

Distress Tolerance Skills Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____ dd / mm / yyyy

ACTIVITY ONE: IDENTIFYING DISTRESS

What things, people or situations trigger distress for you? Specify below:

What warning signs do you get that let you know you are getting distressed? Specify below:

What feelings do you experience in these situations? Emotional:

What feelings do you experience in these situations? Physical:

ACTIVITY TWO: OPPOSITE ACTIONS

What do you do to escape your distress in the above situations? Some examples of escape methods include avoidance, seeking reassurance or guidance from others, or using substances such as alcohol or drugs:

While the urge to engage in an escape method can be powerful in distressing situations, it prevents you from learning helpful ways to tolerate distress and from challenging your own distress intolerant beliefs. For each of the above escape methods you identified, write down an opposite action you can do to practice engaging with your distress in a healthier way:

ACTIVITY THREE: ACCEPTING AND IMPROVING DISTRESS

While sometimes we can control distressing situations through problem-solving and taking action, other times, there is no problem-solving to be done. Whether or not you are able to take productive actions to alleviate the distressing situation, the distress tolerance skills below can help you to tolerate your distress without resorting to unhelpful escape methods. Under each letter of the ACCEPTS acronym below, fill out specific ways you can help yourself to tolerate your distress.

A - Activities: Work on engaging activities that will distract your mind and take the focus off your distress. For me, this could look like...

C - Contribute: Turn your focus to others, this could be reaching out to friends, volunteering in your community, or just doing something kind for someone else. For me, this could look like...

C - Compare: Try to gain perspective by comparing this situation to something worse you or someone else has gone through. For me, this could look like...

E - Emotions: Engage your other emotions through music, books, movies or content that elicits different emotions for you. For me, this could look like...

P - Push Away: Refuse to mentally engage with negative thoughts. For me, this could look like...

T - Thoughts: Replace the negative thoughts with new ones, such as counting, naming, reciting words or lyrics, or working on a puzzle. For me, this could look like...

S - Sensations: Create distracting or soothing physical sensations such as a warm bath or cold shower, loud music, pleasant smell, or strong taste. For me, this could look like...