPECIFIC GOALS

**Behaviors to Decrease**

1. Interpersonal chaos
2. Labile emotions, moods
3. Impulsiveness
4. Confusion about self, cognitive dysregulation

**Behaviors to Increase**

1. Interpersonal effectiveness skills
2. Emotion regulation skills
3. Distress tolerance skills
4. Core mindfulness skills

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Disorder Personality* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# GENERAL HANDOUT 2

## Guidelines for Skills Training

1. Clients who drop out of therapy are out of therapy.
2. Each client has to be in ongoing individual therapy.
3. Clients are not to come to sessions under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
4. Clients are not to discuss past (even if immediate) parasuicidal behaviors with other clients outside of sessions.
5. Clients who call one another for help when feeling suicidal must be willing to accept help from the persons called.
6. Information obtained during sessions, as well as the names of clients, must remain confidential.
7. Clients who are going to be late or miss a session should call ahead of time.
8. Clients may not form private relationships outside of skills training sessions.
9. Sexual partners may not be in skills training together.

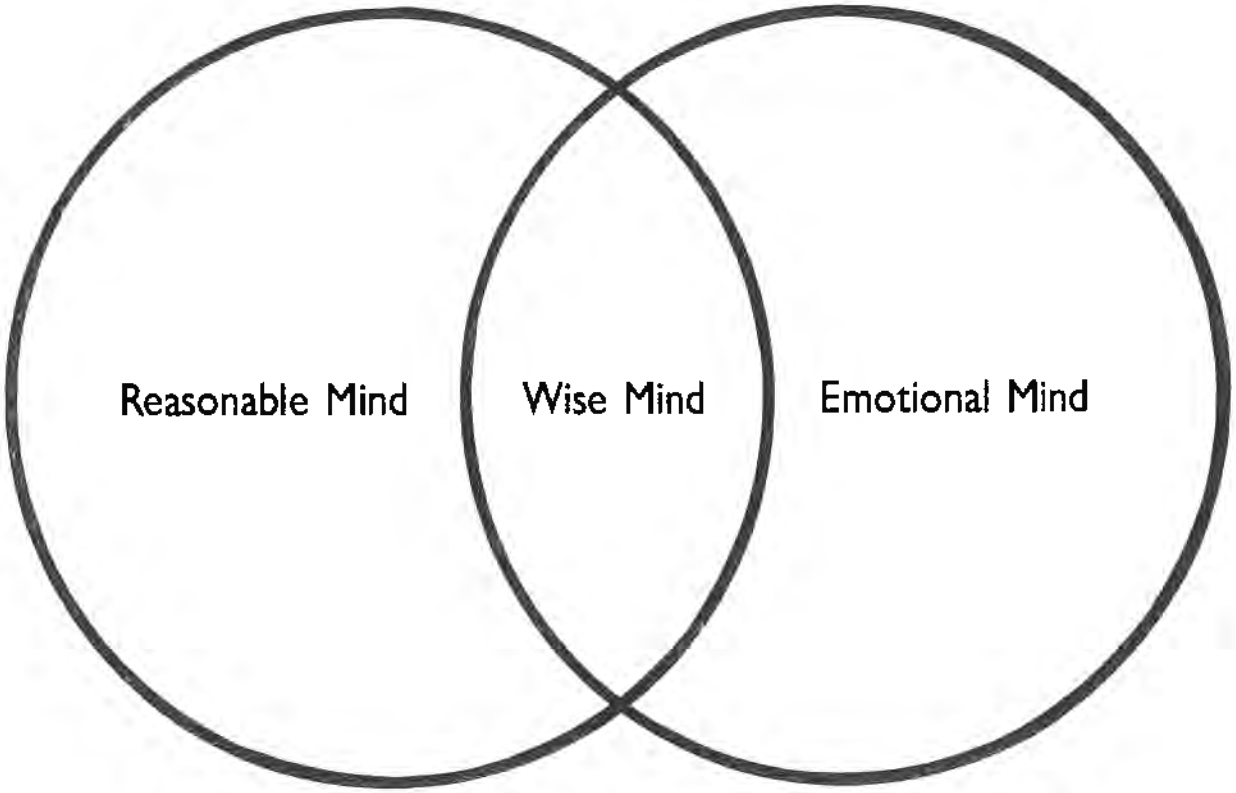
**Other Rules for this Group/Notes:**

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Disorder Personality* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# MINDFULNESS HANDOUT 1

## Taking Hold of Your Mind:

### States of Mind




From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# MINDFULNESS HANDOUT 2

## Taking Hold of Your Mind: "What" Skills

### OBSERVE

- JUST NOTICE THE EXPERIENCE. Notice without getting caught in the experience. Experience without reacting to your experience.
- Have a "TEFLON MIND," letting experiences, feelings, and thoughts come into your mind and slip right out.
- CONTROL your attention, but not what you see. Push away nothing. Cling to nothing.
- Be like a guard at the palace gate, ALERT to every thought, feeling, and action that comes through the gate of your mind.
- Step inside yourself and observe. WATCH your thoughts coming and going, like clouds in the sky. Notice each feeling, rising and falling, like waves in the ocean. Notice exactly what you are doing.
- Notice what comes through your SENSES—your eyes, ears, nose, skin, tongue. See others' actions and expressions. "Smell the roses."

### DESCRIBE

- PUT WORDS ON THE EXPERIENCE. When a feeling or thought arises, or you do something, acknowledge it. For example, say in your mind, "Sadness has just enveloped me." . . . or . . . "Stomach muscles tightnening" . . . or . . . "A thought 'I can't do this' has come into my mind." . . . or . . . "walking, step, step, step. . . . "
- PUT EXPERIENCES INTO WORDS. Describe to yourself what is happening. Put a name on your feelings. Call a thought just a thought, a feeling just a feeling. Don't get caught in content.

### PARTICIPATE

- Enter into your experiences. Let yourself get involved in the moment, letting go of ruminating. BECOME ONE WITH YOUR EXPERIENCE, COMPLETELY FORGETTING YOURSELF.
- ACT INTUITIVELY from wise mind. Do just what is needed in each situation—a skillful dancer on the dance floor, one with the music and your partner, neither willful nor sitting on your hands.
- Actively PRACTICE your skills as you learn them until they become part of you, where you use them without self-consciousness. PRACTICE:

  1. Changing harmful situations.
  2. Changing your harmful reactions to situations.
  3. Accepting yourself and the situation as they are.

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# MINDFULNESS HANDOUT 3

## Taking Hold of Your Mind: "How" Skills

### NON-JUDGMENTALLY

- See but DON'T EVALUATE. Take a nonjudgmental stance. Just the facts. Focus on the "what," not the "good" or "bad," the "terrible" or "wonderful," the "should" or "should not."
- UNGLUE YOUR OPINIONS from the facts, from the "who, what, when, and where."
- ACCEPT each moment, each event as a blanket spread out on the lawn accepts both the rain and the sun, each leaf that falls upon it.
- ACKNOWLEDGE the helpful, the wholesome, but don't judge it. Acknowledge the harmful, the unwholesome, but don't judge it.
- When you find yourself judging, DON'T JUDGE YOUR JUDGING.

### ONE-MINDFULLY

- DO ONE THING AT A TIME. When you are eating, eat. When you are walking, walk. When you are bathing, bathe. When you are working, work. When you are in a group, or a conversation, focus your attention on the very moment you are in with the other person. When you are thinking, think. When you are worrying, worry. When you are planning, plan. When you are remembering, remember. Do each thing with all of your attention.
- If other actions, or other thoughts, or strong feelings distract you, LET GO OF DISTRACTIONS and go back to what you are doing—again, and again, and again.
- CONCENTRATE YOUR MIND. If you find you are doing two things at once, stop and go back to one thing at a time.

### EFFECTIVELY

- FOCUS ON WHAT WORKS. Do what needs to be done in each situation. Stay away from "fair" and "unfair," "right" and "wrong," "should" and "should not."
- PLAY BY THE RULES. Don't "cut off your nose to spite your face."
- Act as SKILLFULLY as you can, meeting the needs of the situation you are in. Not the situation you wish you were in; not the one that is just; not the one that is more comfortable; not the one that. . . .
- Keep an eye on YOUR OBJECTIVES in the situation and do what is necessary to achieve them.
- LET GO of vengeance, useless anger, and righteousness that hurts you and doesn't work.

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Disorder Personality* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 1

## Situations for Interpersonal Effectiveness

### ATTENDING TO RELATIONSHIPS

- Don't let hurts and problems build up.
- Use relationship skills to head off problems.
- End hopeless relationships.
- Resolve conflicts before they get overwhelming.

### BALANCING PRIORITIES vs. DEMANDS

- If overwhelmed, reduce or put off low-priority demands.
- Ask others for help; say no when necessary.
- If not enough to do, try to create some structure and responsibilities; offer to do things.

### BALANCING THE WANTS-TO-SHOULDS

- Look at what you do because you enjoy doing it and "want" to do it; and how much you do because it has to be done and you "should" do it. Try to keep the number of each in balance, even if you have to:
  - Get your opinions taken seriously.
  - Get others to do things.
  - Say no to unwanted requests.

### BUILDING MASTERY AND SELF-RESPECT

- Interact in a way that makes you feel competent and effective, not helpless and overly dependent.
- Stand up for yourself, your beliefs and opinions; follow your own wise mind.

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 2

## Goals of Interpersonal Effectiveness

### OBJECTIVES EFFECTIVENESS:
### Getting Your Objectives or Goals in a Situation

- Obtaining your legitimate rights
- Getting another to do something
- Refusing an unwanted or unreasonable request
- Resolving an interpersonal conflict
- Getting your opinion or point of view taken seriously

***QUESTIONS***

1. *What specific results or changes do I want from this interaction?*
2. *What do I have to do to get the results? What will work?*

### RELATIONSHIP EFFECTIVENESS:
### Getting or Keeping a Good Relationship

- Acting in such a way that the other person keeps liking and respecting you
- Balancing immediate goals with the good of the long-term relationship

***QUESTIONS***

1. *How do I want the other person to feel about me after the interaction is over?*
2. *What do I have to do to get (or keep) this relationship?*

### SELF-RESPECT EFFECTIVENESS:
### Keeping or Improving Self-Respect and Liking for Yourself

- Respecting your own values and beliefs; acting in a way that makes you feel moral
- Acting in a way that makes you feel capable and effective

***QUESTIONS***

1. *How do I want to feel about myself after the interaction is over?*
2. *What do I have to do to feel that way about myself? What will work?*

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 3

## Factors Reducing Interpersonal Effectiveness

### LACK OF SKILL

You actually DON'T KNOW what to say or how to act. You don't know how you should behave to achieve your objectives. You don't know what will work.

### WORRY THOUGHTS

Worry thoughts get in the way of your ability to act effectively. You have the ability, but your worry thoughts interfere with doing or saying what you want.

- WORRIES ABOUT BAD CONSEQUENCES.
  *"They won't like me," "She will think I am stupid."*
- WORRIES ABOUT WHETHER YOU DESERVE TO GET WHAT YOU WANT.
  *"I am such a bad person I don't deserve this."*
- WORRIES ABOUT NOT BEING EFFECTIVE AND CALLING YOURSELF NAMES.
  *"I won't do it right," "I'll probably fall apart," "I'm so stupid."*

### EMOTIONS

Your emotions (ANGER, FRUSTRATION, FEAR, GUILT) get in the way of your ability to act effectively. You have the ability, but your emotions make you unable to do or say what you want. Emotions, instead of skill, control what you say and do.

### INDECISION

You CAN'T DECIDE what to do or what you really want. You have the ability, but your indecision gets in the way of doing or saying what you want. You are ambivalent about your priorities. You can't figure out how to balance:

- Asking for too much versus not asking for anything.
- Saying no to everything versus giving in to everything.

### ENVIRONMENT

Characteristics of the environment make it impossible for even a very skilled person to be effective. SKILLFUL BEHAVIOR DOESN'T WORK.

- Other people are too powerful.
- Other people will be threatened or have some other reason for not liking you if you get what you want.
- Other people won't give you what you need or let you say no without punishing you unless you sacrifice your self-respect, at least a little.

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Disorder Personality* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 4

## Myths about Interpersonal Effectiveness

1. I can't stand it if someone gets upset with me.
   CHALLENGE: _____
2. If they say no, it will kill me.
   CHALLENGE: _____
3. I don't deserve to get what I want or need.
   CHALLENGE: _____
4. If I make a request, this will show that I am a very weak person.
   CHALLENGE: _____
5. I must be really inadequate if I can't fix this myself.
   CHALLENGE: _____
6. I have to know whether a person is going to say yes before I make a request.
   CHALLENGE: _____
7. Making requests is a really pushy (bad, self-centered, selfish, un-christian) thing to do.
   CHALLENGE: _____
8. It doesn't make any difference; I don't care really.
   CHALLENGE: _____
9. Obviously, the problem is just in my head. If I would just think differently I wouldn't have to bother everybody else.
   CHALLENGE: _____
10. This is a catastrophe (is really bad, is terrible, is driving me crazy, will destroy me, is a disaster).
    CHALLENGE: _____
11. Saying no to a request is always a selfish thing to do.
    CHALLENGE: _____
12. I should be willing to sacrifice my own needs for others.
    CHALLENGE: _____
13. _____
    CHALLENGE: _____
14. _____
    CHALLENGE: _____

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 6

## Options for Intensity of Asking or Saying No, and Factors to Consider in Deciding

## OPTIONS

### HIGH INTENSITY: TRY AND CHANGE THE SITUATION

Ask firmly, insist . . . **6** . . . Refuse firmly, don't give in.
Ask firmly, resist no . . . **5** . . . Refuse firmly, resist giving in.
Ask firmly, take no . . . **4** . . . Refuse firmly, but reconsider.
Ask tentatively, take no . . . **3** . . . Express unwillingness.
Hint openly, take no . . . **2** . . . Express unwillingness, but say yes.
Hint indirectly, take no . . . **1** . . . Express hesitancy, say yes.
Don't ask, don't hint . . . **0** . . . Do what other wants without being asked.

### LOW INTENSITY: ACCEPT THE SITUATION AS IT IS

## FACTORS TO CONSIDER

**1. PRIORITIES:** OBJECTIVES very important? Increase intensity.
RELATIONSHIP very tenuous? Consider reducing intensity.
SELF-RESPECT on the line? Intensity should fit values.

**2. CAPABILITY:** Is person able to give me what I want? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.

Do I have what the person wants? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.

**3. TIMELINESS:** Is this a good time to ask? Is person "in the mood" for listening and paying attention to me? Am I catching person when he or she is likely to say yes to my request? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.

Is this a bad time to say no? Should I hold off answering for a while? If NO, raise the intensity of NO.

*(cont.)*

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 6 (cont.)

| | |
|---|---|
| **4. HOMEWORK:** | Have I done my homework? Do I know all the facts I need to know to support my request? Am I clear about what I want? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.<br>Is the other person's request clear? Do I know what I am agreeing to? If NO raise the intensity of NO. |
| **5. AUTHORITY:** | Am I responsible for directing the person or telling the person what to do? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.<br>Does the person have authority over me (e.g., my boss, my teacher)? And is what the person is asking within his or her authority? If NO, raise the intensity of NO. |
| **6. RIGHTS:** | Is person required by law or moral code to give me what I want? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.<br>Am I required to give the person what he or she wants? Would saying no violate the other person's rights? If NO, raise the intensity of NO. |
| **7. RELATIONSHIP:** | Is what I want appropriate to the current relationship? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.<br>Is what the person asking for appropriate to our current relationship? If NO, raise the intensity of NO. |
| **8. RECIPROCITY:** | What have I done for the person? Am I giving at least as much as I ask for? Am I willing to give if person says yes? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.<br>Do I owe person a favor? Does he or she do a lot for me? If NO, raise the intensity of NO. |
| **9. LONG VERSUS SHORT TERM:** | Will being submissive (and not asking) get peace now but create problems in the long run? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.<br>Is giving in to get short-term peace more important than the long-term welfare of the relationship? Will I eventually regret or resent saying no? If NO, raise the intensity of NO. |
| **10. RESPECT:** | Do I usually do things for myself? Am I careful to avoid acting helpless when I am not? If YES, raise the intensity of ASKING.<br>Will saying no make me feel bad about myself, even when I am thinking about it wisely? If NO, raise the intensity of NO. |

Other factors: _____

_____

_____

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 8

## Guidelines for Objectives Effectiveness: Getting What You Want

A way to remember these skills is to remember the term **"DEAR MAN."**

**DESCRIBE**
**EXPRESS**
**ASSERT**
**REINFORCE**

**(stay) MINDFUL**
**APPEAR CONFIDENT**
**NEGOTIATE**

**Describe**

Describe the current SITUATION (if necessary).

Tell the person exactly what you are reacting to. Stick to the facts.

**Express**

Express your FEELINGS and OPINIONS about the situation.

Assume that your feelings and opinions are not self-evident. Give a brief rationale. Use phrases such as "I want," "I don't want," instead of "I need," "You should," or "I can't."

**Assert**

Assert yourself by ASKING for what you want or SAYING NO clearly.

Assume that others will not figure it out or do what you want unless you ask. Assume that others cannot read your mind. Don't expect others to know how hard it is for you to ask directly for what you want.

**Reinforce**

Reinforce or reward the person ahead of time by explaining CONSEQUENCES.

Tell the person the positive effects of getting what you want or need. Tell him or her (if necessary) the negative effects of your not getting it. Help the person feel good ahead of time for doing or accepting what you want. Reward him or her afterwards.

(*cont.*)

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 8 (cont.)

| | |
|---|---|
| **(stay) Mindful** | Keep your focus ON YOUR OBJECTIVES.<br>Maintain your position. Don't be distracted. |
| **"Broken record"** | Keep asking, saying no, or expressing your opinion over and over and over. |
| **Ignore** | If another person attacks, threatens, or tries to change the subject, ignore the threats, comments, or attempts to divert you. Don't respond to attacks. Ignore distractions. Just keep making your point. |
| **Appear confident** | Appear EFFECTIVE and competent.<br>Use a confident voice tone and physical manner; make good eye contact. No stammering, whispering, staring at the floor, retreating, saying "I'm not sure," etc. |
| **Negotiate** | Be willing to GIVE TO GET. Offer and ask for alternative solutions to the problem. Reduce your request. Maintain no, but offer to do something else or to solve the problem another way. Focus on what will work. |
| **Turn the tables** | Turn the problem over to the other person. Ask for alternative solutions: "What do you think we should do?" "I'm not able to say yes, and you seem to really want me to. What can we do here?" "How can we solve this problem?" |

Other ideas: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 9

## Guidelines for Relationship Effectiveness: Keeping the Relationship

A way to remember these skills is to remember the word **"GIVE" (DEAR MAN, GIVE):**

**(be) GENTLE**
**(act) INTERESTED**
**VALIDATE**
**(use an) EASY MANNER**

| | |
|---|---|
| **(be) Gentle** | Be COURTEOUS and temperate in your approach. |
| **No attacks** | No verbal or physical attacks. No hitting, clenching fists. Express anger directly. |
| **No threats** | No "manipulative" statements, no hidden threats. No "I'll kill myself if you. . . . " Tolerate a no to requests. Stay in the discussion even if it gets painful. Exit gracefully. |
| **No judging** | No moralizing. No "If you were a good person, you would. . . . " No " You should. . . . " "You shouldn't. . . . " |
| **(act) Interested** | LISTEN and be interested in the other person.<br>Listen to the other person's point of view, opinion, reasons for saying no, or reasons for making a request of you. Don't interrupt, talk over, etc. Be sensitive to the person's desire to have the discussion at a later time. Be patient. |
| **Validate** | Validate or ACKNOWLEDGE the other person's feelings, wants, difficulties, and opinions about the situation. Be nonjudgmental out loud: "I can understand how you feel, but . . . "; "I realize this is hard for you, but . . . "; "I see that you are busy, and. . . . " |
| **(use an) Easy manner** | Use a little humor. SMILE. Ease the person along. Be light-hearted. Wheedle. Use a "soft sell" over a "hard sell." Be political. |

Other ideas: _____

_____

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 10

## Guidelines for Self-Respect Effectiveness: Keeping Your Respect for Yourself

A way to remember these skills is to remember the word **"FAST" (DEAR MAN, GIVE FAST).**

**(be) FAIR**
**(no) APOLOGIES**
**STICK TO VALUES**
**(be) TRUTHFUL**

**(be) Fair** — Be fair to YOURSELF and to the OTHER person.

**(no) Apologies** — No OVERLY apologetic behavior. No apologizing for being alive, for making a request at all. No apologies for having an opinion, for disagreeing.

**Stick to values** — Stick to YOUR OWN values.

Don't sell out your values or integrity for reasons that aren't very important. Be clear on what you believe is the moral or valued way of thinking and acting, and "stick" to your guns.

**(be) Truthful** — DON'T LIE, ACT HELPLESS when you are not, or EXAGGERATE. Don't make up excuses.

Other ideas: _____

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HOMEWORK SHEET 1

## Goals and Priorities in Interpersonal Situations

Name _____ Date _____

Use this sheet to figure out your goals and priorities in any situation that creates a problem for you such as ones where: 1) your rights or wishes are not being respected, 2) you want someone to do or change something or give you something, 3) you want or need to say no or resist pressure to do something, 4) you want to get your position or point of view taken seriously, 5) there is conflict with another person. Observe and describe in writing as close in time to the situation as possible. Write on back of page if you need more room.

**PROMPTING EVENT** for my problem: Who did what to whom? What led up to what? What is it about this situation that is a problem for me?

My **WANTS AND DESIRES** in this situation:

OBJECTIVES: What specific results do I want? What changes do I want person to make?

RELATIONSHIP: How do I want the other person to feel about me after the interaction?

SELF-RESPECT: How do I want to feel about myself after the interaction?

My **PRIORITIES** in this situation: Rate priorities 1 (most important), 2 (second most important), or 3 (least important).

____ OBJECTIVES ____ RELATIONSHIP ____ SELF-RESPECT

**CONFLICTS IN PRIORITIES** that make it hard to be effective in this situation?

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HOMEWORK SHEET 2

## Observing and Describing Interpersonal Situations

Name _____ Date _____

Fill out this sheet during or just after a situation that creates a problem for you such as one where: 1) your rights or wishes are not being respected, 2) you want someone to do or change something or give you something, 3) you want or need to say no or resist pressure to do something, 4) you want to get your position or point of view taken seriously, 5) there is conflict with another person. Observe and describe in writing as close in time to the situation as possible. Write on back of page if you need more room.

**PROMPTING EVENT** for my problem? Who did what to whom? What led up to what?

What I **SAID OR DID** in the situation: (Be SPECIFIC.) Rate **INTENSITY** of response. (See p. 131.)

**INTENSITY-RATING** (0–6):_____

**FACTORS REDUCING MY EFFECTIVENESS** in this situation:

SKILLS LACKING: (What don't I know how to do or say?)

WORRY THOUGHTS:

EMOTIONS INTERFERING:

INDECISION (or conflict in goals) getting in the way:

OBJECTIVES: What results do I want? What changes do I want the person to make?

RELATIONSHIP: How do I want other person to feel about me after the interaction?

SELF-RESPECT: How do I want to feel about myself after the interaction?

CONFLICT or INDECISION?

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS getting in my way:

(cont.)

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HOMEWORK SHEET 2 (cont.)

| ASK? (If more YES's than NO's, ASK) | | | SAY NO? (If more NO's than YES's, say NO) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| YES NO Can person give me what I want? | **Capability** | Do I have what person wants? | YES NO |
| YES NO Good time for me to ask? | **Timeliness** | Is it a bad time for me to say no? | YES NO |
| YES NO Am I prepared? | **Homework** | Is request clear? | YES NO |
| YES NO Is what person does my business? | **Authority** | Is person in authority over me? | YES NO |
| YES NO Do I have a right to what I am asking for? | **Rights** | Does saying no violate person's rights? | YES NO |
| YES NO Is request appropriate to relationship? | **Relationship** | Is request appropriate? | YES NO |
| YES NO Am I asking less than I give? | **Reciprocity** | Does person give me a lot? Do I owe person? | YES NO |
| YES NO Is asking important to long-term goal? | **Goals** | Does no interfere with long-term goal? | YES NO |
| YES NO Am I acting competent? | **Respect** | Does wise mind say yes? | YES NO |
| ___ SUM of YES responses | | SUM of NO responses ___ | |

## HIGH INTENSITY: TRY AND CHANGE THE SITUATION

Ask firmly, insist . . . **6** . . . Refuse firmly, don't give in.

Ask firmly, resist no . . . **5** . . . Refuse firmly, resist giving in.

Ask firmly, take no . . . **4** . . . Refuse firmly, but reconsider.

Ask tentatively, take no . . . **3** . . . Express unwillingness.

Hint openly, take no . . . **2** . . . Express unwillingness, but say yes.

Hint indirectly, take no . . . **1** . . . Express hesitancy, say yes.

Don't ask, don't hint . . . **0** . . . Do what other wants without being asked.

## LOW INTENSITY: ACCEPT THE SITUATION AS IT IS

Notes: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HOMEWORK SHEET 3

## Using Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

Name _____ Week Starting _____

Fill out this sheet whenever you practice your interpersonal skills and whenever you have an opportunity to practice even if you don't (or almost don't) do anything to practice. Write on back of page if you need more room.

**PROMPTING EVENT** for my problem: Who did what to whom? What led up to what?

OBJECTIVES IN SITUATION (What results I want):

RELATIONSHIP ISSUE (How I want other person to feel about me):

SELF-RESPECT ISSUE (How I want to feel about myself):

What **I SAID OR DID** in the situation: (Describe and check below.)

***DEAR MAN*** *(Getting what I want):*

- ____ Described situation?
- ____ Expressed feelings/opinions?
- ____ Asserted?
- ____ Reinforced?
- ____ Mindful?
  - ____ Broken record?
  - ____ Ignored attacks?
- ____ Appeared confident?
- ____ Negotiated?

***GIVE*** *(Keeping the relationship):*

- ____ Gentle?
  - ____ No threats?
  - ____ No attacks?
  - ____ No judgments?
- ____ Interested?
- ____ Validated?
- ____ Easy manner?

***FAST*** *(Keeping my respect for myself):*

- ____ Fair?
- ____ (No) Apologies?
- ____ Stuck to values?
- ____ Truthful?

**INTENSITY OF MY RESPONSE** (0–6): ____ **INTENSITY I WANTED** (0–6): ____

(cont.)

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HOMEWORK SHEET 3 (cont.)

**FACTORS REDUCING MY EFFECTIVENESS** (check and describe)

____ SKILLS LACKING:

____ WORRY THOUGHTS:

____ EMOTIONS INTERFERING:

____ INDECISION:

____ ENVIRONMENT:

| ASK? (If more YES's than NO's, ASK) | | | SAY NO? (If more NO's than YES's, say NO) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| YES NO | Can person give me what I want? | **Capability** | Do I have what person wants? | YES NO |
| YES NO | Good time for me to ask? | **Timeliness** | Is it a bad time for me to say no? | YES NO |
| YES NO | Am I prepared? | **Homework** | Is request clear? | YES NO |
| YES NO | Is what person does my business? | **Authority** | Is person in authority over me? | YES NO |
| YES NO | Do I have a right to what I am asking for? | **Rights** | Does saying no violate person's rights? | YES NO |
| YES NO | Is request appropriate to relationship? | **Relationship** | Is request appropriate? | YES NO |
| YES NO | Am I asking less than I give? | **Reciprocity** | Does person give me a lot? Do I owe person? | YES NO |
| YES NO | Is asking important to long-term goal? | **Goals** | Does no interfere with long-term goal? | YES NO |
| YES NO | Am I acting competent? | **Respect** | Does wise mind say yes? | YES NO |

____ SUM of YES responses

SUM of NO responses ____

## HIGH INTENSITY: TRY AND CHANGE THE SITUATION

Ask firmly, insist . . . **6** . . . Refuse firmly, don't give in.
Ask firmly, resist no . . . **5** . . . Refuse firmly, resist giving in.
Ask firmly, take no . . . **4** . . . Refuse firmly, but reconsider.
Ask tentatively, take no . . . **3** . . . Express unwillingness.
Hint openly, take no . . . **2** . . . Express unwillingness, but say yes.
Hint indirectly, take no . . . **1** . . . Express hesitancy, say yes.
Don't ask, don't hint . . . **0** . . . Do what other wants without being asked.

## LOW INTENSITY: ACCEPT THE SITUATION AS IT IS

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 1

## Goals of Emotion Regulation Training

### UNDERSTAND EMOTIONS YOU EXPERIENCE

- Identify (observe and describe) emotion.
- Understand what emotions do for you.

### REDUCE EMOTIONAL VULNERABILITY

- Decrease negative vulnerability (vulnerability to emotion mind).
- Increase positive emotions.

### DECREASE EMOTIONAL SUFFERING

- Let go of painful emotions through mindfulness.
- Change painful emotions through opposite action.

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 2

## Myths about Emotions

1. There is a right way to feel in every situation.
   CHALLENGE: _____
2. Letting others know that I am feeling bad is weakness.
   CHALLENGE: _____
3. Negative feelings are bad and destructive.
   CHALLENGE: _____
4. Being emotional means being out of control.
   CHALLENGE: _____
5. Emotions can just happen for no reason.
   CHALLENGE: _____
6. Some emotions are really stupid.
   CHALLENGE: _____
7. All painful emotions are a result of a bad attitude.
   CHALLENGE: _____
8. If others don't approve of my feelings, I obviously shouldn't feel the way I do.
   CHALLENGE: _____
9. Other people are the best judge of how I am feeling.
   CHALLENGE: _____
10. Painful emotions are not really important and should be ignored.
    CHALLENGE: _____
11. _____
    CHALLENGE: _____
12. _____
    CHALLENGE: _____
13. _____
    CHALLENGE: _____
14. _____
    CHALLENGE: _____
15. _____
    CHALLENGE: _____

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 5

## What Good Are Emotions?

### EMOTIONS COMMUNICATE TO (AND INFLUENCE) OTHERS.

- Facial expressions are a hard-wired part of emotions. In primitive societies and among animals, facial expressions communicate like words. Even in modern societies, facial expressions communicate faster than words.
- When it is important to us to communicate to others, or send them a message, it can be very hard for us to change our emotions.
- Whether we intend it or not, the communication of emotions influences others.

### EMOTIONS ORGANIZE AND MOTIVATE ACTION.

- Emotions motivate our behavior. The action urge connected to specific emotions is often "hard-wired." Emotions prepare us for action.
- Emotions save time in getting us to act in important situations. We don't have to think everything through.
- Strong emotions help us overcome obstacles—in our mind and in the environment.

### EMOTIONS CAN BE SELF-VALIDATING.

- Our emotional reactions to other people and to events can give us information about the situation. Emotions can be signals or alarms that something is happening.
- When this is carried to an extreme, emotions are treated as facts: "If I feel incompetent, I am." "If I get depressed when left alone, I shouldn't be left alone." "If I feel right about something, it is right." "If I'm afraid, it is threatening." "I love him, so he must be OK."

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 6

## Reducing Vulnerability to Negative Emotions: How to Stay Out of Emotion Mind

A way to remember these skills is to remember the term **"PLEASE MASTER."**

**Treat PhysicaL illness**
**Balance Eating**
**Avoid mood-Altering drugs**
**Balance Sleep**
**Get Exercise**
**Build MASTERy**

| | |
|---|---|
| **1. Treat PhysicaL illness:** | Take care of your body. See a doctor when necessary. Take prescribed medication. |
| **2. Balance Eating:** | Don't eat too much or too little. Stay away from foods that make you feel overly emotional. |
| **3. Avoid mood-Altering drugs:** | Stay off nonprescribed drugs, including alcohol. |
| **4. Balance Sleep:** | Try to get the amount of sleep that helps you feel good. Keep to a sleep program if you are having difficulty sleeping. |
| **5. Get Exercise:** | Do some sort of exercise every day; try to build up to 20 minutes of vigorous exercise. |
| **6. Build MASTERy:** | Try to do one thing a day to make yourself feel competent and in control. |

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 7

## Steps for Increasing Positive Emotions

### BUILD POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

**SHORT TERM: Do pleasant things that are possible now.**

- INCREASE pleasant events that prompt positive emotions.
- Do ONE THING each day from the Adult Pleasant Events Schedule (see Emotion Regulation Handout 8)

**LONG TERM: Make changes in your life so that positive events will occur more often. Build a "life worth living."**

- Work toward goals: ACCUMULATE POSITIVES.
  - Make list of positive events you want.
  - List small steps toward goals.
  - Take first step.
- ATTEND TO RELATIONSHIPS.
  - Repair old relationships.
  - Reach out for new relationships.
  - Work on current relationships.
- AVOID AVOIDING. Avoid giving up.

### BE MINDFUL OF POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

- FOCUS attention on positive events that happen.
- REFOCUS when your mind wanders to the negative.

### BE UNMINDFUL OF WORRIES

DISTRACT from:

Thinking about when the positive experience WILL END.

Thinking about whether you DESERVE this positive experience.

Thinking about how much more might be EXPECTED of you now.

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 10

## Changing Emotions by Acting Opposite to the Current Emotion

### FEAR

- Do what you are afraid of doing . . . OVER AND OVER AND OVER.
- APPROACH events, places, tasks, activities, people you are afraid of.
- Do things to give yourself a sense of CONTROL and MASTERY.
- When overwhelmed, make a list of small steps or tasks you can do. DO THE FIRST THING on the list.

### GUILT OR SHAME

**When Guilt or Shame Is Justified (Emotion fits your wise mind values):**

- REPAIR the transgression.
  - Say you're sorry. APOLOGIZE.
  - MAKE THINGS BETTER; do something nice for person you offended (or for someone else if that is not possible).
- COMMIT to avoiding that mistake in the future.
- ACCEPT the consequences gracefully.
- Then LET IT GO.

**When Guilt or Shame Is Unjustified (Emotion does not fit your wise mind values):**

- Do what makes you feel guilty or ashamed . . . OVER AND OVER AND OVER.
- APPROACH, don't avoid.

### SADNESS OR DEPRESSION

- Get ACTIVE. APPROACH, don't avoid.
- Do things that make you feel COMPETENT AND SELF-CONFIDENT.

### ANGER

- Gently AVOID person you are angry with rather than attacking. (Avoid thinking about him or her rather than ruminating.)
- Do something NICE rather than mean or attacking.
- Imagine SYMPATHY AND EMPATHY for other person rather than blame.

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# EMOTION REGULATION HOMEWORK SHEET 1

## Observing and Describing Emotions

Name _____ Week Starting _____

Select a current or recent emotional reaction and fillout as much of this sheet as you can. If the prompting event for the emotion you are working on is another emotion that occured first (for example, feeling afraid prompted getting angry at yourself), then fill out a second homework sheet for that first emotion. Write on back of page if you need more room.

**EMOTION NAMES:** _____ _____ **INTENSITY** (0–100) _____

**PROMPTING EVENT** for my emotion: (who, what, when, where) What started the emotion?

**INTERPRETATIONS** (beliefs, assumptions, appraisals) of the situation?

**BODY CHANGES and SENSING:** What am I feeling in my body?

**BODY LANGUAGE** What is my facial expression? posture? gestures?

**ACTION URGES:** What do I feel like doing? What do I want to say?

What **I SAID OR DID** in the situation: (Be specific)

What **AFTER EFFECT** does the emotion have on me (my state of mind, other emotions, behavior, thoughts, memory, body, etc.)?

**FUNCTION OF EMOTION:** _____

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 1

## Crisis Survival Strategies

Skills for tolerating painful events and emotions when you cannot make things better right away.

### DISTRACT with "Wise Mind ACCEPTS."

**A**ctivities
**C**ontributing
**C**omparisons
**E**motions
**P**ushing away
**T**houghts
**S**ensations

### SELF-SOOTHE the FIVE SENSES.

**V**ision
**H**earing
**S**mell
**T**aste
**T**ouch

### IMPROVE THE MOMENT.

**I**magery
**M**eaning
**P**rayer
**R**elaxation
**O**ne thing at a time
**V**acation
**E**ncouragement

### PROS AND CONS

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 1:
## Crises Survival Strategies (cont.)

## DISTRACTING

A useful way to remember these skills is the phrase
**"Wise Mind ACCEPTS."**

With **Activities:**

Engage in exercise or hobbies; do cleaning; go to events; call or visit a friend; play computer games; go walking; work; play sports; go out to a meal, have decaf coffee or tea; go fishing; chop wood, do gardening; play pinball.

With **Contributing:**

Contribute to someone; do volunteer work; give something to someone else; make something nice for someone else; do a surprising, thoughtful thing.

With **Comparisons:**

Compare yourself to people coping the same as you or less well than you. Compare yourself to those less fortunate than you. Watch soap operas; read about disasters, others' suffering.

With opposite **Emotions:**

Read emotional books or stories, old letters; go to emotional movies; listen to emotional music. *Be sure the event creates different emotions.* Ideas: scary movies, joke books, comedies, funny records, religious music, marching songs, "I Am Woman" (Helen Reddy); going to a store and reading funny greeting cards.

With **Pushing away:**

Push the situation away by leaving it for a while. Leave the situation mentally. Build an imaginary wall between yourself and the situation.

Or push the situation away by blocking it in your mind. Censor ruminating. Refuse to think about the painful aspects of the situation. Put the pain on a shelf. Box it up and put it away for a while.

With other **Thoughts:**

Count to 10; count colors in a painting or tree, windows, anything; work puzzles; watch TV; read.

With intense other **Sensations:**

Hold ice in hand; squeeze a rubber ball very hard; stand under a very hard and hot shower; listen to very loud music; sex; put rubber band on wrist, pull out, and let go.

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 1:
## Crisis Survival Strategies (cont.)

### SELF-SOOTHE

A way to remember these skills is to think of soothing each of your
**FIVE SENSES:**

With **Vision:**

Buy one beautiful flower; make one space in a room pretty; light a candle and watch the flame. Set a pretty place at the table, using your best things, for a meal. Go to a museum with beautiful art. Go sit in the lobby of a beautiful old hotel. Look at nature around you. Go out in the middle of the night and watch the stars. Walk in a pretty part of town. Fix your nails so they look pretty. Look at beautiful pictures in a book. Go to a ballet or other dance performance, or watch one on TV. Be mindful of each sight that passes in front of you, not lingering on any.

With **Hearing:**

Listen to beautiful or soothing music, or to invigorating and exciting music. Pay attention to sounds of nature (waves, birds, rainfall, leaves rustling). Sing to your favorite songs. Hum a soothing tune. Learn to play an instrument. Call 800 or other information numbers to hear a human voice. Be mindful of any sounds that come your way, letting them go in one ear and out the other.

With **Smell:**

Use your favorite perfume or lotions, or try them on in the store; spray fragrance in the air; light a scented candle. Put lemon oil on your furniture. Put potpourri in a bowl in your room. Boil cinnamon; bake cookies, cake, or bread. Smell the roses. Walk in a wooded area and mindfully breathe in the fresh smells of nature.

With **Taste:**

Have a good meal; have a favorite soothing drink such as herbal tea or hot chocolate (no alcohol); treat yourself to a dessert. Put whipped cream on your coffee. Sample flavors in an ice cream store. Suck on a piece of peppermint candy. Chew your favorite gum. Get a little bit of a special food you don't usually spend the money on, such as fresh-squeezed orange juice. Really taste the food you eat; eat one thing mindfully.

With **Touch:**

Take a bubble bath; put clean sheets on the bed. Pet your dog or cat. Have a massage; soak your feet. Put creamy lotion on your whole body. Put a cold compress on your forehead. Sink into a really comfortable chair in your home, or find one in a luxurious hotel lobby. Put on a silky blouse, dress, or scarf. Try on fur-lined gloves or fur coats in a department store. Brush your hair for a long time. Hug someone. Experience whatever you are touching; notice touch that is soothing.

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 1:
## Crisis Survival Strategies (cont.)

### IMPROVE THE MOMENT

A way to remember these skills is the word
**IMPROVE.**

With **Imagery:**

Imagine very relaxing scenes. Imagine a secret room within yourself, seeing how it is decorated. Go into the room whenever you feel very threatened. Close the door on anything that can hurt you. Imagine everything going well. Imagine coping well. Make up a fantasy world that is calming and beautiful and let your mind go with it. Imagine hurtful emotions draining out of you like water out of a pipe.

With **Meaning:**

Find or create some purpose, meaning, or value in the pain. Remember, listen to, or read about spiritual values. Focus on whatever positive aspects of a painful situation you can find. Repeat them over and over in your mind. Make lemonade out of lemons.

With **Prayer:**

Open your heart to a supreme being, greater wisdom, God, your own wise mind. Ask for strength to bear the pain in this moment. Turn things over to God or a higher being.

With **Relaxation:**

Try muscle relaxing by tensing and relaxing each large muscle group, starting with your hands and arms, going to the top of your head, and then working down; listen to a relaxation tape; exercise hard; take a hot bath or sit in a hot tub; drink hot milk; massage your neck and scalp, your calves and feet. Get in a tub filled with very cold or hot water and stay in it until the water is tepid. Breathe deeply; half-smile; change facial expression.

With **One thing in the moment:**

Focus your entire attention on just what you are doing right now. Keep yourself in the very moment you are in; put your mind in the present. Focus your entire attention on physical sensations that accompany nonmental tasks (e.g. walking, washing, doing dishes, cleaning, fixing). Be aware of how your body moves during each task. Do awareness exercises.

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 1:
## Crisis Survival Strategies (cont.)

With a brief **Vacation:**

Give yourself a brief vacation. Get in bed and pull the covers up over your head for 20 minutes. Rent a motel room at the beach or in the woods for a day or two; drop your towels on the floor after you use them. Ask your roommate to bring you coffee in bed or make you dinner (offer to reciprocate). Get a schlocky magazine or newspaper at the grocery store, get in bed with chocolates, and read it. Make yourself milk toast, bundle up in a chair, and eat it slowly. Take a blanket to the park and sit on it for a whole afternoon. Unplug your phone for a day, or let your answering machine screen your calls. Take a 1-hour breather from hard work that must be done.

With **Encouragement:**

Cheerlead yourself. Repeat over and over: "I can stand it," "It won't last forever," "I will make it out of this," I'm doing the best I can do."

## Thinking of PROS AND CONS

Make a list of the pros and cons of *tolerating* the distress. Make another list of the pros and cons of *not tolerating* the distress—that is, of coping by hurting yourself, abusing alcohol or drugs, or doing something else impulsive.

Focus on long-term goals, the light at the end of the tunnel. Remember times when pain has ended.

Think of the positive consequences of tolerating the distress. Imagine in your mind how good you will feel if you achieve your goals, if you don't act impulsively.

Think of all of the negative consequences of not tolerating your current distress. Remember what has happened in the past when you have acted impulsively to escape the moment.

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 2

## Guidelines for Accepting Reality: Observing-Your-Breath Exercises

### OBSERVING YOUR BREATH:

Focus your attention on your breath, coming in and out. Observe your breathing as a way to center yourself in your wise mind. Observe your breathing as a way to take hold of your mind, dropping off nonacceptance and fighting reality.

#### 1. DEEP BREATHING

Lie on your back. Breathe evenly and gently, focusing your attention on the movement of your stomach. As you begin to breathe in, allow your stomach to rise in order to bring air into the lower half of your lungs. As the upper halves of your lungs begin to fill with air, your chest begins to rise and your stomach begins to lowet. Don't tire yourself. Continue for 10 breaths. The exhalation will be longer that the inhalation.

#### 2. MEASURING YOUR BREATH BY YOUR FOOTSTEPS

Walk slowly in a yard, along a sidewalk, or on a path. Breathe normally. Determine the length of your breath, the exhalation and the inhalation, by the number of your footsteps. Continue for a few minutes. Begin to lengthen your exhalation by one step. Do not force a longer inhalation. Let it be natural. Watch your inhalation carefully to see whether there is a desire to lengthen it. Continue for 10 breaths.

Now lengthen the exhalation by one more footstep. Watch to see whether the inhalation also lengthens by one step or not. Only lengthen the inhalation when you feel that it will give delight. After 20 breaths, return your breath to normal. About 5 minutes later, you can begin the practice of lengthened breaths again. When you feel the least bit tired, return to normal. After several sessions of the practice of lengthened breath, your exhalation and inhalation will grow equal in length. Do not practice long, equal breaths for more than 10 to 20 breaths before returning to notmal.

#### 3. COUNTING YOUR BREATH

Sit cross-legged on the floor (sit in the half or full lotus position if you know how); or sit in a chair with your feet on the floor; or kneel; or lie flat on the floor; or take a walk. As you inhale, be aware rhat "I am inhaling, 1." When you exhale, be aware that "I am exhaling, 1." Remember to breathe from the stomach. When beginning the second inhalation, be aware that "I am inhaling, 2." And slowly exhaling, be aware that "I am exhaling, 2." Continue on up through 10. After you have reached 10, return to 1. Whenever you lose count, return to 1.

*(cont.)*

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 2 (cont.)

### 4. FOLLOWING YOUR BREATH WHILE LISTENING TO MUSIC

Listen to a piece of music. Breathe long, light, and even breaths. Follow your breath; be master of it while remaining aware of the movement and sentiments of the music. Do not get lost in the music, but continue to be master of your breath and yourself.

### 5. FOLLOWING YOUR BREATH WHILE CARRYING ON A CONVERSATION

Breathe long, light, and even breaths. Follow your breath while listening to a friend's words and to your own replies. Continue as with the music.

### 6. FOLLOWING THE BREATH

Sit cross-legged on the floor (sit in the half or full lotus position if you know how); or sit in a chair with your feet on the floor; or kneel; or lie flat on the floor; or take a walk. Begin to inhale gently and normally (from the stomach), aware that "I am inhaling normally." Exhale in awareness, "I am exhaling normally." Continue for three breaths. On the fourth breath, extend the inhalation, aware that "I am breathing in a long inhalation." Exhale in awareness, "I am breathing out a long exhalation." Continue for three breaths.

Now follow your breath carefully, aware of every movement of your stomach and lungs. Follow the entrance and exit of air. Be aware that "I am inhaling and following the inhalation from its beginning to its end. I am exhaling and following the exhalation from its beginning to its end."

Continue for 20 breaths. Return to normal. After 5 minutes, repeat the exercise. Maintain a half-smile while breathing. Once you have mastered this exercise, move on to the next.

### 7. BREATHING TO QUIET THE MIND AND BODY

Sit cross-legged on the floor (sit in half or full lotus position if you know how); or sit in a chair with your feet on the floor; or kneel; or lie flat on the floor. Half-smile. Follow your breath. When your mind and body are quiet, continue to inhale and exhale very lightly; be aware that "I am breathing in and making the breath and body light and peaceful. I am exhaling and making the breath and body light and peaceful." Continue for three breaths, giving rise to the thought, "I am breathing in while my body and mind are at peace. I am breathing out while my body and mind are at peace."

Maintain this thought in awareness from 5 to 30 minutes, according to your ability and to the time available to you. The beginning and end of the practice should be relaxed and gentle. When you want to stop, gently massage the muscles in your legs before returning to a normal sitting position. Wait a moment before standing up.

*Note.* Adapted from *The Miracle of Mindfulness: A Manual of Meditation* (pp. 81–84) by Thich Nhat Hanh, 1976, Boston: Beacon Press. Copyright 1987 by Mobi Ho. Adapted by permission.

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 3

## Guidelines for Accepting Reality: Half-Smiling Exercises

### HALF-SMILE

Accept reality with your body. *Relax (by letting go or by just tensing and then letting go) your face, neck, and shoulder muscles and half-smile with your lips.* A tense smile is a grin (and might tell the brain you are hiding or masking). A half-smile is slightly up-turned lips with a relaxed face. Try to adopt a serene facial expression. Remember, your body communicates to your mind.

#### 1. HALF-SMILE WHEN YOU FIRST AWAKE IN THE MORNING

Hang a branch, any other sign, or even the word "smile" on the ceiling or wall so that you see it right away when you open your eyes. This sign will serve as your reminder. Use these seconds before you get out of bed to take hold of your breath. Inhale and exhale three breaths gently while maintaining a half-smile. Follow your breaths.

#### 2. HALF-SMILE DURING YOUR FREE MOMENTS

Anywhere you find yourself sitting or standing, half-smile. Look at a child, a leaf, a painting on a wall, or anything that is relatively still, and smile. Inhale and exhale quietly three times.

#### 3. HALF-SMILE WHILE LISTENING TO MUSIC

Listen to a piece of music for 2 or 3 minutes. Pay attention to the words, music, rhythm, and sentiments of the music you are listening to (not your daydreams of other times). Half-smile while watching your inhalations and exhalations.

#### 4. HALF-SMILE WHEN IRRITATED

When you realize "I'm irritated," half-smile at once. Inhale and exhale quietly, maintaining a half-smile for three breaths.

#### 5. HALF-SMILE IN A LYING-DOWN POSITION

Lie on your back on a flat surface without the support of mattress or pillow. Keep your two arms loosely by your sides and keep your two legs slightly apart, stretched out before you. Maintain a half-smile. Breathe in and out gently, keeping your attention focused on your breath. Let go of every muscle in your body. Relax each muscle as though it were sinking down through the floor, or as though it were as soft and yielding as a piece of silk hanging in the breeze to dry. Let go entirely, keeping your attention only on your breath and half-smile. Think of yourself as a cat, completely relaxed before a warm fire, whose muscles yield without resistance to anyone's touch. Continue for 15 breaths.

(cont.)

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 3 (cont.)

## 6. HALF-SMILE IN A SITTING POSITION

Sit on the floor with your back straight, or on a chair with your two feet touching the floor. Half-smile. Inhale and exhale while maintaining the half-smile. Let go.

## 7. HALF-SMILE WHILE CONTEMPLATING THE PERSON YOU HATE OR DESPISE THE MOST

Sit quietly. Breathe and smile a half-smile. Imagine the image of the person who has caused you the most suffering. Regard the features you hate or despise the most or find the most repulsive. Try to examine what makes this person happy and what causes suffering in his or her daily life. Imagine the person's perceptions; try to see what patterns of thought and reason this person follows. Examine what motivates this person's hopes and actions. Finally, consider the person's consciousness. See whether the person's views and insights are open and free or not, and whether or not the person has been influenced by any prejudices, narrow-mindedness, hatred, or anger. See whether or not the person is master of himself or herself. Continue until you feel compassion rise in your heart like a well filling with fresh water, and your anger and resentment disappear. Practice this exercise many times on the same person.

**Notes/Other times to half-smile:** _____

*Note.* Adapted from *The Miracle of Mindfulness: A Manual on Meditation* (pp. 77–81, 93) by Thich Nhat Hanh, 1976, Boston: Beacon Press. Copyright 1976 by Thich Nhat Hanh. Adapted by permission.

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 4

## Guidelines for Accepting Reality: Awareness Exercises

### 1. AWARENESS OF THE POSITIONS OF THE BODY

This can be practiced in any time and place. Begin to focus your attention on your breath. Breathe quietly and more deeply than usual. Be mindful of the position of your body, whether you are walking, standing, lying, or sitting down. Know where you walk, stand, lie, or sit. Be aware of the purpose of your position. For example, you might be conscious that you are standing on a green hillside in order to refresh yourself, to practice breathing, or just to stand. If there is no purpose, be aware that there is no purpose.

### 2. AWARENESS OF CONNECTION TO THE UNIVERSE

This can be practiced any time, any place. Focus your attention on where your body touches an object (floor or ground, air molecules, a chair or arm rest, your bed sheets and covers, your clothes, etc.). Try to see all the ways you are connected to and accepted by that object. Consider the function of that object with relation to you. That is, consider what the object does for you. Consider its kindness in doing that. Experience the sensation of touching the object and focus your entire attention on that kindness until a sense of being connected or loved or cared for arises in your heart.

**Examples:** Focus your attention on your feet touching the ground. Consider the kindness of the ground holding you up, providing a path for you to get to other things, not letting you fall away from everything else. Focus your attention on your body touching the chair you sit in. Consider how the chair accepts you totally, holds you up, supports your back, keeps you from falling down on the floor. Focus your attention on the sheets and covers on your bed. Consider the touch of the sheets and covers holding you, surrounding and keeping you warm and comfortable. Consider the walls in the room. They keep out the wind and the cold and the rain. Think of how the walls are connected to you via the floor and the air in the room. Experience your connection to the walls that provide you with a secure place to do things. Go hug a tree. Think of how you and the tree are connected. Life is in you and in the tree and both of you are warmed by the sun, held by the air and supported by the earth. Try and experience the tree loving you by providing something to lean on, or by shading you.

### 3. AWARENESS WHILE MAKING TEA OR COFFEE

Prepare a pot of tea or coffee to serve a guest or to drink by yourself. Do each movement slowly, in awareness. Do not let one detail of your movements go by without being aware of it. Know that your hand lifts the pot by its handle. Know that you are pouring the fragrant, warm tea or coffee into the cup. Follow each step in awareness. Breathe gently and more deeply than usual. Take hold of your breath if your mind strays.

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 4 (cont.)

### 4. AWARENESS WHILE WASHING THE DISHES

Wash the dishes consciously, as though each bowl is an object of contemplation. Consider each bowl as sacred. Follow your breath to prevent your mind from straying. Do not try to hurry to get the job over with. Consider washing the dishes the most important thing in life.

### 5. AWARENESS WHILE HAND-WASHING CLOTHES

Do not wash too many clothes at one time. Select only three or four articles of clothing. Find the most comfortable position to sit or stand so as to prevent a backache. Scrub the clothes consciously. Hold your attention on every movement of your hands and arms. Pay attention to the soap and water. When you have finished scrubbing and rinsing, your mind and body will feel as clean and fresh as your clothes. Remember to maintain a half-smile and take hold of your breath whenever your mind wanders.

### 6. AWARENESS WHILE CLEANING HOUSE

Divide your work into stages: straightening things and putting away books, scrubbing the toilet, scrubbing the bathroom; sweeping the floors, and dusting. Allow a good length of time for each task. Move slowly, three times more slowly than usual. Focus your attention fully on each task. For example, while placing a book on the shelf, look at the book, be aware of what book it is, know that you are in the process of placing it on the shelf, and know that you intend to put it in that specific place. Know that your hand reaches for the book, and picks it up. Avoid any abrupt or harsh movement. Maintain awareness of the breath, especially when your thoughts wander.

### 7. AWARENESS WHILE TAKING A SLOW-MOTION BATH

Allow yourself 30 to 45 minutes to take a bath. Don't hurry for even a second. From the moment you prepare the bath water to the moment you put on clean clothes, let every motion be light and slow. Be attentive of every movement. Place your attention to every part of your body, without discrimination or fear. Be aware of each stream of water on your body. By the time you've finished, your mind will feel as peaceful and light as your body. Follow your breath. Think of yourself as being in a clean and fragrant lotus pond in the summer.

### 8. PRACTICING AWARENESS WITH MEDITATION

Sit comfortably on the floor with your back straight, on the floor or in a chair with both feet touching the floor. Close your eyes all the way, or open them slightly and gaze at something near. With each breath, say to yourself, quietly and gently, the word "One." As you inhale, say the word "One." As you exhale, say the word "One," calmly and slowly. Try to collect your whole mind and put it into this one word. When your mind strays, return gently to saying "One." *If you start wanting to move, try not to move. Just gently observe wanting to move. Continue practicing a little past wanting to stop. Just gently observe wanting to stop.*

*Note.* Exercises 1 and 3–8 are adapted from *The Miracle of Mindfulness: A Manual on Meditation* (pp. 84–87) by Thich Nhat Hanh, 1976, Boston: Beacon Press. Copyright 1976 by Thich Nhat Hanh. Adapted by permission.

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 5

## Basic Principles of Accepting Reality

### RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

- Freedom from suffering requires ACCEPTANCE from deep within of what is. Let yourself go completely with what is. Let go of fighting reality.
- ACCEPTANCE is the only way out of hell.
- Pain creates suffering only when you refuse to ACCEPT the pain.
- Deciding to tolerate the moment is ACCEPTANCE.
- ACCEPTANCE is acknowledging what is.
- To ACCEPT something is not the same as judging it good.

### TURNING THE MIND

- Acceptance of reality as it is requires an act of CHOICE. It is like coming to a fork in the road. You have to turn your mind towards the acceptance road and away from the "rejecting reality" road.
- You have to make an inner COMMITMENT to accept.

  The COMMITMENT to accept does not itself equal acceptance. It just turns you toward the path. But it is the first step.

  You have to turn your mind and commit to acceptance OVER AND OVER AND OVER again. Sometimes, you have to make the commitment many times in the space of a few minutes.

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 5 (cont.)

## WILLINGNESS

### Cultivate a WILLING response to each situation.

- Willingness is DOING JUST WHAT IS NEEDED in each situation, in an unpretentious way. It is focusing on effectiveness.
- Willingness is listening very carefully to your WISE MIND, acting from your inner self.
- Willingness is ALLOWING into awareness your connection to the universe—to the earth, to the floor you are standing on, to the chair you are sitting on, to the person you are talking to.

## (over) WILLFULNESS

### Replace WILLFULNESS with WILLINGNESS.

- Willfulness is SITTING ON YOUR HANDS when action is needed, refusing to make changes that are needed.
- Willfulness is GIVING UP.
- Willfulness is the OPPOSITE OF "DOING WHAT WORKS," being effective.
- Willfulness is trying to FIX every situation.
- Willfulness is REFUSING TO TOLERATE the moment.

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE HOMEWORK SHEET 1

## Crises Survival Strategies

Name _____ Week starting _____

For each survival skill, check whether you used it during the week and write down your level of distress tolerance both before (pre) and after (post) using the strategy as follows: 0 = "No tolerance, a nightmare" to 100 = "Easy tolerance, piece of cake." List what you tried specifically on the back side of this sheet.

| Skill | Mon Pre/ Post | Tues Pre/ Post | Wed Pre/ Post | Thur Pre/ Post | Fri Pre/ Post | Sat Pre/ Post | Sun Pre/ Post |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **DISTRACTING: "Wise Mind ACCEPTS"** | | | | | | | |
| Activities | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| Contributions | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| Comparisons | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| Emotions | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| Pushing away | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| Thoughts | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| Sensations | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| **SELF-SOOTHING: the five senses** | | | | | | | |
| Vision | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| Hearing | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| Smell | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| Taste | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| Touch | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| **IMPROVING THE MOMENT: IMPROVE** | | | | | | | |
| Imagery | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| Meaning | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| Prayer | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| Relaxation | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| One thing in the moment | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| Vacation | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| Encouragement | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| **Thinking of PROS & CONS** | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press. (*cont.*)

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE HOMEWORK SHEET 1 (cont.)

Specific CRISIS SURVIVAL STRATEGIES I tried during the week:

| Strategy Practiced | Day of Week | Strategy Practiced | Day of Week |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

PROS and CONS. Select one crisis where you found it REALLY hard to tolerate distress, avoid destructive behavior, and not act impulsively.

(DESTRUCTIVE behavior I wanted to do: _____)

| TOLERATING DISTRESS: PROS (advantages of tolerating) | TOLERATING DISTRESS: CONS (disadvantages of tolerating) |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

| NOT TOLERATING DISTRESS: PROS (advantages of not tolerating) | NOT TOLERATING DISTRESS: CONS (disadvantages of not tolerating) |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE HOMEWORK SHEET 2

## Acceptance and Willingness

Name _____ Week Starting _____

Check each time you practice CRISIS SURVIVAL STRATEGIES, ACCEPTANCE EXERCISES, RADICAL ACCEPTANCE, TURNING THE MIND, AND WILLINGNESS. Write down your level of distress tolerance both before (pre) and after (post) practice as follows: 0 = "No tolerance, a nightmare" to 100 = "Easy tolerance, piece of cake." If instead you practice WILLFULNESS, mark that and also write down your level of distress tolerance before and after.

| Skill | Mon Pre/ Post | Tues Pre/ Post | Wed Pre/ Post | Thur Pre/ Post | Fri Pre/ Post | Sat Pre/ Post | Sun Pre/ Post |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CRISIS SURVIVAL** | | | | | | | |
| Distracting | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| Self-Soothing | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| Improving the Moment | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| Thinking of Pros and Cons | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| **ACCEPTANCE EXERCISES** | | | | | | | |
| Observing My Breath | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| Half-smiling | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| Awareness | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| **RADICAL ACCEPTANCE** | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| **TURNING THE MIND** | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| **WILLINGNESS** | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |
| **WILLFULNESS** | / | / | / | / | / | / | / |

**NOTES: What made this easier? Harder? What I did specifically.**

From *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder* by Marsha Linehan. ©1993 The Guilford Press.