Skills Training Handouts for *DBT® Skills Manual for Adolescents*, by Jill H. Rathus and Alec L. Miller
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**ORIENTATION HANOUTS**

*Orientation Handout 1*: What Is Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)?
*Orientation Handout 2*: Goals of Skills Training
*Orientation Handout 3*: DBT Skills Training Group Format
*Orientation Handout 4*: Biosocial Theory
*Orientation Handout 5*: DBT Assumptions
*Orientation Handout 6*: Guidelines for the Adolescent Skills Training Group
*Orientation Handout 7*: DBT Contract

**MINDFULNESS HANOUTS**

*Mindfulness Handout 1*: Mindfulness: Taking Hold of Your Mind
*Mindfulness Handout 2*: Mindfulness: Why Bother?
*Mindfulness Handout 3*: Three States of Mind
*Mindfulness Handout 4*: Practice Exercise: Observing Yourself in Each State of Mind
*Mindfulness Handout 5*: Mindfulness “What” Skills
*Mindfulness Handout 6*: Mindfulness “How” Skills
*Mindfulness Handout 7*: Mindfulness Cheat Sheet
*Mindfulness Handout 8*: Practice Exercise: Mindfulness “What” and “How” Skills

**DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANOUTS**

*Distress Tolerance Handout 1*: Why Bother Tolerating Painful Feelings and Urges?
*Distress Tolerance Handout 2*: Crisis Survival Skills Overview

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Distress Tolerance Handout 3: Crisis Survival Skills: Distract with “Wise Mind ACCEPTS”
Distress Tolerance Handout 4: Practice Exercise: Distract with “Wise Mind ACCEPTS”
Distress Tolerance Handout 5: Crisis Survival Skills: Self-Soothe with Six Senses
Distress Tolerance Handout 6: Practice Exercise: Self-Soothe Skills
Distress Tolerance Handout 7: Crisis Survival Skills: IMPROVE the Moment
Distress Tolerance Handout 8: Practice Exercise: IMPROVE the Moment
Distress Tolerance Handout 9: Crisis Survival Skills: Pros and Cons
Distress Tolerance Handout 10: Practice Exercise: Pros and Cons
Distress Tolerance Handout 11: Crisis Survival Skills: TIPP Skills for Managing Extreme Emotions
Distress Tolerance Handout 12: Practice Exercise: TIPP Skills
Distress Tolerance Handout 13: Create Your Crisis Survival Kit for Home, School, or Work
Distress Tolerance Handout 14: Accepting Reality: Choices We Can Make
Distress Tolerance Handout 15: Accepting Reality: Turning the Mind
Distress Tolerance Handout 16: Willingness
Distress Tolerance Handout 17: Ways to Practice Accepting Reality
Distress Tolerance Handout 18: Practice Exercise: Accepting Reality

WALKING THE MIDDLE PATH Handouts

Walking the Middle Path Handout 1: Dialectics: What Is It?
Walking the Middle Path Handout 2: Dialectics “How-to” Guide
Walking the Middle Path Handout 3: Thinking Mistakes
Walking the Middle Path Handout 4: Dialectical Dilemmas
Walking the Middle Path Handout 5: Dialectical Dilemmas: How Does the Dilemma Apply to You?
Walking the Middle Path Handout 6: What’s Typical for Adolescents and What’s Cause for Concern?
Walking the Middle Path Handout 7: Practice Exercise: Thinking and Acting Dialectically
Walking the Middle Path Handout 8: Validation
Walking the Middle Path Handout 9: How Can We Validate Others?
Walking the Middle Path Handout 10: How Can We Validate Ourselves?
Walking the Middle Path Handout 11: Practice Exercise: Validation of Self and Others
Walking the Middle Path Handout 12: Behavior Change
Walking the Middle Path Handout 13: Ways to Increase Behaviors
Walking the Middle Path Handout 14: Practice Exercise: Positive Reinforcement
EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUTS

Emotion Regulation Handout 1: Taking Charge of Your Emotions: Why Bother?
Emotion Regulation Handout 2: Goals of Emotion Regulation Skills Training
Emotion Regulation Handout 3: Short List of Emotions
Emotion Regulation Handout 4: What Good Are Emotions?
Emotion Regulation Handout 5: A Model of Emotions
Emotion Regulation Handout 6: A Model of Emotions with Skills
Emotion Regulation Handout 7: Practice Exercise: Observe and Describe an Emotion
Emotion Regulation Handout 8: ABC PLEASE Overview
Emotion Regulation Handout 9: ACCUMULATING Positive Experiences—Short Term
Emotion Regulation Handout 10: Pleasant Activities List
Emotion Regulation Handout 11: Parent–Teen Shared Pleasant Activities List
Emotion Regulation Handout 12: ACCUMULATING Positive Experiences—Long Term
Emotion Regulation Handout 13: Wise Mind Values and Priorities List
Emotion Regulation Handout 14: Practice Exercise: ACCUMULATING Positive Experiences in the Short and Long Term
Emotion Regulation Handout 15: Building Mastery and Coping Ahead
Emotion Regulation Handout 16: PLEASE Skills
Emotion Regulation Optional Handout 16a: FOOD and Your MOOD
Emotion Regulation Optional Handout 16b: BEST Ways to Get REST: 12 Tips for Better Sleep
Emotion Regulation Handout 17: Practice Exercise: Build Mastery, Cope Ahead, and PLEASE Skills
Emotion Regulation Handout 18: The Wave Skill: Mindfulness of Current Emotions
Emotion Regulation Handout 19: Check the Facts and Problem Solving
Emotion Regulation Handout 20: Opposite Action to Change Emotions
Emotion Regulation Handout 21: Practice Exercise: Opposite Action

INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUTS

Interpersonal Effectiveness Handout 1: What Is Your Goal and Priority?
Interpersonal Effectiveness Handout 2: What Stops You from Achieving Your Goals?
Interpersonal Effectiveness Handout 3: Building and Maintaining Positive Relationships: GIVE Skills

Interpersonal Effectiveness Handout 4: Practice Exercise: GIVE Skills

Interpersonal Effectiveness Handout 5: Getting Someone to Do What You Want: DEAR MAN Skills

Interpersonal Effectiveness Handout 6: Practice Exercise: DEAR MAN Skills

Interpersonal Effectiveness Handout 7: Maintaining Your Self-Respect: FAST Skills

Interpersonal Effectiveness Handout 8: Worry Thoughts and Wise Mind Self-Statements

Interpersonal Effectiveness Handout 9: Practice Exercise: FAST Skills

Interpersonal Effectiveness Handout 10: Factors to Consider in Asking for What You Want

Interpersonal Effectiveness Handout 11: Practice Exercise: Factors to Consider in Asking or Saying “No”

Interpersonal Effectiveness Handout 12: Practice Exercise: Using Skills at the Same Time

Interpersonal Effectiveness Optional Handout 13: THINK Skills

Interpersonal Effectiveness Optional Handout 14: Practice Exercise: THINK Skills
ORIENTATION HANDOUTS
ORIENTATION HANOUT 1

What Is Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)?

- DBT is an effective treatment for people who have difficulty controlling their emotions and behaviors.
- DBT aims to replace problem behaviors with skillful behaviors.
- DBT skills help people experience a range of emotions without necessarily acting on those emotions.
- DBT skills help teens navigate relationships in their environment (family/school/peers).
- DBT helps people create a life worth living.

What Does “Dialectical” Mean?

Dialectical = two opposite ideas can be true at the same time, and when considered together, can create a new truth and a new way of viewing the situation. There is always more than one way to think about a situation.
ORIENTATION HANDOUT 2

Goals of Skills Training

Problems to Decrease
1. REDUCED AWARENESS AND FOCUS; CONFUSION ABOUT SELF
   (Not always aware of what you are feeling, why you get upset, or what your goals are, and/or have trouble staying focused)

2. EMOTIONAL DYSREGULATION
   (Fast, intense mood changes with little control and/or steady negative emotional state; mood-dependent behaviors)

3. IMPULSIVITY
   (Acting without thinking it all through; escaping or avoiding emotional experiences)

4. INTERPERSONAL PROBLEMS
   (Pattern of difficulty keeping relationships steady, getting what you want, keeping self-respect; loneliness)

5. TEENAGER AND FAMILY CHALLENGES
   (Extreme thinking, feeling, and acting; absence of flexibility; difficulty navigating family conflict or effectively influencing others’ behaviors)

Behaviors to Increase
1. CORE MINDFULNESS SKILLS

2. EMOTION REGULATION SKILLS

3. DISTRESS TOLERANCE SKILLS

4. INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

5. WALKING THE MIDDLE PATH SKILLS

PERSONAL GOALS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors to Decrease</th>
<th>Behaviors to Increase</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1.</td>
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ORIENTATION HANDOUT 3

DBT Skills Training Group Format

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ORIENTATION HANDOUT 4
Biosocial Theory

BIO:
A. There is a biological vulnerability to emotions
   1. high sensitivity
   2. high reactivity
   3. slow return to baseline
   plus
B. An inability to effectively regulate emotions.

TRANSACTING WITH . . .

SOCIAL:
An invalidating environment communicates that what you are feeling, thinking, or doing doesn’t make sense or is considered inaccurate or an overreaction. Environments include parents, teachers, peers, therapists, coaches, and others. Sometimes there is a “poor fit” (e.g., temperament) between the person and the environment.

The invalidating environment punishes or sometimes reinforces emotional displays and contributes to the person’s suppression or escalation of emotions, and sometimes leaves the person feeling confused and unable to trust one’s own emotional experiences (self-invalidation).

OVER TIME LEADS TO . . .

Multiple Problems
(Chronic Emotional Dysregulation)

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ORIENTATION HANDOUT 5

DBT Assumptions

1. People are doing the best they can.

2. People want to improve.

3. People need to do better, try harder, and be more motivated to change.

4. People may not have caused all of their own problems and they have to solve them anyway.

5. The lives of emotionally distressed teenagers and their families are painful as they are currently being lived.

6. Teens and families must learn and practice new behaviors in all the different situations in their lives (e.g., home, school, work, neighborhood).

7. There is no absolute truth.

8. Teens and their families cannot fail in DBT.
ORIENTATION HANDOUT 6

Guidelines for the Adolescent Skills Training Group

1. Information obtained during sessions (including the names of other group members) must remain confidential.

2. People are not to come to sessions under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

3. If you miss more than five group sessions (absences) in a 24-week program, you have dropped out of treatment. You can reapply one complete module after being out of the group. Attendance is kept on each family member individually.

4. If you are more than 15 minutes late, you will be allowed in but will be considered absent.

5. People are not to discuss any risk behaviors with other group members outside of sessions. Participants do not tempt others to engage in problem behaviors.

6. Group members may not contact one another when in crisis and instead should contact their skills coach or therapist.

7. People may not form private (cliques, dating) relationships with one another while they are in skills training together.

8. People may not act in a mean or disrespectful manner toward other group members or leaders.

9. For teens in a comprehensive DBT program, each adolescent must be in ongoing individual DBT therapy.


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I am familiar with the theory, assumptions, and format of DBT Skills Training.

I agree to participate in DBT Skills Training and complete all of the modules.

I will come to group on time with my materials and practice exercises. If I don’t do the practice, I agree to do a behavioral analysis (so we understand what got in the way and can problem-solve for next time).

I am fully aware of the attendance policy, and if I exceed the allotted amount of absences, I understand that I will have dropped out of DBT Skills Training. (As a caregiver, I am aware that the attendance policy applies to me as well.)

(Your signature)  (date)

(Skills trainer signature)  (date)
I’m noticing the thought that...
Mindfulness: Taking Hold of Your Mind

Being in control of your mind rather than letting your mind be in control of you.

1. **FULL AWARENESS (Opened Mind):** Being aware of the present moment (e.g., thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations) without judgment and without trying to change it.

2. **ATTENTIONAL CONTROL (Focused Mind):** Staying focused on one thing at a time.

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Mindfulness: Why Bother?

Being mindful can . . .

1. Give you more choices and more control over your behavior. It helps you slow down and notice emotions, thoughts, and urges (i.e., increases self-awareness), and helps you choose a behavior more thoughtfully, rather than act impulsively and make situations worse.

2. Reduce your emotional suffering and increase your pleasure and sense of well-being.

3. Help you make important decisions (and balance overly emotional or overly logical decisions).

4. Help focus your attention (i.e., be in control of your mind rather than letting your mind be in control of you) and therefore make you more effective and productive.

5. Increase compassion for self and others.

6. Lessen your pain, tension, and stress, and in turn can even improve your health.

Practice, practice, practice

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Emotional Mind is “hot,” ruled by your feelings and urges.
When I am in Emotional Mind, I tend to: ____________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

(continued)


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Reasonable Mind is “cool,” ruled by thinking, facts, and logic.

When I am in Reasonable Mind, I tend to: 

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

Wise Mind includes both reason and emotion; it is the wisdom within each person and the state of mind to access to avoid acting impulsively and when you need to make an important decision. (Wise mind helps us think more clearly in the presence of strong emotions.)

When I am in Wise Mind, I tend to: 

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________
**Emotional Mind**

One example of Emotional Mind this week was (please describe your emotions, thoughts, behaviors):

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

(continued)

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Reasonable Mind
One example of Reasonable Mind this week was (please describe your emotions, thoughts, behaviors):

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

Wise Mind
One example of Wise Mind this week was (please describe your emotions, thoughts, behaviors):

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________________
MINDFULNESS HANDOUT 5

Mindfulness “What” Skills

Observe

- *Wordless watching*: Just notice the experience in the present moment.
- Observe both inside and outside yourself, using all of your five senses.
- Watch your thoughts and feelings come and go, as if they were on a conveyer belt.
- Have a “Teflon mind,” letting experiences come into your mind and slip right out (not holding on).
- Don’t push away your thoughts and feelings. Just let them happen, even when they’re painful.
- Note: we cannot observe another’s inner experience (“He’s upset.”)—only external features (e.g., a tear rolling down a cheek) or our thoughts about another’s experience (“I observed the thought ‘He’s upset.’ ”).

Describe

- Put words on the experience: Label what you observe with words.
- For example: “I feel sad,” “My face feels hot,” “I feel my heart racing,” “I’m having the thought that . . . ,” “I’m having an urge to. . . .”
- Describe only what you observe *without* interpretations. Stick to the facts! Instead of “that person has an attitude,” you could describe that person as “rolling her eyes, speaking with a loud voice.”

Participate

- Throw yourself into the present moment fully (e.g., dancing, cleaning, taking a test, feeling sad in the moment). Try not to worry about tomorrow or focus on yesterday.
- Become one with whatever you’re doing: *Get into the zone.*
- Fully experience the moment without being self-conscious.
- Experience even negative emotions fully to help your Wise Mind make a decision about what to do (instead of acting impulsively).


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MINDFULNESS HANDOUT 6

Mindfulness “How” Skills

Don’t Judge

- Notice but don’t evaluate as good or bad. Stick to the observable facts of the situation, using only what is observed with your senses.
- Acknowledge the harmful and the helpful, but don’t judge it. For example, replace “He’s a jerk” with “He walked away while we were talking.”
- You can’t go through life without making judgments; your goal is to catch and replace them with descriptions so you have more control over your emotions.
- When you find yourself judging, don’t judge your judging.

Stay Focused

- One-mindfully: Focus your attention on only one thing in this moment. Slow yourself down to accomplish this.
- Stop doing two things at once (the opposite of multitasking).
- Concentrate your mind: Let go of distractions and refocus your attention when it drifts, again and again.
- Stay focused so that past, future, and current distractions don’t get in your way.

Do What Works

- Be effective: Focus on what works to achieve your goal.
- Don’t let emotions control your behavior; cut the cord between feeling and doing.
- Play by the rules (which may vary at home, school, work).
- Act as skillfully as you can to achieve your goals.
- Let go of negative feelings (e.g., vengeance and useless anger) and “shoulds” (e.g., “My teacher should have. . . .”) that can hurt you and make things worse.


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1. Identify what you will focus on:

   Examples: Your breath
   An object (a picture, burning candle)
   An activity (brushing your hair, cleaning your room, reading)

2. Bring your attention to the object of focus.

3. When your attention wanders away from the object of focus (and sometimes it will, so don’t judge yourself for it!) . . .
   - Notice that this has happened.
   - Gently bring your attention back to the object of focus.

**To Get Started**

Begin practicing mindfulness by noticing your attention and how it wanders. Gradually work on doing this practice for 30 seconds, 1 minute and 2 minutes at a time. Practice a lot. No one will know you are doing it!

Your attention may wander to noises around you, worry thoughts, judgmental thoughts such as “this is stupid,” body sensations, urges to talk, and so on. Notice them, let them go, and return your attention to the object of focus.
Check off one “what” skill and one “how” skill to practice during the week.

“What” Skills

___ Observe
___ Describe
___ Participate

“How” Skills

___ Don’t Judge
___ Stay Focused
___ Do What Works

Briefly describe how you used each skill during the week (include what, when, and where):

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Briefly describe how the skills affected your thoughts, feelings, or behaviors:
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

___ Were you able to get into Wise Mind?
___ Were you able to better notice the present moment?
___ Were you able to better focus your attention on just one thing at a time?
___ Any other effects on thoughts, feelings, or behaviors? ____________________________

DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUTS
DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 1

Why Bother Tolerating Painful Feelings and Urges?

Because . . .

1. Pain is part of life and can’t always be avoided.

2. If you can’t deal with your pain, you may act impulsively.

3. When you act impulsively, you may end up hurting yourself, hurting someone else, or not getting what you want.
Skills for tolerating painful events and emotions when you can’t make things better right away and you don’t want to make things worse!

**Distract with “Wise Mind ACCEPTS”**
- Activities
- Contributing
- Comparisons
- Emotions
- Pushing Away
- Thoughts
- Sensations

**SELF-SOOTHE with Six Senses**
- Vision
- Hearing
- Smell
- Taste
- Touch
- Movement

**IMPROVE the Moment**
- Imagery
- Meaning
- Prayer
- Relaxation
- One thing in the moment
- Vacation
- Encouragement

**PROS AND CONS**

**TIPP**
- Temperature
- Intense exercise
- Paced breathing
- Progressively relaxing your muscles

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**Activities**

*Do something.* Call, e-mail, text, or visit a friend; watch a favorite movie or TV show; play your instrument or sing; play videogames; draw, cook, or bake; write in a journal; clean your room; go for a walk or exercise; read a book; listen to your iPod, go online and download music, apps; play a game with yourself or others.

**Contributing**

*Contribute to (do something nice for) someone.* Help a friend or sibling with homework; make something nice for someone else; donate things you don’t need; surprise someone with a hug, a note, or a favor; volunteer.

**Comparisons**

*Compare yourself* to those less fortunate. Compare how you are feeling now to a time when you were doing worse. Think about others who are coping the same or less well than you.

**Emotions**

*Create different emotions.* Watch a funny TV show or emotional movie; listen to soothing or upbeat music; get active when you are sad; go to a store and read funny greeting cards or joke books.

**Pushing away**

*Push the painful situation out of your mind temporarily.* Leave the situation mentally by moving your attention and thoughts away; build an imaginary wall between you and the situation. Put the pain in a box and on a shelf for a while.

**Thoughts**

*Replace your thoughts.* Read; do word or number puzzles; count numbers, colors in a poster, tiles on a wall, anything; repeat the words to a song in your mind.

**Sensations**

*Intensify other sensations.* Hold or chew ice; listen to loud music; take a warm or cold shower; squeeze a stress ball; do sit-ups and push-ups; pet your dog or cat.

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DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 4

Practice Exercise:
Distract with “Wise Mind ACCEPTS”

Due Date ______________________

Write down at least two specific Distract skills to practice during the week when you feel upset (e.g., activity—play the guitar; contributing—bake cookies for my neighbor):

Distract with “ACCEPTS”

Activities ____________________________________________

Contributing _________________________________________

Comparisons _________________________________________

Emotions _____________________________________________

Pushing away _________________________________________

Thoughts _____________________________________________

Sensations ___________________________________________

(continued)


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Practice Exercise: Distract with "Wise Mind ACCEPTS"  (page 2 of 2)

Briefly describe the stressful situations you were in and the specific skills you used: 

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Did using the skills help you to (1) cope with uncomfortable feelings and urges and/or (2) avoid conflict of any kind?
Circle  Yes  or  No.
(Note: If the skill helped you to not do anything to make the situation worse, it worked!)

If  YES, please describe how it helped: ______________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

If  NO, please describe why you believe it did not help: _________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

If you did not practice this skill, please explain why: __________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 5

Crisis Survival Skills: Self-Soothe with Six Senses

VISION  HEARING
SMELL  TASTE
TOUCH  MOVEMENT

**Vision**
Go to your favorite place and take in all the sights; look at a photo album; zone out to a poster/picture; notice colors in a sunset; people watch.

**Hearing**
Listen to your favorite music and play it over and over again; pay attention to sounds in nature (birds, rain, thunder, traffic); play an instrument or sing; listen to a sound machine.

**Smell**
Put on your favorite lotion; use a scented aftershave or body wash; make cookies or popcorn; smell freshly brewed coffee; go to the park and “smell the roses.”

**Taste**
Eat some of your favorite foods; drink your favorite nonalcoholic beverage; have your favorite flavor of ice cream; really notice the food you eat; eat one thing mindfully; don’t overdo it!

**Touch**
Take a long bath or shower; pet your dog or cat; get a massage; brush your hair; hug or be hugged; put a cold cloth on your head; change into your most comfortable clothes.

**Movement**
Rock yourself gently; stretch; go for a run; do yoga; dance!

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DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 6

Practice Exercise: Self-Soothe Skills

Due Date _______________________

Write down at least two specific SELF-SOOTHE Skills to practice during the week when you feel upset:

SELF-SOOTHE WITH SIX SENSES:

VISION

HEARING

SMELL

TASTE

TOUCH

MOVEMENT

(continued)


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Practice Exercise: Self-Soothe Skills (page 2 of 2)

Briefly describe the stressful situations you were in and the specific skills you used:
1. __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

2. __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

Did using this skill help you to (1) cope with uncomfortable feelings and urges and/or (2) avoid conflict of any kind?

Circle Yes or No.

If YES, please describe how it helped: __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

If NO, please describe why you believe it did not help: _____________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

If you did not practice this skill, please explain why: _____________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 7
Crisis Survival Skills: IMPROVE the Moment

IMPROVE the Moment with:

**Imagery**
Imagine very relaxing scenes of a calming, safe place. Imagine things going well; imagine coping well. Imagine painful emotions draining out of you like water out of a pipe.

**Meaning**
Find or create some purpose, meaning, or value in the pain. Make lemonade out of lemons.

**Prayer**
Open your heart to a supreme being, greater wisdom, or your own Wise Mind. Ask for strength to bear the pain in this moment.

**Relaxation**
Try to relax your muscles by tensing and relaxing each large muscle group, starting with the forehead and working down. Download a relaxation audio or video; stretch; take a bath or get a massage.

**One thing in the Moment**
Focus your entire attention on what you are doing right now. Keep your mind in the present moment. Be aware of body movements or sensations while you’re walking, cleaning, eating.

**Vacation**
Give yourself a brief vacation. Get outside, take a short walk, go get your favorite coffee drink or smoothie, read a magazine or newspaper; surf the web; take a 1-hour breather from hard work that must be done. Unplug from all electronic devices.

**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.”

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DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 8

Practice Exercise: IMPROVE the Moment

Due Date _________________________

Write down at least two specific IMPROVE Skills to practice during the week when you feel distressed:

Imagery ____________________________________________

Meaning ____________________________________________

Prayer ____________________________________________

Relaxation __________________________________________

One Thing in the Moment ____________________________________________

Vacation ____________________________________________

Encouragement ____________________________________________

Briefly describe the stressful situation(s) you were in and the specific skills you used:

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

(continued)


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Practice Exercise: IMPROVE the Moment (page 2 of 2)

Did using the skills help you to (1) cope with uncomfortable feelings and urges and/or (2) avoid conflict of any kind?

Circle YES or NO

If YES, please describe how it helped: 

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

If NO, please describe why you believe it did not help: 

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

If you did not practice this skill, please explain why: 

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Select one crisis (emotionally upsetting situation) where you find it really hard to tolerate your distress, avoid destructive behavior, and not act impulsively.

Crisis I am faced with: ____________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

Crisis urges: ________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

- An urge can intensify a crisis when it is intense and acting on the urge will make things worse in the long term.

- Make a list of the pros and cons of acting on your crisis urges. These might be to engage in addictive or harmful behavior or it might be to give in, give up, or avoid doing what is necessary to build a life you want to live.

- Make another list of the pros and cons of resisting crisis urges—that is, tolerating the distress skillfully and not giving into the urge.

(continued)


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1. Consider short-term and long-term PROS and CONS.

2. **Before** an overwhelming urge hits:
   Write out your PROS and CONS and carry them with you.

3. **When** an overwhelming urge hits:
   Review your PROS and CONS and imagine the positive consequences of resisting the urge.
   Imagine (and remember past) negative consequences of giving in to crisis urges.
### Practice Exercise: Pros and Cons

Select one crisis (emotionally upsetting situation) where you find it really hard to tolerate your distress, avoid destructive behavior, and not act on your urges.

**Crisis I am faced with:**

**Crisis urges:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROS</th>
<th>CONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acting on Crisis Urges</strong></td>
<td>Pros of acting on impulsive urges:</td>
</tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

| **Resisting Crisis Urges** | Pros of resisting impulsive urges: | Cons of resisting impulsive urges: |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

1. Consider short-term and long-term PROS and CONS.
2. **Before** an overwhelming urge hits:
   - Write out your PROS and CONS and carry them with you.
3. **When** an overwhelming urge hits:
   - Review your PROS and CONS and imagine the positive consequences of resisting the urge.
   - Imagine (and remember past) negative consequences of giving in to crisis urges.


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When emotional arousal is very HIGH!!!!!!!

- You are completely caught in Emotion Mind.
- Your brain is not processing information.
- You are emotionally overwhelmed.

“TIPP” your body chemistry to reduce extreme Emotion Mind quickly with:

**Temperature**

- **Tip the temperature of your face with cold water to calm down fast.** Holding your breath, put your face in a bowl of cold water; keep water above 50° F. Or, hold a cold pack or ziplock bag with ice water on your eyes and cheeks, or splash cold water on your face. Hold for 30 seconds.

  **Caution:** Ice water decreases your heart rate rapidly. Intense exercise will increase heart rate. If you have a heart or medical condition, lowered base heart rate due to medications, take a beta blocker, or have an eating disorder, consult your health care provider before using these skills. Avoid ice water if allergic to the cold.

**Intense Exercise**

- **To calm down your body when it is revved up by emotion.** Engage in intense aerobic exercise, if only for a short while (10–15 minutes). Expend your body’s stored-up physical energy by running, walking fast, jumping rope or jumping jacks, playing basketball, weight lifting, putting on music and dancing. *Don’t overdo it!*

(continued)
Paced Breathing

- **Slow your pace of breathing way down** (to about 5–7 in and out breaths per minute). Breathe deeply from the abdomen. Breathe *out* more slowly than you breathe *in* (e.g., 4 seconds in and 6 seconds out). Do this for 1–2 minutes to bring down your arousal.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- **Tense and relax each muscle group**, head to toe, one muscle group at a time. *Tense* (5 seconds), then let go; *relax* each muscle all the way. *Notice* the tension; *notice* the difference when relaxed.
Choose one TIPP skill to practice this week. Check it off now and prepare yourself to use this skill when emotional arousal gets very high.

Rate your emotional arousal before you use the skill: 1–100: ______

**TIPP** your body chemistry with:

___ Temperature

Alter your body temperature by holding your breath and placing head in bowl of cold water. Or, splash cold water on your face or place a cold gel mask on your eyes or forehead. Hold for at least 30 seconds. Works best if bent over forward.

___ Intense exercise

Run in place, do a high-intensity weight circuit, jump, put on music and dance (10–15 minutes). *Don’t overdo it!*

___ Paced breathing

Slow down your breath so that you’re breathing in for about 4 seconds and out for 5–8 seconds. Do this for 1–2 minutes to bring down your arousal.

___ Progressive muscle relaxation

Tense and relax each muscle group, head to toe, one muscle group at a time.

Rate your emotional arousal after using the skill: 1–100: ______
Create Your Crisis Survival Kit for Home, School, or Work

List below 10 “tools” that go into your home crisis survival kit. Choose from your Distract with Wise Mind ACCEP TS skills, your Self-Soothe skills, your IMPROVE skills, and your TIPP skills. Take a shoebox, sturdy bag, or basket and place the relevant items inside: for example, your iPod, a stress ball, your favorite scented lotion or aftershave, picture of your favorite vacation spot, a favorite magazine, a crossword book, herbal tea bags, a favorite piece of candy, a relaxation CD or DVD.

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

6. 

7. 

8. 

9. 

10. 

Create a smaller version of your kit for school or work that fits in a pencil case or lunchbox. Consider items that can be used at your desk: for example, multicolored rubber bands to stretch; paper and pens for doodling; a mini-pack of playdough; a squeeze ball; silly putty; a list of visual stimuli in your class or office that can distract or soothe you; snacks to self-soothe; a list of friends, teachers, counselors, or colleagues you can approach when you have a break.

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

6. 

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Five optional ways of responding when a serious problem comes into your life:

1. Figure out how to solve the problem.
2. Change how you feel about the problem.
3. Accept it.
4. Stay miserable (no skill use).
5. Make things worse (act on your impulsive urges).

When you can’t solve the problem or change your emotions about the problem, try acceptance as a way to reduce your suffering.

Why Bother Accepting Reality?

✓ Rejecting reality does not change reality.
✓ Changing reality requires first accepting reality.
✓ Rejecting reality turns pain into suffering.
✓ Refusing to accept reality can keep you stuck in unhappiness, anger, shame, sadness, bitterness, or other painful emotions.

Radical Acceptance

✓ RADICAL ACCEPTANCE is the skill of accepting the things you can’t change.
✓ RADICAL = complete and total accepting in mind, heart, and body.
✓ ACCEPTANCE = seeing reality for what it is, even if you don’t like it.
✓ ACCEPTANCE can mean to acknowledge, recognize, endure, not give up or give in.
✓ It’s when you stop fighting reality, stop throwing tantrums about reality, and let go of bitterness. It is the opposite of “Why me?” It is “Things are as they are.”
✓ Life can be worth living, even with painful events in it.

(continued)
List one important thing that you need to accept in your life now: ________________

_____________________________________________________________________

List one less important thing you need to accept this week: ________________

_____________________________________________________________________
DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 15

Accepting Reality: Turning the Mind

✓ ACCEPTANCE is a choice. It is like coming to a “fork in the road.” You may have to turn your mind toward the ACCEPTANCE road and away from the REJECTING “Reality Road.”

✓ First notice you are not accepting reality (anger, bitterness, “Why me?”)

✓ Second, make an inner commitment to ACCEPT.

✓ You may have to turn your mind over and over and over again.

Factors That Interfere with Acceptance

✓ Beliefs get in the way: You believe that if you accept your painful situation, you will become weak and just give up (or give in), approve of reality, or accept a life of pain.

✓ Emotions get in the way: Intense anger at the person or group that caused the painful event; unbearable sadness; guilt about your own behavior; shame regarding something about you; rage about the injustice of the world.

REMEMBER: ACCEPTANCE DOES NOT MEAN APPROVAL!


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WILLFULNESS IS . . .
• Willfulness is refusing to tolerate a situation or giving up.
• Willfulness is trying to change a situation that cannot be changed, or refusing to change something that must be changed.
• Willfulness is “the terrible twos”—“no . . . no . . . no . . .”
• Willfulness is the opposite of “DOING WHAT WORKS”

REPLACE WILLFULNESS WITH WILLINGNESS.

WILLINGNESS IS . . .
• allowing the world to be what it is and participating in it fully.
• doing just what is needed—no more, no less. It is being effective.
• listening carefully to your Wise Mind and deciding what to do.
• When willfulness doesn’t budge, ask: “What is the threat?”

How can you feel the difference between when you are willing and when you are willful? Clues that you are being willful: extreme thoughts like “No way!“; muscles tightening.

(continued)
Describe a situation when you noticed your **willingness** and one in which you noticed your **willfulness**:

Where were you willful? ____________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

How were you willful (e.g., thoughts, feelings, body sensations)? ____________

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

What happened? ________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

Where were you willing? _________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

How were you willing (e.g., thoughts, feelings, body sensations)? ____________

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

What happened? ________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________
Ways to Practice Accepting Reality

1. Acceptance of reality **as it is** sometimes requires an act of CHOICE.

2. Breathe mindfully to be in the moment and to help develop a more accepting mindset.

3. Accept reality with your face: half-smile.

4. Rehearse in your mind those things that you would do if you really did accept reality **as it is**.

5. Practice willingness.

6. Remember to turn the mind back to accepting Reality Road.


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**Practice Exercise: Accepting Reality**

**Due Date**

Describe a situation during the week in which you were distressed and there was no way to change the situation right away: ________________________________

______________________________

______________________________

Rate your distress from 1 to 10 (with 10 being the worst): __________

If you couldn’t solve the problem right away or change how you felt about it, what did you choose to do (circle one of the remaining three possibilities)?:

1. Solve the problem.
2. Change how you feel about the problem.
3. ACCEPT the situation.
4. Stay miserable (refuse to accept situation).
5. Make the situation worse.

If you tried to radically accept the situation, what exactly did you do or say to yourself? ______

______________________________

______________________________

Did you notice that you had to “turn your mind” back to radical acceptance? If yes, how? ___

______________________________

______________________________

If you chose to stay miserable or make things worse, what did you do? ________________

______________________________

______________________________

Rate your distress after you turned your mind toward acceptance (rate 0–10, with 10 being the worst distress): __________

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WALKING THE MIDDLE PATH HANDOUTS
Dialectics teach us that:

- There is always more than one way to see a situation and more than one way to solve a problem.
- All people have unique qualities and different points of view.
- Change is the only constant.
- Two things that seem like (or are) opposites can both be true.
- Honor the truth on both sides of a conflict. This does not mean giving up your values or selling out. Avoid seeing the world in “black-and-white,” “all-or-nothing” ways.

**Examples:**

I am doing the best I can **AND** I need to do better, try harder, and be more motivated to change.

I can do this **AND** it’s going to be hard. My mom is really strict **AND** she really cares about me. I’ve got big problems **AND** I can try to solve them. You are tough **AND** you are gentle.

This perspective helps pave the way toward the middle path by helping you:

- Expand your thoughts and ways of considering life situations.
- “Unstick” standoffs and conflicts.
- Be more flexible and approachable.
- Avoid assumptions and blaming.
Hints for Thinking and Acting Dialectically:

1. Move to “both–and” thinking and away from “either/or” thinking. Avoid extreme words: always, never, you make me. Be descriptive.
   
   Example: Instead of saying “Everyone always treats me unfairly,” say “Sometimes I am treated fairly and at other times, I am treated unfairly.”

2. Practice looking at all sides of a situation and all points of view. Be generous and dig deep. Find the kernel of truth in every side by asking “What is being left out?”
   
   Example: “Why does Mom want me to be home at 10:00 P.M.? ” “Why does my daughter want to stay out until 2:00 A.M.?”

3. Remember: No one has the absolute truth. Be open to alternatives.

4. Use “I feel . . .” statements, instead of “You are . . .,” “You should . . .,” or “That’s just the way it is” statements.
   
   Example: Say “I feel angry when you say I can’t stay out later just because you said so” instead of, “You never listen and you are always unfair to me.”

5. Accept that different opinions can be valid, even if you do not agree with them.
   
   Example: “I can see your point of view even though I do not agree with it.”

6. Check your assumptions. Do not assume that you know what others are thinking.
   
   Example: “What did you mean when you said . . .?”

7. Do not expect others to know what you are thinking.
   
   Example: “What I am trying to say is. . . .”

(continued)
Practice:

Circle the dialectical statements:

1. a. “It is hopeless. I just cannot do it.”
   b. “This is easy . . . I’ve got no problems.”
   c. “This is really hard for me and I am going to keep trying.”

2. a. “I know I am right about this.”
   b. “You are totally wrong about that and I am right.”
   c. “I can understand why you feel this way, and I feel different about it.”
WALKING THE MIDDLE PATH HANDOUT 3

Thinking Mistakes

1. **ALL-OR-NOTHING, BLACK-AND-WHITE THINKING**: If you’re not perfect, you’re a total loser. If you don’t get everything you want, it feels like you got nothing. If you’re having a good day, the whole rest of your life is perfect and you don’t need therapy anymore.

2. **CATASTROPHIZING (FORTUNETELLING ERROR)**: You predict the future negatively without considering other, more likely outcomes. “I’m definitely going to fail my test,” or “If I tell her that, she’ll hate me forever.”

3. **MIND READING**: You believe you know what other people are thinking even without asking. “He clearly doesn’t think I will do a good job.”

4. **OVERGENERALIZATION**: You make a sweeping, negative conclusion that goes far beyond the current situation. “Since I felt uncomfortable in my first day of class, I know that I won’t be able to enjoy the rest of the year.”

5. **MENTAL FILTER**: You develop selective hearing and vision and only hear and see the one negative thing and ignore the many positive things. “Because my supervisor gave me one low rating on my evaluation (that also had many higher ratings), it means I’m doing a terrible job.”

6. **DISQUALIFYING THE POSITIVE**: You tell yourself that the positive experiences, actions, or qualities do not count. “I did well in that one basketball game because I just got lucky.”

7. **EMOTIONAL REASONING**: You start thinking your emotions are fact. “I feel . . . ; therefore, it is. I feel like she hates me; therefore, she does.” “I feel stupid; therefore I am stupid.” “I dread school, so it’s a bad idea to go.”

8. **“SHOULD” STATEMENTS**: You “should” on yourself or someone else by having a fixed idea of how you or others should behave, and you overestimate how bad it will be if these expectations are not met. “It’s terrible that I made a mistake; I should always do my best.” “You shouldn’t be so upset.”

9. **LABELING**: Overgeneralization is taken a step further by the use of extreme language to describe things. “I spilled my milk. I am SUCH A LOSER!” “My therapist didn’t call me right back; she is the most uncaring, heartless therapist ever!”

10. **PERSONALIZATION**: You see yourself as the cause for things you have absolutely no control over or the target of stuff that may have absolutely nothing to do with you. “My parents divorced because of me.” “The receptionist was short with me because I did something wrong.”


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Dialectical Dilemmas

Making light of problem behaviors

Forcing independence

Too loose

Fostering dependence

Making too much of typical adolescent behavior

Too strict

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Dialectical Dilemmas:
How Does the Dilemma Apply to You?

Too loose       Too strict

Have clear rules and enforce them consistently
AND AT THE SAME TIME
Be willing to negotiate on some issues and don’t overuse consequences

Making light of problem behaviors       Making too much of typical adolescent behavior

Recognize when a behavior “crosses the line” and get help for that behavior
AND AT THE SAME TIME
Recognize which behaviors are part of typical adolescent development

Forcing independence       Fostering dependence

Give your adolescent guidance, support, and coaching to help figure out how to be responsible
AND AT THE SAME TIME
SLOWLY give your adolescent greater amounts of freedom and independence while continuing to encourage an appropriate amount of reliance on others

Place an “X” on each continuum to note where you are, a “Y” where your family member is, and a “Z” for a second family member.

What do you need to do to think and act more dialectically?

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### What’s Typical for Adolescents and What’s Cause for Concern?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical</th>
<th>Not Typical: Cause for Concern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Increased moodiness</td>
<td>Intense, painful, long-lasting moods; risky mood-dependent behavior, major depression, or panic attacks; self-injury or suicidal thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Increased self-consciousness, of feeling “on stage,” increased focus on body image</td>
<td>Social phobia or withdrawal; perfectionism and unrealistic standards; bingeing, purging, or restricted eating; obsessive about or neglectful of hygiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Increased dawdling</td>
<td>Multiple distractions to point of not being able to complete homework or projects, lack of focus that interferes with daily work or tasks, regularly late for appointments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Increased parent–adolescent conflict</td>
<td>Verbal or physical aggression, running away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Experimentation with drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes</td>
<td>Substance abuse, selling drugs, substance-using peer group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Increased sense of invulnerability (may lead to increased sensation seeking or risk taking)</td>
<td>Multiple accidents; encounters with firearms; excessive risk taking (e.g., subway surfing, driving drunk or texting while driving), getting arrested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Stressful transitions to middle and high school</td>
<td>School refusal; bullying or being bullied; lack of connection to school or peers; school truancy, failure, or dropout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Increased argumentativeness, idealism, and criticism; being opinionated</td>
<td>Rebellious questioning of social rules and conventions; causing trouble with family members, teachers, or others who attempt to assert authority over the adolescent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
### What’s Typical for Adolescents and What’s Cause for Concern?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. Increased sexual maturation; sexual interest or experimentation</td>
<td>Sexual promiscuity, multiple partners, unsafe sexual practices, pregnancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Becoming stressed by everyday decision making</td>
<td>Becoming paralyzed with indecision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Increased desire for privacy</td>
<td>Isolation from family; breakdown of communication, routine lying, and hiding things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Strong interest in technology; social media</td>
<td>Many hours per day spent on computer, on high-risk or triggering websites; casually meeting partners online; revealing too much (e.g., “sexting,” overly personal posts on Facebook, Tumblr, Instagram, in blog)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Messy room</td>
<td>Old, rotting food; teen not able to find basic necessities; dirty clothes covering floor chronically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Sleep cycle shifts later (urge to be a “night owl” and to sleep late on weekends)</td>
<td>Often up nearly all night; sleeps almost all day on weekends; routinely late (or missing school) because of sleep schedule</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Practice Exercise: Thinking and Acting Dialectically

Due Date _______________________

Identify a time this week when you did not think or act dialectically.

Example 1: Briefly describe the situation (who, what, when) _______________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

How did you think or act in this situation? ________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

Are you thinking in extremes (e.g., all or nothing or catastrophizing)? Examples: ______________
_____________________________________________________________________________

What is a more dialectical thought (or action) about the situation? ______________
_____________________________________________________________________________

What was the outcome? ______________
_____________________________________________________________________________

Identify a time this week when you did think or act dialectically.

Example 2: Briefly describe the situation (who, what, when) _______________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

How did you think or act in this situation? ________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

What was the outcome? ______________
_____________________________________________________________________________

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VALIDATION communicates to another person that his or her feelings, thoughts, and actions make sense and are understandable to you in a particular situation.

SELF-VALIDATION involves perceiving your own feelings, thoughts, and actions as making sense, accurate, and acceptable in a particular situation.

INVALIDATION communicates (intentionally or not, through words or actions) that another person’s feelings, thoughts, and actions in a particular situation make no sense, are “manipulative,” or “stupid,” or an “overreaction,” or not worthy of your time, interest, or respect.

Remember: Validation ≠ Agreement
Validation does not necessarily mean that you like or agree with what the other person is doing, saying, or feeling. It means that you understand where they are coming from.

WHY VALIDATE?
• Validation improves relationships!!!!
• It can deescalate conflict and intense emotions.
• Validation can show that:
  o We are listening.
  o We understand.
  o We are being nonjudgmental.
  o We care about the relationship.
  o We can disagree without having a big conflict.

WHAT TO VALIDATE?
• Feelings, thoughts, and behaviors in ourselves or others

Validate the valid, not the invalid. You can still validate the feeling without validating the behavior. For example: Validate someone feeling upset about a low test grade even though you know he or she didn’t study, but don’t validate the lack of studying that led to the low grade.
How Can We Validate Others?

1. Actively listen. Make eye contact and stay focused.

2. Be mindful of your verbal and nonverbal reactions in order to avoid invalidation (e.g., rolling eyes, sucking teeth, heavy sighing, walking away, making light of serious things, or saying, for example, “That’s stupid, don’t be sad,” “I don’t care what you say,” “Whatever!”).

3. Observe what the other person is feeling in the moment. Look for a word that describes the feeling.

4. Reflect the feeling back without judgment. The goal is to communicate that you understand how the other person feels (e.g., “It makes sense that you’re angry”; “I understand that you are having a tough time right now”).

   For self-validation: “I have a right to feel sad.” Avoid “Yes, but . . .” thinking. Instead, think about what your best friend in Wise Mind would say to you.

5. Show tolerance! Look for how the feelings, thoughts, or actions make sense given the other’s (or your own) history and current situation, even if you don’t approve of the behavior, emotion, or action itself.

6. Respond in a way that shows that you are taking the person seriously (with or without words); for example, “That sounds awful.” If someone is crying, give a tissue or a hug. You may ask, “What do you need right now? For me to just listen or to help you problem-solve?”

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How can I validate myself?

1. Actively listen and pay attention to yourself: Be mindful of your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

2. Describe your feelings without passing judgment: “Wow, I’m really angry right now!” or “It makes sense that I’m a little nervous.”

3. Respond in a way that shows that you take yourself seriously: Accept that it is OK to have your emotion(s) (e.g., “It’s OK to feel sad sometimes”).

4. Acknowledge that the emotion may make sense in the situation. Show tolerance for yourself and your emotions (e.g., “It makes sense that I’m not able to focus very well with all of the stress I am under”).

5. Do not judge your own emotion (or yourself).

6. Use interpersonal effectiveness skills for self-respect to be fair to yourself, not apologize for feeling how you feel, stick up for yourself, and stay true to your values (FAST).
Practice Exercise: Validation of Self and Others

Due Date __________________________

List one self-invalidating statement and two self-validating statements:
1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________

List one invalidating statement to others and two validating statements to others:
1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________

Choose a situation during the week in which you used validation skills with someone else or yourself.

Situation: ____________________________________________

Who did you validate? ____________________________________________

What exactly did you do or say to validate yourself or that person? ____________________________________________

What was the outcome? ____________________________________________

How did you feel afterward? ____________________________________________

Would you say or do something differently next time? What? ____________________________________________
Behavior change skills are strategies used to *increase* behaviors we want and to *reduce* behaviors we don’t want (in ourselves and others).

**BEHAVIORS TO INCREASE**

Remember to be specific and measurable.

**SELF:**

What behaviors would you like to increase in *yourself* (e.g., exercising, saving money, going to school, doing homework)?

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

**OTHERS:**

What behaviors would you like to increase in *someone else* (e.g., spending more time with you, listening to you, making eye contact, putting dirty dishes in the sink)?

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

(continued)
BEHAVIORS TO DECREASE

SELF:

What behaviors would you like to decrease in yourself (e.g., overeating, cigarette smoking, cutting, blurting out impulsively, arguing back, running away, fighting, skipping classes, lying in bed during the day)?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

OTHERS:

What behaviors would you like to decrease in someone else (e.g., nagging, breaking curfew, running away, yelling, avoiding school, invalidation, playing videogames, staying up past bedtime)?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Reinforcers are consequences that result in an increase in a behavior. They provide information to a person about what you want them to do.

• **Positive reinforcement**: Increases the frequency of a behavior by providing a “rewarding” consequence (e.g., labeled praise; a genuine compliment; an A on an exam).

  **HINT**: Timing is very important. Give the reward immediately and choose motivating reinforcers! Don’t forget to reinforce yourself!

  **Examples**: __________________________________________________________
  __________________________________________________________
  __________________________________________________________

• **Negative reinforcement**: Increases the frequency of a behavior by removing something negative; it’s relief from something unpleasant.

  **Examples**: Why take an aspirin when you have a headache? It relieves the headache and that makes you more likely to take aspirin next time you have a headache (aversive stimulus). Aspirin taking is negatively reinforced.

  If your mom is nagging you, you are more likely to clean your room in order to stop the nagging. If you have intense negative emotions, and a harmful behavior provides temporary relief, you are more likely to repeat the harmful behavior. Remember, you are learning skills to manage this better!

  (continued)
Examples of negative reinforcements that are not harmful (e.g., positive ways to soothe yourself, leaving painful situations): 

- **Shaping**: Reinforcing small steps that lead toward the ultimate goal (e.g., going from A to Z in 26 steps, each step rewarded).

*Example*: A teenager is anxious about going to school and doesn’t usually go. She might be encouraged to go for 1 hour on Monday, 2 hours on Tuesday, and so on, until she’s able to stay for a whole day, ultimately leading up to staying every day, all week long. Reinforce each step!
Practice Exercise: Positive Reinforcement

Due Date ____________________

1. Look for opportunities (since they are occurring all of the time) to positively reinforce yourself and someone else. First, simply notice or acknowledge something positive that occurred (positive tracking).
   
   What is something positive that you did this week? __________________________
   What is something positive that your family member did this week? ___________

2. Using a different example, identify a specific behavior you wanted to increase and the reinforcer you used to help increase it. Remember, you can reinforce even a small step in the right direction (shaping)!
   
   A. For yourself:
      
      Behavior: _____________________________________________________________
      Reinforcer: ___________________________________________________________
   
   B. Someone else: _______________________________________________________
      
      Behavior: _____________________________________________________________
      Reinforcer: ___________________________________________________________

3. Describe the situation(s) when you used reinforcement:
   
   A. For yourself: _________________________________________________________
   
   B. Someone else: _________________________________________________________

4. What was the outcome? What did you observe?
   
   A. For yourself: _________________________________________________________
      
      _________________________________________________________
      
      _________________________________________________________

   B. Someone else: _______________________________________________________
      
      _________________________________________________________
      
      _________________________________________________________

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WALKING THE MIDDLE PATH HANDOUT 15

Ways to Decrease or Stop Behaviors

**Extinction:** Reduces a behavior by *withholding* previous reinforcement. When attention is reinforcing, ignore the unwanted behavior. Make sure you reinforce a desirable replacement behavior.

- If a parent ignores a child’s tantrum, the child will eventually stop tantruming.
- Beware of the *behavioral burst*, a temporary increase in the behavior you are trying to extinguish. DON’T GIVE UP or forget to orient the person in whom you are beginning to extinguish a particular behavior!
- Beware of *intermittent reinforcement*: Behavior that is reinforced only occasionally is the hardest behavior to extinguish (e.g., never give candy to stop a tantrum after you’ve ignored episodes).

**Punishment:** A *consequence* that results in a *decrease* in behavior. It tells another person what you don’t want him or her to do. **Use sparingly because:**

- Punishment does not teach new behavior.
- Punishment can lead to resentment and a feeling of demoralization.
- Punishment may lead to self-punishment.

(continued)
To use punishment effectively:

- First, reinforce desired behaviors to prevent undesired ones.
- Communicate **clear rules and expectations**.
- Have a menu of possible punishments ready in advance.
- Pair a negative consequence with **reinforcement of desired behavior**.
- Be specific, time limited, and make the punishment fit the crime (e.g., if you’re out past curfew 1 hour, your curfew is 1 hour earlier next time).
- Ask yourself, is **Wise Mind** dictating the consequence?
- Apply the punishing consequence immediately or . . .
- Allow natural consequences (e.g., you failed the test because you stayed up all night and were too tired to focus in school).
Practice Exercise: Extinction and Punishment

**Extinction**

Practice ignoring what peers or family members do that is annoying or provocative.

*Important Note 1:* Don’t use with behaviors that are dangerous!

*Important Note 2:* If provocative behaviors include bullying or pressuring you to do something that goes against your values, ignoring (extinction) might not be enough. You may need to tell a trusted authority figure and ask for help!

Briefly describe the situation and what you ignored. How did it work out? _______________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

**Punishing Consequences: Use Sparingly or as Last Resort**

Parents:

List three Wise Mind–based short-term consequences you can apply when other methods of behavior change haven’t worked:

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________

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EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUTS
Taking charge of your emotions is important because:

Adolescents often have intense emotions that are difficult to manage, such as anger, shame, depression, or anxiety.

Difficulties controlling these emotions often lead to problematic behaviors that affect you and those around you.

Problematic behaviors are often ineffective solutions to intensely painful emotions.
EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 2

Goals of Emotion Regulation Skills Training

I. Understand the emotions that you experience.
   • Identify (observe and describe/name) emotions.
   • Know what emotions do for you (are your emotions working for or against you in this moment?).

II. Reduce emotional vulnerability and stop unwanted emotions from starting in the first place.
   • Increase positive emotions.
   • Decrease vulnerability to Emotion Mind.

III. Decrease the frequency of unwanted emotions.

IV. Decrease emotional suffering; stop or reduce unwanted emotions once they start.
   • Let go of painful emotions using *mindfulness*.
   • Change emotions through *opposite action*.


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**EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 3**

**Short List of Emotions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOVE</th>
<th>HATE</th>
<th>FEAR</th>
<th>JOY</th>
<th>shame</th>
<th>Guilt</th>
<th>ANXIETY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>loneliness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANGER</th>
<th>Excited</th>
<th>FRUSTRATION</th>
<th>sadness</th>
<th>shyness</th>
<th>envy</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOREDOM</td>
<td>SURPRISE!</td>
<td>embarrassed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONFUSED</th>
<th>CURIOUS</th>
<th>PRIDE</th>
<th>SUSPICIOUS</th>
<th>HAPPY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rage</th>
<th>INTEREST</th>
<th>DEPRESSED</th>
<th>WORRY</th>
<th>IRRITABLE</th>
<th>PANIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jealous</td>
<td>optimistic</td>
<td>hopeless</td>
<td>Disgust</td>
<td>hurt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sympathy</th>
<th>DISAPPOINTED</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Calm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Other names for emotions I frequently have:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
10. 
11. 
12. 
13. 
14. 
15. 
16. 
17. 
18. 
19. 
20. 

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What Good Are Emotions?

**Emotions Give Us Information.**

- Emotions provide us with a signal that something is happening (e.g., “I feel nervous standing alone in this dark alley”).
- Sometimes our emotions communicate by “gut feeling” or intuition. This can be helpful if our emotions get us to check out the facts.
- It’s a problem when we treat emotions as if they are facts about the world. For example: “If I am afraid, there must be a threat,” or “I love him, so he must be good for me.”
- We need to be mindful that emotions are *not* facts. Therefore, it is important to check the facts about the situation.

**Emotions Communicate to, and Influence, Others.**

- Facial expressions, body posture, and voice tone say a lot about how you’re feeling. They communicate emotions to others (e.g., your sad face may cause someone to ask you if you are OK and to give you support).
- Whether you realize it or not, your emotions—expressed by words, face, or body language—influence how other people respond to you.

**Emotions Motivate and Prepare Us for Action.**

- The action urge connected to specific emotions is often “hardwired.” For example, when we hear a loud horn beep suddenly, we startle.
- Emotions save time in getting us to act in important situations. Our nervous system activates us (e.g., we instantly jump out of the way of an oncoming car). We don’t have to think everything through.
- Strong emotions can help us overcome obstacles—in our mind and in the environment.

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EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 5

A Model of Emotions

Vulnerability Factors

Prompting Event 1

Thoughts

Prompting Event 2

Body Changes
what you experience

Internal

External

Face and Body
(expression, body language, posture)

Emotion
Name

Action
Urges

Actions
what you say and do

Aftereffects


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A Model of Emotions with Skills

**Vulnerability Factors**
- **REDUCE EMOTIONAL VULNERABILITY**
  1. Accumulate Positive Emotions
  2. Build Mastery
  3. Cope Ahead
  4. PLEASE skills

**Prompting Event 1**

**Prompting Event 2**

**Thoughts**
- **CHANGE EMOTIONAL THOUGHTS AND INTERPRETATIONS**
  - Check the Facts

**Body Changes**
- **what you experience**
  - REDUCE EMOTIONAL REACTIONS AND HIGH AROUSAL
  - Crisis Survival Strategies
  - Mindfulness of Current Emotions

**Emotion Name**
- **Describe Emotions**

**Action Urges**
- **what you say and do**
  - Opposite Action
  - All the Way
  - Opposite Body Language
  - Opposite Words

**Face and Body**
- (expression, body language, posture)
- **CHANGE EMOTIONAL REACTIONS**
- **Crisis Survival Strategies**
- **Opposite Body Language**
- **Opposite Words**

**Aftereffects**
- **MANAGE AFTEREFFECTS**
  - Repeat for Secondary Emotions
  - Distress Tolerance Skills

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**Practice Exercise: Observe and Describe an Emotion**

**Vulnerability Factors:**
What happened before to make me more vulnerable to the prompting event?

**Prompting Event:**
What triggered the emotion? What happened in the minutes right before the emotion fired? Just the facts!

**Thoughts** (thoughts, beliefs, assumptions):

**Prompting Event 2:**
What happened next to trigger more emotion firing?

**Face and Body Change/Sensing**
What am I feeling in my body?

**Face and Body Language**
What is my facial expression? Posture? Gestures?

**Actions and Words**
What I said and did:

**Emotion Name**

**Action Urge**
What do I feel like doing? What do I want to say?

**Intensity (0–100)**

**Aftereffects** (secondary emotions, behavior, thoughts, etc.)

Due Date _______________________

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EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 8

ABC PLEASE Overview

How to **increase** positive emotions and **reduce** vulnerability to Emotional Mind

- Accumulating positive experiences
- **Build** mastery
- **Cope** ahead of time with emotional situations

Treat **Physical** illness

Balance **Eating**
- **Avoid** mood-altering drugs

Balance **Sleep**

Get **Exercise**

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In the Short Term:
Do pleasant things that are possible right now.

- Increase pleasant activities that lead to positive emotions.
- Do one thing each day from the Pleasant Activities List. Also consider the Parent-Teen Shared Pleasant Activities List.
- Be mindful of positive experiences.

Be Mindful of Positive Experiences:
- Focus your attention on positive events while they are happening.
- Refocus your attention when your mind wanders to the negative.
- Participate fully in the experience.

Be Unmindful of Worries:
- Don’t destroy positive experiences by thinking about when they will end.
- Don’t think about whether you deserve this positive experience.
- Don’t think about how much more might be expected of you now.

**Pleasant Activities List**

1. Soaking in the bathtub
2. Thinking about how it will be when school ends
3. Going out with friends
4. Relaxing
5. Going to a movie
6. Going running
7. Listening to music
8. Lying in the sun (with sunscreen)
9. Reading
10. Saving money
11. Planning the future
12. Dancing
13. Fixing or cleaning things around the house
14. Having a quiet night
15. Cooking good food
16. Taking care of your pets
17. Going swimming
18. Writing
19. Drawing or doodling
20. Playing sports (list: __________)
21. Going to a party
22. Talking with friends
23. Working out
24. Singing
25. Going ice skating
26. Going to a beach
27. Playing a musical instrument
28. Traveling
29. Making a gift for someone
30. Downloading music or new apps
31. Watching sports on TV
32. Going out to dinner
33. Baking
34. Planning a party for someone
35. Buying clothes
36. Getting a haircut or styling your hair
37. Enjoying a cup of hot chocolate, coffee, or tea
38. Kissing
39. Going to hear live music
40. Getting a manicure or pedicure
41. Spending some time with little kids
42. Going for a bike ride
43. Going sledding in a snowstorm
44. Getting a massage

(continued)
Pleasant Activities List  (page 2 of 2)

45. E-mailing or texting friends
46. Writing in a diary or journal
47. Looking at photos
48. Dressing up however you like
49. Playing videogames
50. Walking around where you live
51. Noticing birds or trees (something in nature)
52. Surfing the Internet
53. Surprising someone with a favor
54. Completing something you will feel great about
55. Shooting pool or playing ping-pong
56. Contacting a relative with whom you have been out of touch
57. Tweeting, posting online
58. Thinking about taking lessons (sports, dance, music, martial arts)
59. Bowling
60. Fantasizing about life getting better
61. Saying “I love you”
62. Writing a poem, song, or rap
63. Thinking about a friend’s good qualities
64. Putting on makeup
65. Making a smoothie and drinking it slowly
66. Putting on your favorite piece of clothing
67. Playing a game
68. Writing a story
69. Instant messaging someone
70. Watching reruns on TV
71. Making a card and giving it to someone you care about
72. Figuring out your favorite scent
73. Buying yourself a little treat
74. Noticing a storm coming
75. Building furniture or carpentry

Add Your Own!

76. __________________________
77. __________________________
78. __________________________
79. __________________________
80. __________________________
**EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 11**

**Parent–Teen Shared Pleasant Activities List**

**Instructions:** Check off the activities on this list that you would enjoy doing with your parent/teen. Then compare lists (or fill this out together) and select a few activities that you can enjoy together—aim for at least 3 per week.

*Also, remember to respect each other’s need for privacy and alone time.

1. Going bicycling
2. Going for coffee
3. Going out for ice cream/yogurt
4. Cooking or baking
5. Getting a manicure
6. Going for a massage
7. Walking by the beach
8. Planning a vacation
9. Going shopping
10. Watching a ballgame
11. Doing yard work/gardening
12. Playing with pets, walking the dog
13. Bowling
14. Playing golf
15. Going for a drive
16. Fixing up part of your home
17. Doing a crossword puzzle
18. Skiing, ice skating
19. Having some quiet reading time together
20. Going to a café/out to eat
21. Going to an amusement park
22. Going to a museum
23. Playing catch
24. Having a barbecue
25. Going camping
26. Listening to music you both like
27. Going to a show, game, or concert
28. Watching a favorite TV show or movie together
29. Going for a walk/run
30. Getting your hair or makeup done together
31. Talking about when you were little
32. Visiting relatives or friends together

*(continued)*
33. Doing community service/volunteer work
34. Shopping for a gift
35. Talking about your day
36. Playing videogames
37. Playing board games or cards
38. Looking thru photos
39. Going to a park
40. Working out/going to the gym
41. Take a yoga/exercise class
42. Playing music/jamming together
43. Talking about future plans together
44. Planning a surprise for someone
45. Joking around/being silly
46. Doing a creative hobby together (e.g., painting, drawing, knitting, scrapbooking, model building)
47. Taking an art class
48. Looking at/showing your favorite website
49. Teaching the other one something new (e.g., in technology, photography)
50. Telling family stories

Add Your Own!
51. __________________________
   __________________________
52. __________________________
   __________________________
53. __________________________
   __________________________
54. __________________________
   __________________________
55. __________________________
   __________________________
EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 12

ACCUMULATING Positive Experiences—Long Term
(To Build a Life Worth Living)

In the Long Term:

Make changes in your life so that positive events will occur more often. Build a life worth living. Check “Wise Mind” Values and Priorities List.

Work toward goals based on your values:
- Identify one goal (e.g., graduate from high school).
- List small steps toward goals (e.g., get out of bed, go to first class).
- Take first step (e.g., buy an alarm clock or set cell phone alarm).
1. Goal: __________________________
   __________________________
   __________________________
2. Some steps toward my goal: __________________________
   __________________________
   __________________________
   __________________________
3. What’s a simple first step I can take? __________________________
   __________________________

Pay attention to relationships:
- Repair old, create new, work on current relationships, and end destructive relationships.
What can I do this week to work on a relationship? __________________________
   __________________________

Avoid avoiding:
- Avoiding makes problems build up and increases vulnerability to Emotion Mind. Return that call, schedule that doctor’s appointment, face that work, discuss that problem.
- Avoid giving up.
What have I been avoiding? __________________________
   __________________________


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Wise Mind Values and Priorities List

Mark the items that are important to you:

- **Contribute** (e.g., be generous, help people in need, make sacrifices for others, volunteer, service to society).

- **Attend to relationships** (e.g., build new relationships, work on current relationships, repair old relationships, end destructive relationships, treat others well).

- **Be part of a group** (e.g., be social, have close friends, have people to do things with, feel sense of belonging).

- **Build character** (e.g., have integrity, be honest, be loyal, stand up for my beliefs, keep my word, be respectful, be courageous in facing and living life, keep growing as a human being).

- **Be responsible** (e.g., get my work done, earn money, take care of myself more and more, be reliable).

- **Achieve things** (e.g., get good grades, work hard, be financially secure).

- **Learn** (e.g., seek knowledge and information, read, study).

- **Have fun** (e.g., enjoy what I do, laugh, go out and have a good time, relax).

- **Focus on family** (e.g., see family often, keep family relationships strong, do things for family, respect family traditions).

- **Be a leader** (e.g., be seen by others as successful; be in charge of something like a club, team, or committee; be respected by others; be accepted).

- **Be healthy** (e.g., be physically fit, exercise, eat and sleep well, see my doctors when needed, practice yoga).

- **Strive for moderation** (e.g., avoid excesses and achieve balance).

- **Other**

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**EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 14**

**Practice Exercise: ACCUMULATING Positive Experiences in the Short and Long Term**

Due Date ____________________

**In the short term:**

1. Engage in at least one activity from your list each day. Also consider the Parent–Teen Shared Pleasant Activities List. Please write down each activity on the list below. Add more rows if you need them.

2. Rate your mood before you start the activity and then after. Use rating scale below.

3. Remember to try to stay mindful of activity and unmindful of worries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>-5</th>
<th>-2.5</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>+2.5</th>
<th>+5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>I feel very upset</td>
<td>I feel somewhat upset</td>
<td>I feel OK</td>
<td>I feel pretty good</td>
<td>I feel great</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
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<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Were you mindfully participating in each activity? If yes, describe the effect on your emotional state. If no, what happened?

____________________________________________________________________________

**In the long term:**

1. List your goal and a value with which it is associated:

____________________________________________________________________________

2. What is the first step in achieving your goal?

____________________________________________________________________________

3. Take the first step. Describe how taking the first step made you feel?

____________________________________________________________________________

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**BUILD MASTERY**

1. Do at least one thing each day to feel competent and in control of your life. The idea is to challenge yourself a little, get better at something, or cross something off your “to-do” list. Examples: Put together a piece of furniture, practice your instrument, get one HW assignment done, start a project.

   Example: __________________________________________

2. Plan for success, not failure.
   - Do something difficult, but possible.

3. Gradually increase the difficulty over time.
   - If the first task is too difficult, do something a little easier next time.

**COPE AHEAD OF TIME WITH EMOTIONAL SITUATIONS**

Rehearse a plan ahead of time so that you are prepared when there is a threat.

1. Describe a situation that is likely to create negative emotions.
   - Be specific in describing the situation. **Check the facts!**
   - Name the emotions you are likely to experience in the situation.

2. Decide what DBT skills (including **problem-solving**) you want to use in the situation.
   - Be specific. Write them out: __________________________________________

3. Imagine the situation in your mind as vividly as possible.
   - Imagine yourself in the situation now.

4. Rehearse coping effectively in your mind.
   - Rehearse exactly what you could do to cope effectively in your mind.
   - Rehearse your actions, your thoughts, what you say, and how to say it.
   - **Troubleshoot**: Rehearse coping with problems that might arise.

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**PLEASE Skills**

- **Treat Physical illness:** Take care of your body. See a doctor when necessary. Take medications as prescribed.

- **Balance Eating:** Don’t eat too much or too little. Stay away from foods that may make you overly emotional.

- **Avoid mood-altering drugs:** Stay off nonprescribed drugs such as marijuana, other street drugs, and alcohol.

- **Balance Sleep:** Try to get the amount of sleep that helps you feel rested. Stay on a regular schedule in order to develop good sleep habits.

- **Get Exercise:** Do some sort of exercise every day, including walking. Start small and build on it!

---


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Step 1: Observe how certain foods affect your mood (both negatively and positively).

**Negative examples:**
- Soda and sugary snacks might make you feel tired and irritable.
- Heavy, fatty foods (e.g., french fries, potato chips, fried chicken, greasy foods) might make you feel sluggish.
- Caffeine might make you feel jittery and more anxious and interfere with your sleep.

**Positive examples:**
- Complex carbohydrates and fiber (e.g., sweet potatoes, whole wheat pasta, oatmeal, whole-grain cereals, salads) give you slow and steady energy.
- Proteins (e.g., lean meats and poultry, beans, nuts, fish, eggs) also provide your body with steady energy that helps you stay active and strong both physically and mentally.
- Dairy foods (e.g., low-fat milks, cheeses, yogurts) have protein and calcium, which help with energy and bone strength.
- Fruits and vegetables provide you energy, boost your health, and give you a sweet or crunchy treat without zapping your energy or making you feel guilty.
- Once you know what foods make up a balanced diet, you can determine what changes might be needed.

Step 2: Notice whether you are eating too much or too little.

Step 3: Start thinking about changes.

How can you begin to increase the amount of healthy foods you eat? Keep track of your food choices in a food diary every day so you see your progress!

(continued)
Step 4: Start small.

Don’t try to make dramatic changes to your diet all at once. You may feel overwhelmed, which might set yourself up to fail. Start slowly and gradually to change your habits.

For example:

- Cut down on processed foods and add more fresh foods.
- Add more fruits and vegetables to meals and have them for snacks.
- Add lettuce, tomato, cucumber, and onion to sandwiches.
- Add fruit to cereal.

Step 5: Notice the effects of eating well on your mood.
Maintaining a balanced sleep pattern will decrease your emotional vulnerability.

1. **Stick to a schedule** and don’t sleep late on weekends. If you sleep late on Saturday and Sunday morning, you will disrupt your sleep pattern. Instead, go to bed and get up at about the same time every day.

2. **Establish a bedtime routine.** This might include shutting off screens (TV, computer, cell phone), changing into comfy PJs, sipping herbal tea, lowering bright lights and reducing noise, and reading.

3. **Don’t eat or drink a lot before bed.** Eat a light dinner at least 2 hours before sleeping. If you drink too many liquids before bed, you’ll wake up repeatedly for trips to the bathroom. Watch out for spicy foods, which may cause heartburn and interfere with sleep.

4. **Avoid caffeine and nicotine.** Both are stimulants and can keep you awake. Caffeine should be avoided for 8 hours before your desired bedtime.

5. **Exercise.** If you’re trying to sleep better, the best time to exercise is in the morning or afternoon. A program of regular physical activity enhances the quality of your sleep.

6. **Keep your room cool.** Turn the temperature in the room down, as this mimics the natural drop in your body’s temperature during sleep. Use an air conditioner or a fan to keep the room cool. If you get cold, add more layers. If you are hot, remove some layers.

7. **Sleep primarily at night.** Daytime naps steal hours from your nighttime sleep. Limit daytime sleep to less than 1 hour, no later than 3:00 P.M.

8. **Keep it dark, quiet, and NO SCREENS.** Use shades, blinds, and turn off lights. Silence helps you sleep better. Turn off the radio and TV. Use earplugs. Use a fan, a white noise machine, or some other source of constant, soothing, background noise to mask sounds you can’t control. No laptops, iPads, phones, or screens for at least 1 hour before bedtime.

(continued)
9. **Use your bed only for sleep.** Make your bed comfortable and appealing. Use only for sleep—not for studying or watching TV. Go to bed when you feel tired and turn out the lights. If you don’t fall asleep in 30 minutes, get up and do something else relaxing like reading books or magazines—NO SCREENS! Go back to bed when you are tired. Don’t stress out! This will make it harder to fall asleep.

10. **Soak and sack out.** Taking a hot shower or bath before bed helps relax tense muscles.

11. **Don’t rely on sleeping pills.** If they are prescribed to you, use them only under a doctor’s close supervision. Make sure the pills won’t interact with other medications!

12. **Don’t catastrophize.** Tell yourself “It’s OK; I’ll fall asleep eventually.”
EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 17

Practice Exercise:
Build Mastery, Cope Ahead, and PLEASE Skills

Due Date ______________________

Building Mastery:
List two ways that you built mastery this week.
1. ___________________________________________________________
2. ___________________________________________________________

Coping Ahead of Time with Emotional Situations:
Describe your plan to effectively manage a future emotional situation. Include skills you will use.
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Check off two PLEASE Skills to practice during the week:

___ Treat Physical illness
___ Balance Eating
___ Avoid mood-altering drugs
___ Balance Sleep
___ Get Exercise

Describe specifically what you did to practice your PLEASE Skills. ____________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Did you notice a difference in your mood? ____________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________


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**EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 18**

**The Wave Skill: Mindfulness of Current Emotions**

**EXPERIENCE YOUR EMOTION**
- Observe your feeling.
- Step back and just notice it.
- Get unstuck.
- Experience it as a WAVE, coming and going.
- Don’t try to GET RID of it or PUSH it away.
- And don’t try to HOLD ON to it.

**PRACTICE MINDFULNESS OF EMOTIONAL BODY SENSATIONS**
- Notice WHERE in your body you are feeling emotional sensations.
- Experience the SENSATIONS as fully as you can.

**REMEMBER: YOU ARE NOT YOUR EMOTION**
- You don’t need to ACT on the feeling.
- Remember times when you have felt differently.

**DON’T JUDGE YOUR EMOTION**
- Radically accept it as part of you.
- Invite it home for dinner; name the emotion.
- Practice willingness to experience the emotion.


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EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 19

Check the Facts and Problem Solving

These two skills can be used as part of Cope Ahead, or as independent emotion regulation skills to help reduce/change intense emotions regarding situations that have already occurred or are ongoing.

1. DESCRIBE the problem situation.

2. CHECK THE FACTS! (Check all the facts; sort them from interpretations.)
   a. Are you interpreting the situation correctly? Are there other possible interpretations?
   b. Are you thinking in extremes (all-or-nothing, catastrophic thinking?)
   c. What is the probability of the worst happening?
   d. Even if the worst were to happen, could you imagine coping well with it?
   e. If you are still faced with a big problem, then start the steps below.

3. IDENTIFY your GOAL in solving the problem.
   a. Identify what needs to happen or change for you to feel OK.
   b. Keep it simple; keep it something that can actually happen.

4. BRAINSTORM lots of solutions.
   a. Think of as many solutions as you can. Ask for suggestions from people you trust.
   b. Do not be critical of any ideas at first (wait for Step 5 to evaluate ideas).

5. CHOOSE a solution that is likely to work.
   a. If unsure, choose two or three solutions that look good.
   b. Do pros and cons to compare the solutions. Choose the best to try first.

6. Put the solution into ACTION.
   a. ACT: Try out the solution.
   b. Take the first step, and then the second . . .

7. EVALUATE outcomes.
   a. Did it work? YEAH! Reward yourself!
   b. It didn’t work? Reward yourself for trying and DON’T GIVE UP!
   c. Try a new solution.


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EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 20

Opposite Action to Change Emotions

Emotions come with specific ACTION URGES that push us to act in certain ways.

Often we escape the pain of the emotion in harmful ways.

These are common URGES associated with a sample of emotions:

FEAR → Escaping or avoiding
ANGER → Attacking
SADNESS → Withdrawing, becoming passive, isolating
SHAME → Hiding, avoiding, withdrawing, saving face by attacking others
GUILT → Overpromise that you will not commit the offense again, disclaim all responsibility, hiding, lowering head, begging forgiveness
JEALOUSY → Verbal accusations, attempt to control, acting suspicious
LOVE → Saying “I love you,” making effort to spend time with the person, doing what the other person wants and needs, and giving affection

ACTING OPPOSITE = act opposite to the action urge when the emotion is doing more harm than good (see Emotion Regulation Handout 4, “What Good Are Emotions?”).

EMOTION-OPPOSITE ACTION

Fear/Anxiety - APPROACH
- Approach events, places, tasks, activities, people you are afraid of, over and over; confront.
- Do things to increase a sense of control and mastery over fears.

Anger - GENTLY AVOID
- Gently avoid the person you are angry with (rather than attacking).
- Take a time out and breathe in and out deeply and slowly.
- Be kind rather than mean or attacking. (Try to have sympathy or empathy for the other person.)

Sadness - GET ACTIVE
- Approach, don’t avoid.
- Build mastery and increase pleasant activities.

(continued)


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EMOTION--------OPPOSITE ACTION

Shame--------------FACE THE MUSIC (when your behavior violates your moral values or something shameful has been revealed about you and the shame fits the facts):
  • Apologize and repair the harm when possible.
  • Try to avoid making same mistake in the future and accept consequences.
  • Forgive yourself and let it go.

GO PUBLIC (when your behavior DOES NOT violate your moral values and the shame does NOT fit the facts):
  • You continue to participate fully in social interactions, hold your head high, keep your voice steady, and make eye contact.
  • Go public with your personal characteristics or your behavior (with people who won’t reject you).
  • Repeat the behavior that sets off shame over and over (without hiding it from those who won’t reject you).

Guilt--------------FACE THE MUSIC (when your behavior violates your moral values, hurts feelings of significant others, and the guilt fits the facts):
  • Experience the guilt.
  • You ask, but don’t beg, for forgiveness and accept the consequences.
  • You repair the transgression and work to prevent it from happening again.

DON’T APOLOGIZE OR TRY TO MAKE UP FOR IT (when your behavior DOES NOT violate your moral values and the guilt does NOT fit the facts):
  • Change your body posture, look innocent and proud, head up, puff up your chest, maintain eye contact, keep voice steady and clear.

Jealousy----------LET GO OF CONTROLLING OTHERS’ ACTIONS (when it does not fit the facts or is not effective):
  • Stop spying or snooping.
  • Relax your face and body.

Love-------------STOP EXPRESSING LOVE (when it does not fit the facts or is not effective, e.g., the relationship is truly over, not accessible, or abusive):
  • Avoid the person and distract yourself from thoughts of the person.
  • Remind yourself of why love is not justified and rehearse the “cons” of loving this person.
  • Avoid contact with things that remind you of the person (e.g., pictures).

(continued)
OPPOSITE ACTION WORKS BEST WHEN:

1. **The emotion does NOT FIT THE FACTS.**
   - An emotion does *not fit the facts* when:
     - The emotion does *not fit the facts* of the actual situation (e.g., terror in response to speaking in public)
     - or
     - The emotion, its intensity, or its duration are *not effective* for your goals in the situation (e.g., you feel angry at your math teacher, but three periods later you’re still fuming and can’t focus on science).

2. **The opposite action is done ALL THE WAY.**
   - Opposite behavior
   - Opposite words and thinking
   - Opposite facial expression, voice tone, and posture

OPPOSITE ACTION REQUIRES THESE seven STEPS:

1. Figure out the emotion you are feeling.
2. What is the action URGE that goes with the emotion?
3. Ask yourself: Does the emotion fit the facts in the situation? If yes, will acting on the emotion’s urge be effective?
4. Ask yourself: Do I want to change the emotion?
5. If yes, figure out the OPPOSITE ACTION.
6. Do the opposite action—ALL THE WAY!
7. Repeat acting in the opposite way until the emotion goes down enough for you to notice.
EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 21

Practice Exercise: Opposite Action

Due Date ______________________

Ask yourself the following questions as a guide to OPPOSITE ACTION:

**Observe** and **Describe** the emotion.
What is the current emotion you want to change?

What is your action urge?

Do the opposite action ALL THE WAY.

How did you feel after acting opposite to your emotion?

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INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUTS

POSITIVE
RELATIONSHIPS
What Is Your Goal and Priority?

**Keeping and maintaining healthy relationships (GIVE Skills)**

Question: How do I want the other person to feel about me?

*Example:* If I care about the person or if the person has authority over me, act in a way that keeps the person respecting and liking me.

**Getting somebody to do what you want (DEAR MAN Skills)**


*Example:* How do I ask for something, resolve a problem, or have people take me seriously?

**Maintaining Your Self-Respect (FAST Skills)**

Question: How do I want to feel about myself after the interaction?

*Example:* What are my values? Act in a way that makes me feel positive about myself.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Lack of skill</th>
<th>You actually <em>don’t know</em> what to say or how to act.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II. Worry thoughts</td>
<td>You have the skill, but your worry thoughts interfere with your doing or saying what you want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Worries about bad consequences:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o “They won’t like me”; “He will break up with me.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Worries about whether you deserve to get what you want:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o “I’m such a bad person, I don’t deserve this.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Worries about being ineffective and calling yourself names:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o “I won’t do it right”; “I’m such a loser.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Emotions</td>
<td>You have the skill, but your emotions (anger, fear, shame, sadness) make you unable to do or say what you want. Emotion Mind, instead of skills, controls what you say and do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Can’t decide</td>
<td>You have the skills, but you <em>can’t decide</em> what you really want: asking for too much versus not asking for anything; saying “no” to everything versus giving in to everything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Environment</td>
<td>You have the skill, but the environment gets in the way:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other people are too powerful (sometimes despite your best efforts).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other people may have some reason for not liking you if you get what you want.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other people won’t give you what you need unless you sacrifice your self-respect.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Building and Maintaining Positive Relationships: GIVE Skills

Remember **GIVE:**

- **(be) Gentle:** Be nice and respectful!
  - Don’t attack, use threats, or cast judgments.
  - Be aware of your tone of voice.

- **(act) Interested:** LISTEN and act interested in what the other person is saying.
  - Don’t interrupt or talk over him or her.
  - Don’t make faces.
  - Maintain good eye contact.

- **Validate:** Show that you understand the other person’s feelings or opinions.
  - Be nonjudgmental out loud.
  - “I can understand how you feel *and . . .”
  - “I realize this is hard . . .”
  - “I see you are busy, *and . . .”
  - “That must have felt . . .”

- **(use an) Easy manner:** SMILE.
  - Use humor.
  - Use nonthreatening body language.
  - Leave your attitude at the door.

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Practice Exercise: GIVE Skills

Due Date ____________________

Choose two situations during the week in which you used your GIVE skills and describe how.

Remember GIVE . . .

   (be) Gentle
   (act) Interested
   Validate
   (use an) Easy manner

SITUATION 1:
With whom are you trying to keep a good relationship? ___________________________________
What was the situation in which you chose to use your GIVE skills? _______________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
What was the outcome? ________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
How did you feel after using your skills? _________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

SITUATION 2:
With whom are you trying to keep a good relationship? ___________________________________
What was the situation in which you chose to use your GIVE skills? _______________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
What was the outcome? ________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
How did you feel after using your skills? _________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________


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INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 5

Getting Someone to Do What You Want: DEAR MAN Skills

Remember DEAR MAN:

Reset Mindful
Express Appear Confident
Assert Negotiate
Reinforce

Describe: Describe the situation. Stick to the facts. “The last three weekends, I have noticed you coming home after curfew.”

Express: Express your feelings using “I” statements (“I feel . . . ,” “I would like . . .”). Stay away from “you should . . .”; instead, say, “When you come home late, I feel worried about you.”

Assert: Ask for what you want or say “no” clearly. Remember, the other person cannot read your mind. “I would like you to come home by curfew.”

Reinforce: Reward (reinforce) the person ahead of time by explaining the positive effects of getting what you want. “I would be able to trust you more and give you more privileges if you stuck to our curfew agreement.”

Mindful: Keep your focus on what you want, avoiding distractions. Come back to your assertion over and over, like a “broken record.” Ignore attacks. “I know the other kids stay out later than you, and I would still like you to do your best to meet your curfew.”

Appear Confident: Make (and maintain) eye contact. Use a confident tone of voice—do not whisper, mumble, or give up and say “Whatever.”

Negotiate: Be willing to GIVE TO GET. Ask for the other person’s input. Offer alternative solutions to the problem. Know when to “agree to disagree” and walk away. “If you can do this for the next 2 weeks, then I will feel comfortable letting you stay out later for the party.”


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Due Date ____________________

Choose one situation during the week in which you used your DEAR MAN skills and describe below.

What happened? (Who did what? What led up to what? What is the problem?)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What did you want (e.g., asking for something, saying “no,” being taken seriously)?
Be specific:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

DEAR MAN Skills used (write down exactly how you used each one):

Describe (describe the situation; just the facts): ______________________________________________________________________

Express (feelings): ______________________________________________________________________

Assert: ______________________________________________________________________

Reward: ______________________________________________________________________

Mindful: ______________________________________________________________________

Appear confident: ______________________________________________________________________

Negotiate: ______________________________________________________________________

What was the result of using your DEAR MAN skills? ______________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________


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Remember **FAST:**

- **Fair:** Be fair to yourself and to the other person.
- **Apologies:** Don’t overapologize for your behavior, for making a request, or for being you.
  - (If you wronged someone, don’t underapologize.)
- **Stick to values:** Stick to your own values and opinions.
  - Don’t sell out to get what you want, to fit in, or to avoid saying “no.”
  - (Refer to Emotion Regulation Handout 13, “Wise Mind Values and Priorities List.”)
- **Truthful:** Don’t lie.
  - Don’t act helpless when you are not.
  - Don’t make up excuses or exaggerate.


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Turn negative thoughts into realistic ones.

1. Why bother asking? It won’t make a difference anyway.
   Wise Mind Statement:

2. If I ask for something, she’ll think I’m stupid.
   Wise Mind Statement:

3. I can’t take it if he’s [she’s] upset with me.
   Wise Mind Statement:

4. If I say “no,” they won’t like me or want to hang out with me anymore.
   Wise Mind Statement:

5. If I say “no,” they’ll be really angry at me.
   Wise Mind Statement:

6. If I make a request or ask for help, I will look weak.
   Wise Mind Statement:

Examples of Wise Mind Self-Statements:

1. “Just because I didn’t get what I wanted last time does not mean that if I ask skillfully this time that I won’t get it.”
2. “I can handle it if I don’t get what I want or need.”
3. “It takes a strong person to admit that he [she] needs help from someone else and then ask for it.”
4. “If I say ‘no’ to people and they get angry, it doesn’t mean I should have said ‘yes.’”
5. “I can deal with it if he [she] is annoyed with me.”

Others?

Choose two situations during the week in which you used your FAST skills and describe below.

Remember FAST . . .

Fair
Apologies
Stick to values
Truthful

SITUATION 1:
In what way are you trying to maintain your self-respect? ____________________________
What was the situation in which you chose to use your FAST skills and how did you use them? ____________________________________________________________
What was the outcome? _________________________________________________________
How did you feel after you used your skills? ____________________________________________

SITUATION 2:
In what way are you trying to maintain your self-respect? ____________________________
What was the situation in which you chose to use your FAST skills and how did you use them? ____________________________________________________________
What was the outcome? _________________________________________________________
How did you feel after you used your skills? ____________________________________________


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Factors to Consider in Asking for What You Want
(or Saying “No” to an Unwanted Request)

1. Priorities: Objectives very important? (Is it important to get what I want?)
   Relationship shaky? On good terms?
   Self-respect on the line?

2. Capability: Is the person able to give me what I want? (Or do I have what the person wants?)

3. Timeliness: Is this a good time to ask? Is the person in the mood to listen or able to pay attention to me? (Is this a bad time to say “no”?)

4. Preparation: Do I know all the facts I need to know? Am I clear about what I want? (Am I clear on the facts that I am using to explain why I am saying “no”?)

5. Relationship: Is what I want appropriate to the current relationship? (Is what the person is asking me appropriate to our current relationship?)

6. Give and take: Has the other person helped me in the past? Have I overused his [her] help? [Have I helped the other person in the past? Has he [she] overused my help?]

Which of the above do you need to pay more attention to? ____________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________


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Choose a situation during the week in which it was hard to determine whether to ask for something or to say “no,” or how strong your request or your “no” should be.

Did you consider each of the factors below? Check off which ones applied. If the factor applied, what was the circumstance, and did considering it lead you to still ask for what you wanted or say “no” to what someone else wanted? Did it make your request or your “no” stronger or weaker?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>✓</th>
<th>Describe Circumstance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priorities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Capability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timeliness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Give and take</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

So, what did you decide to do, and how did it work out?  

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INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS HANDOUT 12

Practice Exercise: Using Skills at the Same Time

Due Date __________________

Choose a situation during the week that required more than one interpersonal effectiveness skill.

Describe situation: ____________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

What were my priorities? (Check all that apply.)

_____ Build/maintain relationship
_____ Get what I want, say “no,” or be taken seriously
_____ Build/maintain self-respect

What I said or did and how I did so (check and describe):

_____ Gentle   _____ Describe   _____ Fair
_____ Interested  _____ Express   _____ No apologies
_____ Validate   _____ Assert   _____ Stick to values
_____ Easy manner   _____ Reinforce   _____ Truthful
________________________
_____ Mindful
_____ Appear confident
_____ Negotiate

________________________

________________________

________________________

________________________

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THINK Skills

When you want to make peace, reduce conflict, and reduce anger, THINK about it differently.

We often make interpretations or assumptions about others that fuel our Emotion Minds and can make the situation worse. So . . .

What’s the situation? _____________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

How are your interpretations about the other person fueling your Emotion Mind? ____________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Now try these steps to THINK about it differently:

_Think . . . about it from the other person’s perspective.

_Have empathy What might he or she be feeling or thinking?

_Interpretations Can you think of more than one possible interpretation or explanation for the other’s behavior? List other possible reasons for the behavior; come up with at least one benign reason:

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

_Notice . . . ways the other person has been trying to make things better, to help, or to show he or she cares. Or, notice how the other person may be struggling with his or her own stress or problems.

_Use Kindness Can you use kindness and be gentle when you approach the other person?
Practice Exercise: THINK Skills

THINK about it differently:

With whom did you want to make peace/reduce conflict/reduce anger? ______________________
Briefly, what was the situation? ____________________________________________________________

How were your interpretations or assumptions about the other person fueling your Emotion Mind or making things worse? __________________________________________________________

Indicate which steps you used and HOW you used them to THINK about it differently:
Think about it from the other person’s perspective—what was his or her perspective?

________________________________________________________

Have empathy—what might he or she have been feeling or thinking? ______________________

________________________________________________________

Interpretations—were you able to think of more than one possible interpretation or explanation for the other’s behavior? List other possible reasons for the behavior; did you come up with at least one benign reason?

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

Notice: What are ways the other person had been trying to make things better, to help, or to show he or she cared? ______________________

________________________________________________________

Or, how was the other person struggling with his or her own stress or problems? __________

________________________________________________________

Did you use Kindness and were you gentle when you approached the other person? _______

________________________________________________________

What was the outcome? ________________________________________________________________

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