

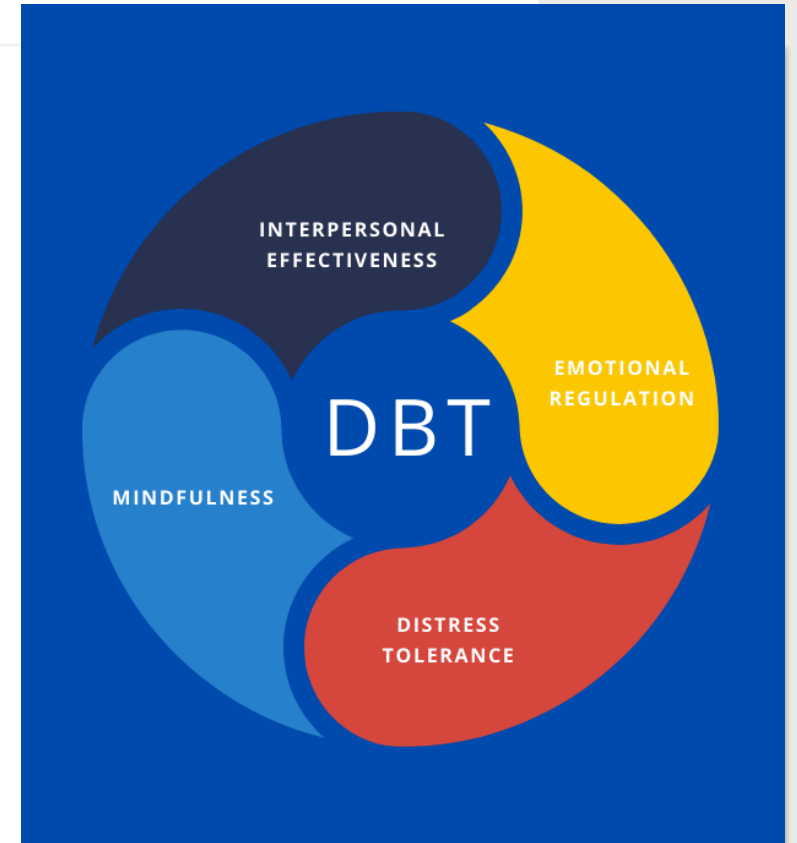
Dialectical Behavioral Therapy - ACCEPTS

October, 2023



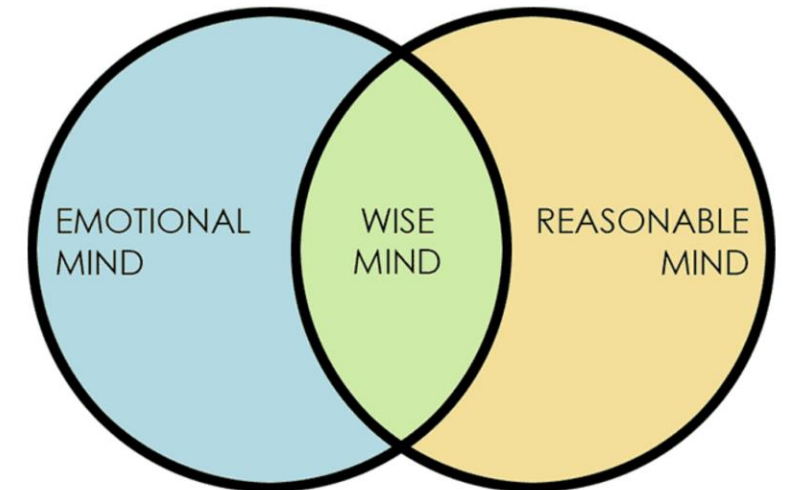
DBT

- Definition: Everything is fundamentally comprised of opposites – and the healing comes in exploring the middle spaces in the dialectic
- Purpose: to help us better cope with **extreme sets of emotions** - very repetitive – necessary for rewiring our brain
- Very research-based, commonalities with **CBT**...but when the **stakes are higher** and reframing of thoughts is **too difficult**



DBT

- Starting point is **Wise Mind**, between reasoning mind and emotional mind – at our best when we're able to access both and not be ruled by either
- Most of the skills involve taking a **pause**
- Helps **disarm** the thought that we're a horrible person (that people may have been reinforcing our entire life) - or that other people are horrible people
- **Most useful:**
 - when we need to buy time,
 - to prevent things come getting worse,
 - to help when our emotions are telling us to do something extreme - something we'll later regret



DISTRESS TOLERANCE SKILLS

Distress Tolerance: Allow us to survive an immediate emotional crisis without making it worse (Linehan, 2014).

- They also help us to *accept the reality* of the situation when we feel out of control because we cannot change the situation.
- Also help us cope with our feelings when *we don't know* exactly what we want or need in the moment

- **ACCEPTS Skills**
- TIP(P) Skills
- Self-soothe Skills
- IMPROVE Skills
- Pro-Cons Skills
- Problem Solving Skills
- Radical Acceptance Skills

ACTIVITIES
CONTRIBUTING
COMPARISONS
EMOTIONS
PUSHING AWAY
THOUGHTS
SENSATIONS



Link for ACCEPTS video

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bl1Sy7xR92g>

Distraction and A.C.C.E.P.T.S. Skills- Key Ideas

- When we feel emotionally overwhelmed, but not in crisis, we can “take a pause” to allow ourselves to return to our “wise mind” and our **window of emotional tolerance**.
- A.C.C.E.P.T.S. is a set of different techniques – some cognitive, some experiential, to **provide distraction from the source of our distress**.
- Effective distraction techniques should, ideally, be **in opposition to our default survival response** (e.g., if you tend to freeze/dissociate, do something that is more active and connecting).
- Tactical distraction is **different from chronic avoidance**. One is helpful; the other can make things worse over time.

A.C.C.E.P.T.S. - Distract until emotions subside

- **Activities** Engage in positive, healthy activities that you enjoy.
- **Contributing** Do something kind for another person.
- **Comparisons** Put current stress in context to what you or and/or others have experienced and survived). No shame!
- **Emotions** Do something to feel the opposite emotion. E.g., happy memory.
- **Push away** Deliberately postpone dealing with emotion, using activities, mindfulness. Schedule time that you will revisit what you pushing away.
- **Thoughts** Replace negative thoughts with other neutral thoughts. Engage “reasoning” mind by counting backwards, playing Sudoku, doing puzzle, paint by #, singing alphabet backwards, etc.
- **Sensations** Find ways to engage your five senses and movement (e.g., listen to outdoor sounds, take a warm bath, smell spices or put scents on a cotton ball, take a walk or skip around the room, yoga/Quigong/stretching.)

DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 7



(Distress Tolerance Worksheets 5–5b)

Distracting

A way to remember these skills is the phrase “**Wise Mind ACCEPTS.**”

With **A**ctivities:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Focus attention on a task you need to get done. | <input type="checkbox"/> Go out for a meal or eat a favorite food. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rent movies; watch TV. | <input type="checkbox"/> Call or go out with a friend. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clean a room in your house. | <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to your iPod; download music. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Find an event to go to. | <input type="checkbox"/> Build something. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Play computer games. | <input type="checkbox"/> Spend time with your children. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Go walking. Exercise. | <input type="checkbox"/> Play cards. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Surf the Internet. Write e-mails. | <input type="checkbox"/> Read magazines, books, comics. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Play sports. | <input type="checkbox"/> Do crossword puzzles or Sudoku. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

With **C**ontributing:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Find volunteer work to do. | <input type="checkbox"/> Call or send an instant message encouraging someone or just saying hi. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help a friend or family member. | <input type="checkbox"/> Make something nice for someone else. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Surprise someone with something nice (a card, a favor, a hug). | <input type="checkbox"/> Do something thoughtful. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Give away things you don't need. | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

With **C**omparisons:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compare how you are feeling now to a time when you felt different. | <input type="checkbox"/> Compare yourself to those less fortunate. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Think about people coping the same as you or less well than you. | <input type="checkbox"/> Watch reality shows about others' troubles; read about disasters, others' suffering. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

With different **Emotions:**

- Read emotional books or stories, old letters.
 - Watch emotional TV shows; 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, soothing music or music that fires you up, going to a store and reading funny greeting cards.

Other: _____

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.
- Block thoughts and images from your mind.

Notice ruminating: Yell "No!"

Refuse to think about the painful situations.

Put the pain on a shelf. Box it up and put it away for a while.

Deny the problem for the moment.

Other: _____

With other **Thoughts:**

- Count to 10; count colors in a painting or poster or out the window; count anything.
- Repeat words to a song in your mind.

Work puzzles.

Watch TV or read.

Other: _____

With other **Sensations:**

- Squeeze a rubber ball very hard.
- Listen to very loud music.
- Hold ice in your hand or mouth.

Go out in the rain or snow.

Take a hot or cold shower.

Other: _____

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Exercise

Reflect:

- Which of these helps/might help you the most – and what specific is the specific action you do (ie – Activities: cleaning my house)?
- Which one is perhaps untested and might be something to try next time you're experiencing extreme emotions?

In small groups, share your ACCEPTS reflections (your go-to skill w/ example and one you'd like to try)



Resources

- https://dbt.tools/distress_tolerance/accepts.php
- https://www.wichita.edu/academics/fairmount_college_of_liberal_arts_and_sciences/psychology/Clinic/Wise.Mind.ACCEPTS.pdf (handout)