
Distress Tolerance Handouts



Goals of Distress Tolerance

SURVIVE CRISIS SITUATIONS

Without Making Them Worse

ACCEPT REALITY

**Replace Suffering and Being “Stuck”
with Ordinary Pain and the Possibility of Moving Forward**

BECOME FREE

**Of Having to Satisfy
the Demands of Your Own
Desires, Urges, and Intense Emotions**

OTHER: _____



When to Use Crisis Survival Skills

YOU ARE IN A CRISIS when the situation is:

- Highly stressful.
- Short-term (that is, it won't last a long time).
- Creates intense pressure to resolve the crisis *now*.

USE CRISIS SURVIVAL SKILLS when:

1. You have intense pain that cannot be helped quickly.
2. You want to act on your emotions, but it will only make things worse.
3. Emotion mind threatens to overwhelm you, and you need to stay skillful.
4. You are overwhelmed, yet demands must be met.
5. Arousal is extreme, but problems can't be solved immediately.

DON'T USE CRISIS SURVIVAL SKILLS for:

- Everyday problems.
- Solving all your life problems.
- Making your life worth living.



STOP Skill



S_{top}

Do not just react. Stop! Freeze! Do not move a muscle! Your emotions may try to make you act without thinking. Stay in control!

T_{ake a step back}

Take a step back from the situation. Take a break. Let go. Take a deep breath. Do not let your feelings make you act impulsively.

O_{bserve}

Notice what is going on inside and outside you. What is the situation? What are your thoughts and feelings? What are others saying or doing?

P_{roceed mindfully}

Act with awareness. In deciding what to do, consider your thoughts and feelings, the situation, and other people's thoughts and feelings. Think about your goals. Ask Wise Mind: Which actions will make it better or worse?

Note. Adapted from an unpublished worksheet by Francheska Perepletchikova and Seth Axelrod, with their permission.

DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 5



([Distress Tolerance Worksheets 3, 3a](#))

Pros and Cons

Use pros and cons any time you have to decide between two courses of action.

- An urge is a crisis when it is very strong and when 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 dangerous, addictive, or harmful behaviors, or they 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 and not giving in to the urges.
- Use the grid below to evaluate both sets of pros and cons (this type of grid is also used in Distress Tolerance Worksheet 3). Or you can use the type of grid seen in Distress Tolerance Worksheet 3a and in the pros-and-cons worksheets for other modules.

| | PROS | CONS |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Acting on crisis urges | Pros of acting on impulsive urges, giving in, giving up, or avoiding what needs to be done. _____ _____ _____ _____ | Cons of acting on impulsive urges, giving in, giving up, or avoiding what needs to be done. _____ _____ _____ _____ |
| Resisting crisis urges | Pros of resisting impulsive urges, doing what needs to be done, and not giving up. _____ _____ _____ _____ | Cons of resisting impulsive urges, doing what needs to be done, and not giving up. _____ _____ _____ _____ |

Before an overwhelming crisis urge hits:

Write out your pros and cons; carry them with you.
Rehearse your pros and cons over and over.

When an overwhelming crisis urge hits:

Review your pros and cons. Get out your list and read it over again.

- Imagine the positive consequences of resisting the urge.
- Think of the negative consequences of giving in to crisis behaviors.
- Remember past consequences when you have acted on crisis urges.



TIP Skills: Changing Your Body Chemistry

To reduce extreme emotion mind *fast*.

Remember these as **TIP** skills:

T

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, or hold a cold pack (or zip-lock bag of cold water) on your eyes and cheeks.
- Hold for 30 seconds. Keep water above 50°F.

I

INTENSE EXERCISE* (to calm down your body when it is revved up by emotion)

- Engage in intense exercise, if only for a short while.
- Expend your body's stored up physical energy by running, walking fast, jumping, playing basketball, lifting weights, etc.

P

PACED BREATHING (pace your breathing by slowing it down)

- Breathe deeply into your belly.
- Slow your pace of inhaling and exhaling way down (on average, five to six breaths per minute).
- Breathe *out* more slowly than you breathe *in* (for example, 5 seconds in and 7 seconds out).

PAIRED MUSCLE RELAXATION (to calm down by pairing muscle relaxation with breathing out)

- While breathing into your belly deeply tense your body muscles (*not* so much as to cause a cramp).
- Notice the tension in your body.
- While breathing out, say the word "Relax" in your mind.
- Let go of the tension.
- Notice the difference in your body.

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

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DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 6A

([Distress Tolerance Worksheet 4](#))

Using Cold Water, Step by Step

COLD WATER CAN WORK WONDERS*

When you put your full face into cold water . . . **or** you put a zip-lock bag with cold water on your eyes and upper cheeks, and **hold your breath**, it tells your brain you are diving underwater.

This causes the “**dive response**” to occur. (It may take 15–30 seconds to start.)

Your heart slows down, blood flow to nonessential organs is reduced, and blood flow is redirected to the brain and heart.

This response can actually help **regulate your emotions**.

This will be useful as a **distress tolerance strategy** when you are having a very **strong, distressing emotion**, or when you are having very **strong urges to engage in dangerous behaviors**.

(This strategy works best when you are sitting quietly—activity and distraction may make it less effective.)

TRY IT OUT!

***Caution:** Very cold water decreases your heart rate. If you have any heart or medical condition, have a lowered base heart rate due to medications, or are on a beta-blocker, consult your health care provider before using these skills. Avoid ice water if you are allergic to the cold.

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DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 7



(Distress Tolerance Worksheets 5–5b)

Distracting

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

With **A**ctivities:

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

With **C**ontributing:

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

With **C**omparisons:

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

With different **E**motions:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read emotional books or stories, old letters. | <i>Ideas:</i> Scary movies, joke books, comedies, funny records, religious music, soothing music or music that fires you up, going to a store and reading funny greeting cards. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Watch emotional TV shows; go to emotional movies. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to emotional music. (Be sure the event creates different emotions.) | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

With **P**ushing away:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Push the situation away by leaving it for a while. | <input type="checkbox"/> Notice ruminating: Yell “No!” |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leave the situation mentally. | <input type="checkbox"/> Refuse to think about the painful situations. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Build an imaginary wall between yourself and the situation. | <input type="checkbox"/> Put the pain on a shelf. Box it up and put it away for a while. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Block thoughts and images from your mind. | <input type="checkbox"/> Deny the problem for the moment. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

With other **T**houghts:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Count to 10; count colors in a painting or poster or out the window; count anything. | <input type="checkbox"/> Work puzzles. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Repeat words to a song in your mind. | <input type="checkbox"/> Watch TV or read. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

With other **S**ensations:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Squeeze a rubber ball very hard. | <input type="checkbox"/> Go out in the rain or snow. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to very loud music. | <input type="checkbox"/> Take a hot or cold shower. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hold ice in your hand or mouth. | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 8



(Distress Tolerance Worksheet 6–6b)

Self-Soothing

A way to remember these skills is to think of soothing each of your **FIVE SENSES**.

With Vision:

- Look at the stars at night.
- Look at pictures you like in a book.
- Buy one beautiful flower.
- Make one space in a room pleasing to look at.
- Light a candle and watch the flame.
- Set a pretty place at the table using your best things.
- Go people-watching or window-shopping.
- Go to a museum or poster shop with beautiful art.
- Sit in the lobby of a beautiful old hotel.
- Look at nature around you.
- Walk in a pretty part of town.
- Watch a sunrise or a sunset.
- Go to a dance performance, or watch it on TV.
- Be mindful of each sight that passes in front of you.
- Take a walk in a park or a scenic hike.
- Browse through stores looking at things.
- Other: _____

With Hearing:

- Listen to soothing or invigorating music.
- Pay attention to sounds of nature (waves, birds, rainfall, leaves rustling).
- Pay attention to the sounds of the city (traffic, horns, city music).
- Sing to your favorite songs.
- Hum a soothing tune.
- Learn to play an instrument.
- Burn a CD or make an iPod mix with music that will get you through tough times. Turn it on.
- Be mindful of any sounds that come your way, letting them go in one ear and out the other.
- Turn on the radio.
- Other: _____

With Smell:

- Use your favorite soap, shampoo, aftershave, cologne, or lotions, or try them on in the store.
- Burn incense or light a scented candle.
- Open a package of coffee and inhale the aroma.
- Put lemon oil on your furniture.
- Put potpourri or eucalyptus oil in a bowl in your room.
- Sit in a new car and breathe the aroma.
- Boil cinnamon. Make cookies, bread, or popcorn.
- Smell the roses.
- Walk in a wooded area and mindfully breathe in the fresh smells of nature.
- Open the window and smell the air.
- Other: _____

With Taste:

- Eat some of your favorite foods.
- Drink your favorite soothing drink, such as herbal tea, hot chocolate, a latté, or a smoothie.
- Treat yourself to a dessert.
- Eat macaroni and cheese or another favorite childhood food.
- Sample flavors in an ice cream store.
- Suck on a piece of peppermint candy.
- Chew your favorite gum.
- Get a little bit of a special food you don't usually spend the money on, such as fresh-squeezed orange juice or your favorite candy.
- Really taste the food you eat. Eat one thing mindfully.
- Other: _____

With Touch:

- Take a long hot bath or shower.
- Pet your dog or cat.
- Have a massage. Soak your feet.
- Put creamy lotion on your whole body.
- Put a cold compress on your forehead.
- Sink into a comfortable chair in your home.
- Put on a blouse or shirt that has a pleasant feel.
- Take a drive with the car windows rolled down.
- Run your hand along smooth wood or leather.
- Hug someone.
- Put clean sheets on the bed.
- Wrap up in a blanket.
- Notice touch that is soothing.
- Other: _____

DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 9



(Distress Tolerance Worksheets 7, 7a, 7b)

Improving the Moment

A way to remember these skills is the word **IMPROVE**.

With Imagery:

- Imagine very relaxing scenes.
- Imagine a secret room within yourself. Furnish it the way you like. Close and lock the door on anything that can hurt you.
- Imagine everything going well.
- Make up a calming fantasy world.
- Imagine hurtful emotions draining out of you like water out of a pipe.
- Remember a happy time and imagine yourself in it again; play out the time in your mind again.
- Other: _____

With Meaning:

- Find purpose or meaning in a painful situation.
- Focus on whatever positive aspects of a painful situation you can find.
- Repeat these positive aspects in your mind.
- Remember, listen to, or read about spiritual values.
- Other: _____

With Prayer:

- Open your heart to a supreme being, God, or your own Wise Mind.
- Ask for strength to bear the pain.
- Turn things over to God or a higher being.
- Other: _____

With Relaxing actions:

- Take a hot bath or sit in a hot tub.
- Drink hot milk.
- Massage your neck and scalp.
- Practice yoga or other stretching.
- Breathe deeply.
- Change your facial expression.
- Other: _____

With One thing in the moment:

- Focus your entire attention on just what you are doing.
- Keep yourself in the moment.
- Put your mind in the present.
- Focus your entire attention on the physical
- Listen to a sensory awareness recording (or use Distress Tolerance Handout 9a)
- Other: _____

With a brief Vacation:

- Give yourself a brief vacation.
- Get in bed; pull the covers up over your head.
- Go to the beach or the woods for the day.
- Get a magazine and read it with chocolates.
- Turn off your phone for a day.
- Take a blanket to the park and sit on it for a whole afternoon.
- Take a 1-hour breather from hard work.
- Take a brief vacation from responsibility.
- Other: _____

With self-Encouragement and rethinking the situation:

- Cheerlead yourself: "You go, girl!" "You da man!"
- "I will make it out of this."
- "I'm doing the best I can."
- Repeat over and over: "I can stand it."
- "This too shall pass."
- "I will be OK."
- "It won't last forever."
- Other: _____

List (and then practice) rethoughts that are particularly important in your crisis situations (e.g., "The fact that he did not pick me up doesn't mean he doesn't love me"):

- _____
- _____

DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 10



([Distress Tolerance Worksheets 8–12a](#))

Overview: Reality Acceptance Skills

These are skills for how to live a life that is not the life you want.

RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

TURNING THE MIND

WILLINGNESS

HALF-SMILING AND WILLING HANDS

**ALLOWING THE MIND:
MINDFULNESS OF CURRENT THOUGHTS**



Radical Acceptance

(When you cannot keep painful events and emotions from coming your way.)

WHAT IS RADICAL ACCEPTANCE?

1. Radical means *all the way*, complete and total.
2. It is accepting in your mind, your heart, and your body.
3. It's when you stop fighting reality, stop throwing tantrums because reality is not the way you want it, and let go of bitterness.

WHAT HAS TO BE ACCEPTED?

1. Reality is as it is (the facts about the past and the present are the facts, even if you don't like them).
2. There are limitations on the future for everyone (but only realistic limitations need to be accepted).
3. Everything has a cause (including events and situations that cause you pain and suffering).
4. Life can be worth living even with painful events in it.

WHY ACCEPT REALITY?

1. Rejecting reality does not change reality.
2. Changing reality requires first accepting reality.
3. Pain can't be avoided; it is nature's way of signaling that something is wrong.
4. Rejecting reality turns pain into suffering.
5. Refusing to accept reality can keep you stuck in unhappiness, bitterness, anger, sadness, shame, or other painful emotions.
6. Acceptance may lead to sadness, but deep calmness usually follows.
7. The path out of hell is through misery. By refusing to accept the misery that is part of climbing out of hell, you fall back into hell.

DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 11A

Radical Acceptance: Factors That Interfere

RADICAL ACCEPTANCE IS NOT:

Approval, compassion, love, passivity, or against change.

FACTORS THAT INTERFERE WITH ACCEPTANCE

- 1. You don't have the skills for acceptance; you do not know how to accept really painful events and facts.
- 2. You believe that if you accept a painful event, you are making light of it or are approving of the facts, and that nothing will be done to change or prevent future painful events.
- 3. Emotions get in the way (unbearable sadness; anger at the person or group that caused the painful event; rage at the injustice of the world; overwhelming shame about who you are; guilt about your own behavior).
- Other: _____

DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 11B

([Distress Tolerance Worksheets 9, 9a](#))

Practicing Radical Acceptance Step by Step

- Observe that you are questioning or fighting reality (“It shouldn’t be this way”).
- Remind yourself that the unpleasant reality is just as it is and cannot be changed (“This is what happened”).
- Remind yourself that there are causes for the reality. Acknowledge that some sort of history led up to this very moment. Consider how people’s lives have been shaped by a series of factors. Notice that given these causal factors and how history led up to this moment, this reality had to occur just this way (“This is how things happened”).
- Practice accepting with the whole self (mind, body, and spirit). Be creative in finding ways to involve your whole self. Use accepting self-talk—but also consider using relaxation; mindfulness of your breath; half-smiling and willing hands while thinking about what feels unacceptable; prayer; going to a place that helps bring you to acceptance; or imagery.
- Practice opposite action. List all the behaviors you would do if you did accept the facts. Then act as if you have already accepted the facts. Engage in the behaviors that you would do if you really had accepted.
- Cope ahead with events that seem unacceptable. Imagine (in your mind’s eye) believing what you don’t want to accept. Rehearse in your mind what you would do if you accepted what seems unacceptable.
- Attend to body sensations as you think about what you need to accept.
- Allow disappointment, sadness, or grief to arise within you.
- Acknowledge that life can be worth living even when there is pain.
- Do pros and cons if you find yourself resisting practicing acceptance.

DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 12



(Distress Tolerance Worksheets 8, 8a, 10)

Turning the Mind

TURNING THE MIND is like facing a fork in the road. You have to turn your mind toward the acceptance road, and away from the road of rejecting reality.

TURNING THE MIND is choosing to accept.

The CHOICE to accept does not itself equal acceptance. It just puts you on the path.



TURNING THE MIND, STEP BY STEP

1. **OBSERVE** that you are not accepting. (Look for anger, bitterness, annoyance; avoiding emotions; saying “Why me?”, “Why is this happening?”, “I can’t stand this,” “It shouldn’t be this way.”)
2. Go within yourself and **MAKE AN INNER COMMITMENT** to accept reality as it is.
3. **DO IT AGAIN**, over and over. Keep turning your mind to acceptance each time you come to the fork in the road where you can reject reality or accept it.
4. **DEVELOP A PLAN** for catching yourself in the future when you drift out of acceptance.

DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 13



(Distress Tolerance Worksheets 8, 8a, 10)

Willingness

Willingness is readiness to enter and participate fully in life and living.

Find a WILLING RESPONSE to each situation.

Willingness is DOING JUST WHAT IS NEEDED:

- In each situation.
- Wholeheartedly, without dragging your feet.

Willingness is listening very carefully to your WISE MIND, and then acting from your WISE MIND.

Willingness is ACTING WITH AWARENESS that you are connected to the universe (to the stars, people you like and don't like, the floor, etc.).

Replace WILLFULNESS with WILLINGNESS.

- Willfulness is **REFUSING TO TOLERATE** the moment.
- Willfulness is refusing to make changes that are needed.
- Willfulness is **GIVING UP**.
- Willfulness is the **OPPOSITE OF "DOING WHAT WORKS."**
- Willfulness is trying to **FIX EVERY SITUATION**.
- Willfulness is insisting on **BEING IN CONTROL**.
- Willfulness is **ATTACHMENT TO "ME, ME, ME"** and "what I want right now!"

WILLINGNESS, STEP BY STEP

1. **OBSERVE** the willfulness. Label it. Experience it.
2. **RADICALLY ACCEPT** that at this moment you feel (and may be acting) willful. You cannot fight willfulness with willfulness.
3. **TURN YOUR MIND** toward acceptance and willingness.
4. Try **HALF-SMILING** and a **WILLING POSTURE**.
5. When willfulness is immovable, **ASK, "WHAT'S THE THREAT?"**

Situations where I notice my own:

Willfulness: _____

Willingness: _____

DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 14



(Distress Tolerance Worksheets 8, 8a, 11)

Half-Smiling and Willing Hands

Accepting reality with your body.

HALF-SMILING

- 1st.** *Relax* your face from the top of your head down to your chin and jaw. Let go of each facial muscle (forehead, eyes, and brows; cheeks, mouth, and tongue; teeth slightly apart). If you have difficulty, try tensing your facial muscles and then letting go.
A tense smile is a grin (and might tell your brain you are hiding or masking your real feelings).
- 2nd.** Let both *corners of your lips* go slightly up, just so you can feel them. It is not necessary for others to see it. A half-smile is slightly upturned lips with a relaxed face.
- 3rd.** Try to adopt a serene facial expression.
Remember, your face communicates to your brain; your body connects to your mind.

WILLING HANDS

- Standing:** Drop your arms down from your shoulders; keep them straight or bent slightly at the elbows. With hands unclenched, turn your hands outward, with thumbs out to your sides, palms up, and fingers relaxed.
- Sitting:** Place your hands on your lap or your thighs. With hands unclenched, turn your hands outward, with palms up and fingers relaxed.
- Lying down:** Arms by your side, hands unclenched, turn your palms up with fingers relaxed.

Remember, your hands communicate to your brain; your body connects to your mind.

Practicing Half-Smiling and Willing Hands

1. HALF-SMILE WHEN YOU FIRST WAKE UP IN THE MORNING.

Hang a branch, any other sign, or even the word “smile” on the ceiling or wall, so that you see it right away when you open your eyes. This sign will serve as your reminder. Use these seconds before you get out of bed to take hold of your breath. Inhale and exhale three breaths gently while maintaining a half-smile. Follow your breaths. Add willing hands to your half-smile, or practice willing hands alone.

2. HALF-SMILE DURING YOUR FREE MOMENTS.

Anywhere you find yourself sitting or standing, half-smile. Look at a child, a leaf, a painting on a wall, or anything that is relatively still, and smile. Inhale and exhale quietly three times.

3. HALF-SMILE WITH WILLING HANDS WHILE YOU ARE LISTENING TO MUSIC.

Listen to a piece of music for 2 or 3 minutes. Pay attention to the words, music, rhythm, and sentiments of the music you are listening to (not your daydreams of other times). Half-smile while watching your inhalations and exhalations. Adopt a willing-hands posture.

4. HALF-SMILE WITH WILLING HANDS WHEN YOU ARE IRRITATED.

When you realize “I’m irritated,” half-smile or adopt a willing-hands posture at once. Inhale and exhale quietly, maintaining a half-smile or willing hands for three breaths.

5. HALF-SMILE IN A LYING-DOWN POSITION.

Lie on your back on a flat surface, without the support of mattress or pillow. Keep your two arms loosely by your sides, and keep your two legs slightly apart, stretched out before you. Maintain willing hands and a half-smile. Breathe in and out gently, keeping your attention focused on your breath. Let go of every muscle in your body. Relax each muscle as though it were sinking down through the floor, or as though it were as soft and yielding as a piece of silk hanging in the breeze to dry. Let go entirely, keeping your attention only on your breath and half-smile. Think of yourself as a cat, completely relaxed before a warm fire, whose muscles yield without resistance to anyone’s touch. Continue for 15 breaths.

6. HALF-SMILE IN A SITTING POSITION.

Sit on the floor with your back straight, or on a chair with your two feet touching the floor. Half-smile. Inhale and exhale while maintaining the half-smile. Let go.

(continued on next page)

Note. Exercises 1 and 3–7 are adapted from *The Miracle of Mindfulness* (pp. 77–81, 93) by Thich Nhat Hanh. Copyright 1975, 1976 by Thich Nhat Hanh. Preface and English translation copyright 1975, 1976, 1987 by Mobi Ho. Adapted by permission of Beacon Press, Boston.

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DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 15



(Distress Tolerance Worksheets 8, 8a, 12)

Mindfulness of Current Thoughts

1. OBSERVE YOUR THOUGHTS.

- As waves, coming and going.
- Not suppressing thoughts.
- Not judging thoughts.
- Acknowledging their presence.
- Not keeping thoughts around.
- Not analyzing thoughts.
- Practicing willingness.
- Stepping back and observing thoughts as they run in and out of your mind.

2. ADOPT A CURIOUS MIND.

- Ask, “Where do my thoughts come from?” Watch and see.
- Notice that every thought that comes also goes out of your mind.
- Observe but do not evaluate your thoughts. Let go of judgments.

3. REMEMBER: YOU ARE NOT YOUR THOUGHTS.

- Do not necessarily act on thoughts.
- Remember times when you have had very different thoughts.
- Remind yourself that catastrophic thinking is “emotion mind.”
- Remember how you think when you are not feeling such intense suffering and pain.

4. DON'T BLOCK OR SUPPRESS THOUGHTS.

- Ask, “What sensations are these thoughts trying to avoid?” Turn your mind to the sensation. Then come back to the thought. Repeat several times.
- Step back; allow your thoughts to come and go as you observe your breath.
- Play with your thoughts: Repeat them out loud over and over as fast as you can. Sing them. Imagine the thoughts as the words of a clown, as recordings getting all tangled up; as cute animals you can cuddle up to; as bright colors running through your mind; as only sounds.
- Try loving your thoughts.

Practicing Mindfulness of Thoughts

PRACTICE MINDFULNESS OF THOUGHTS BY OBSERVING THEM

- 1. Notice thoughts as they come into your mind. As a thought comes into your mind, say “a thought has entered my mind.” Label the thought as a thought, saying, “The thought [describe thought] arose in my mind.” Use a gentle voice tone.
- 2. As you notice thoughts in your mind, ask, “Where did the thought come from?” Then watch your mind to see if you can see where it came from.
- 3. Step back from your mind, as if you are on top of a mountain and your mind is just a boulder down below. Gaze at your mind, watching what thoughts come up when you are watching it. Come back into your mind before you stop.
- 4. Close your eyes and scan your body for the first physical sensation that you notice. Then scan your mind for the first thought you notice. Shuttle back and forth between scanning for physical sensations and scanning for thoughts. Another time, replace scanning your body for physical sensations to scanning yourself for any emotional feelings. Then shuttle back and forth between an emotional feeling and a thought.

PRACTICE MINDFULNESS OF THOUGHTS BY USING WORDS AND VOICE TONE

- 5. Verbalize thoughts or beliefs out loud, using a nonjudgmental voice tone, over and over and over:
 - As fast as you can until the thoughts make no sense.
 - Very, very slowly (one syllable or word per breath).
 - In a different voice from yours (high- or low-pitched, like a cartoon character or celebrity).
 - As a dialogue on a TV comedy show (“You’ll never believe what thought went through my mind. I was thinking, ‘I’m a jerk.’ Can you believe that?”).
 - As songs, sung wholeheartedly and dramatically, in a tune that fits the thoughts.

PRACTICE MINDFULNESS OF THOUGHTS WITH OPPOSITE ACTION

- 6. Relax your face and body while imagining accepting your thoughts as only thoughts—sensations of the brain.
- 7. Imagine things you would do if you stopped believing everything you think.
- 8. Rehearse in your mind the things that you would do if you did not view your thoughts as facts.
- 9. Practice loving your thoughts as they go through your mind.

(continued on next page)

PRACTICE MINDFULNESS OF THOUGHTS BY IMAGINING THAT YOUR MIND IS:

- 10. A conveyor belt, and that thoughts and feelings are coming down the belt. Put each thought or feeling in a box labeled with the type of thought that it is (e.g., worry thoughts, thoughts about my past, thoughts about my mother, planning what to do thoughts). Just keep observing and sorting thoughts into the labeled boxes.
- 11. A river, and that thoughts and feelings are boats going down the river. Imagine sitting on the grass, watching the boats go by. Try not to jump on the boat.
- 12. A railroad track, and that thoughts and feelings are train cars going by. Try not to jump on the train.
- 13. A leaf that has dropped off a tree into a beautiful creek flowing by you as you sit on the grass. Each time a thought or image comes into your mind, imagine that it is written or pictured on the leaf floating by. Let each leaf go by, watching as it goes out of sight.
- 14. The sky, and thoughts have wings and can fly through the sky. Watch as each flies out of sight.
- 15. The sky, and thoughts are clouds. Notice each thought-cloud as it drifts by, letting it drift out of your mind.
- 16. A white room with two doors. Through one door, thoughts come in; through the other, thoughts go out. Watch each thought with attention and curiosity until it leaves. Let go of judgments. Let go of analyzing thoughts and of figuring out if they fit the facts. As a thought comes into your mind, say, "A thought has entered my mind."

Other: _____

Other: _____

Other: _____

Other: _____

Other: _____

DISTRESS TOLERANCE WORKSHEET 1

(Distress Tolerance Handouts 2–9a)

Crisis Survival Skills

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

Practice your crisis survival skills at least twice. Describe the crisis event; check off which skills you used for that event; and then describe how you used the skill and what happened.

CRISIS EVENT 1: Rate level of distress (0–100) Before: _____ After: _____

Prompting event for my distress (who, what, when, where): What triggered the state of crisis?

- STOP**
- Pros and cons**
- TIP**
- Distract with ACCEPTS**
- Self-soothe**
- IMPROVE the moment**

At left, check the skills you used, and describe here:

Describe the outcome of using skills:

Circle a number to indicate how effective the skills were in helping you tolerate the distress and cope with the situation (keeping you from doing something to make the situation worse). Use the following scale:

*I still couldn't stand
the situation, even
for one more minute.*

1

2

*I was able to cope somewhat,
at least for a little while.
It helped somewhat.*

3

4

*I could use skills,
tolerated distress, and
resisted problem urges.*

5

CRISIS EVENT 2: Rate level of distress (0–100) Before: _____ After: _____

Prompting event for my distress (who, what, when, where): What triggered the state of crisis?

- STOP**
- Pros and cons**
- TIP**
- Distract with ACCEPTS**
- Self-soothe**
- IMPROVE the moment**

At left, check the skills you used, and describe here:

Describe the outcome of using skills:

Circle effectiveness of skills:

*I still couldn't stand
the situation, even
for one more minute.*

1

2

*I was able to cope somewhat,
at least for a little while.
It helped somewhat.*

3

4

*I could use skills,
tolerated distress, and
resisted problem urges.*

5

DISTRESS TOLERANCE WORKSHEET 1A

([Distress Tolerance Handouts 2–9a](#))

Crisis Survival Skills

Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

Practice each crisis survival skill twice, and describe your experience as follows:

| | What was the crisis (what prompted needing the skill)? | Amount of time practicing skill? | Rate before/after skill use | | | Conclusions or questions about this skills practice |
|--|--|----------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| | | | Your level of distress tolerance (0 = I can't stand it; 5 = I can definitely survive) | Emotion | | |
| | | | | Negative emotion intensity (0–100) | Positive emotion intensity (0–100) | |
| When did you practice this skill, and what did you do to practice? | | | / | / | / | |
| Stop: | | | / | / | / | |
| Pros and cons: | | | / | / | / | |
| TIP: | | | / | / | / | |
| Distract with ACCEPTS: | | | / | / | / | |
| Self-soothe: | | | / | / | / | |
| IMPROVE the moment: | | | / | / | / | |

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DISTRESS TOLERANCE WORKSHEET 2

(Distress Tolerance Handout 4)

Practicing the STOP Skill

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

Describe two crisis situations that happened to you. Then describe your use of the STOP skill.

CRISIS EVENT 1: Rate level of distress (0–100) Before: _____ After: _____

Prompting event for my distress (who, what, when, where): What triggered the state of crisis?

Behavior you are trying to stop: _____

- Stop**
- Take a step back**
- Observe**
- Proceed mindfully**

At left, check the steps you used, and describe what you did here:

Describe the outcome of using skills:

Circle a number to indicate how effective the skill was in helping you tolerate the distress and cope with the situation (keeping you from doing something to make the situation worse). Use the following scale:

*I still couldn't stand
the situation, even
for one more minute.*

1

2

*I was able to cope somewhat,
at least for a little while.
It helped somewhat.*

3

4

*I could use skills,
tolerated distress, and
resisted problem urges.*

5

CRISIS EVENT 2: Rate level of distress (0–100) Before: _____ After: _____

Prompting event for my distress (who, what, when, where): What triggered the state of crisis?

Behavior you are trying to stop: _____

- Stop**
- Take a step back**
- Observe**
- Proceed mindfully**

At left, check the steps you used, and describe what you did here:

Describe the outcome of using the skills:

Circle effectiveness of the skill:

*I still couldn't stand
the situation, even
for one more minute.*

1

2

*I was able to cope somewhat,
at least for a little while.
It helped somewhat.*

3

4

*I could use skills,
tolerated distress, and
resisted problem urges.*

5

DISTRESS TOLERANCE WORKSHEET 3

(Distress Tolerance Handout 5)

Pros and Cons of Acting on Crisis Urges

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

1. Describe the *problem behavior* you are trying to stop: _____
2. List pros and cons for acting on crisis urges (including urges to act and urges to quit), and create a separate list for resisting crisis behavior by tolerating distress and using skills. Use the back of this sheet if you need more room.
3. Read the pros and cons when an urge toward the problem behavior occurs.

| Problem behavior | PROS | CONS |
|-------------------------------|------|------|
| Acting on crisis urges | 1. | 1. |
| | 2. | 2. |
| | 3. | 3. |
| | 4. | 4. |
| | 5. | 5. |
| Resisting crisis urges | 1. | 1. |
| | 2. | 2. |
| | 3. | 3. |
| | 4. | 4. |
| | 5. | 5. |

Identify which pros and cons are short-term (just for today) or long-term (beyond today). Then ask your Wise Mind: Would you rather have a good day or a good life? Make a mindful choice about your behavior.

If this worksheet helps you choose skillful behavior over crisis behavior, be sure to keep it where you can find it and review it again when you are in crisis.

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DISTRESS TOLERANCE WORKSHEET 4

(Distress Tolerance Handouts 6, 6a, 6b)

Changing Body Chemistry with TIP Skills

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

Describe the situation you were in when you chose to practice each skill. Rate both your emotional arousal and distress tolerance before and after using the TIP skill. Describe what you actually did. Use the back of this sheet if necessary.

CHANGING MY FACIAL TEMPERATURE

Used cold water to change emotions

T Situation: _____
Arousal (0–100) Before: _____ After: _____
Distress tolerance (0 = I can't stand it; 100 = I can definitely survive) Before: _____ After: _____
What I did (describe): _____

INTENSE EXERCISE

I Situation: _____
Arousal (0–100) Before: _____ After: _____
Distress tolerance (0 = I can't stand it; 100 = I can definitely survive) Before: _____ After: _____
What I did (describe): _____

PACED BREATHING

P Situation: _____
Arousal (0–100) Before: _____ After: _____
Distress tolerance (0 = I can't stand it; 100 = I can definitely survive) Before: _____ After: _____
What I did (describe): _____

PAIRED MUSCLE RELAXATION

Situation: _____
Arousal (0–100) Before: _____ After: _____
Distress tolerance (0 = I can't stand it; 100 = I can definitely survive) Before: _____ After: _____
What I did (describe): _____

DISTRESS TOLERANCE WORKSHEET 5B

(Distress Tolerance Handout 7)

Distracting with Wise Mind ACCEPTS

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

For each ACCEPTS skill, write down what you did during the week, and write down a number to indicate how effective the skill was in helping you tolerate the distress and cope with the situation (keeping you from doing something to make the situation worse). Use the following scale:

*I still couldn't stand
the situation, even
for one more minute.*

1

2

*I was able to cope somewhat,
at least for a little while.
It helped somewhat.*

3

4

*I could use skills,
tolerated distress, and
resisted problem urges.*

5

Day:

ACTIVITIES

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

Day:

CONTRIBUTIONS

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

Day:

COMPARISONS

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

Day:

EMOTIONS

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

Day:

PUSHING AWAY

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

Day:

THOUGHTS

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

Day:

SENSATIONS

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

DISTRESS TOLERANCE WORKSHEET 6

(Distress Tolerance Handout 8)

Self-Soothing

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

Describe two crisis situations that happened to you. Then describe your use of the self-soothing skills.

CRISIS EVENT 1: Rate level of distress (0–100) Before: _____ After: _____

Prompting event for my distress (who, what, when, where): What triggered the state of crisis?

- Vision
- Hearing
- Smell
- Taste
- Touch

At left, check the skills you used, and describe here:

Describe the outcome of using skills:

Circle a number to indicate how effective the skills were in helping you tolerate the distress and cope with the situation (keeping you from doing something to make the situation worse). Use the following scale:

*I still couldn't stand
the situation, even
for one more minute.*

1

2

*I was able to cope somewhat,
at least for a little while.
It helped somewhat.*

3

4

*I could use skills,
tolerated distress, and
resisted problem urges.*

5

CRISIS EVENT 2: Rate level of distress (0–100) Before: _____ After: _____

Prompting event for my distress (who, what, when, where): What triggered the state of crisis?

- Vision
- Hearing
- Smell
- Taste
- Touch

At left, check the skills you used, and describe here:

Describe the outcome of using skills:

Circle effectiveness of skills:

*I still couldn't stand
the situation, even
for one more minute.*

1

2

*I was able to cope somewhat,
at least for a little while.
It helped somewhat.*

3

4

*I could use skills,
tolerated distress, and
resisted problem urges.*

5

DISTRESS TOLERANCE WORKSHEET 6B

(Distress Tolerance Handout 8)

Self-Soothing

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

For each self-soothing skill, write down what you did during the week, and write down a number to indicate how effective the skill was in helping you tolerate the distress and cope with the situation (keeping you from doing something to make the situation worse). Use the following scale:

*I still couldn't stand
the situation, even
for one more minute.*

1

2

*I was able to cope somewhat,
at least for a little while.
It helped somewhat.*

3

*I could use skills,
tolerated distress, and
resisted problem urges.*

4

5

Day:

VISION

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

Day:

HEARING

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

Day:

SMELL

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

Day:

TASTE

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

Day:

TOUCH

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

DISTRESS TOLERANCE WORKSHEET 7

(Distress Tolerance Handout 9)

IMPROVE the Moment

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

Describe two crisis situations that happened to you. Then describe your use of the IMPROVE skills.

CRISIS EVENT 1: Rate level of distress (0–100) Before: _____ After: _____

Prompting event for my distress (who, what, when, where): What triggered the state of crisis?

- I**magery
- M**eaning
- P**rayer
- R**elaxation
- O**ne thing
- V**acation
- E**ncouragement

At left, check the skills you used, and describe here:

Describe the outcome of using skills:

Circle a number to indicate how effective the skills were in helping you tolerate the distress and cope with the situation (keeping you from doing something to make the situation worse). Use the following scale:

*I still couldn't stand
the situation, even
for one more minute.*

1

2

*I was able to cope somewhat,
at least for a little while.
It helped somewhat.*

3

4

*I could use skills,
tolerated distress, and
resisted problem urges.*

5

CRISIS EVENT 2: Rate level of distress (0–100) Before: _____ After: _____

Prompting event for my distress (who, what, when, where): What triggered the state of crisis?

- I**magery
- M**eaning
- P**rayer
- R**elaxation
- O**ne thing
- V**acation
- E**ncouragement

At left, check the skills you used, and describe here:

Describe the outcome of using skills:

Circle effectiveness of skills:

*I still couldn't stand
the situation, even
for one more minute.*

1

2

*I was able to cope somewhat,
at least for a little while.
It helped somewhat.*

3

4

*I could use skills,
tolerated distress, and
resisted problem urges.*

5

DISTRESS TOLERANCE WORKSHEET 7B

(Distress Tolerance Handout 9)

IMPROVE the Moment

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

For each IMPROVE skill, write down what you did during the week, and write down a number to indicate how effective the skill was in helping you tolerate the distress and cope with the situation (keeping you from doing something to make the situation worse). Use the following scale:

I still couldn't stand the situation, even for one more minute.

1

2

I was able to cope somewhat, at least for a little while. It helped somewhat.

3

4

I could use skills, tolerated distress, and resisted problem urges.

5

Day: _____ **IMAGERY** _____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

Day: _____ **MEANING** _____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

Day: _____ **PRAYER** _____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

Day: _____ **RELAXATION** _____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

Day: _____ **ONE THING IN THE MOMENT** _____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

Day: _____ **VACATION** _____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

Day: _____ **ENCOURAGEMENT** _____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____
_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

DISTRESS TOLERANCE WORKSHEET 8

(Distress Tolerance Handouts 10–15a)

Reality Acceptance Skills

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

Check off two reality acceptance skills to practice this week during a stressful situation:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Radical acceptance | <input type="checkbox"/> Half-smiling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Turning the mind | <input type="checkbox"/> Willing hands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Willingness | <input type="checkbox"/> Mindfulness of current thoughts |

Skill 1. Describe the situation and how you practiced the skill:

How effective was the skill in helping you cope with the situation (keeping you from doing something to make the situation worse)? Circle a number below.

*I still couldn't stand
the situation, even
for one more minute.*

1

2

*I was able to cope somewhat,
at least for a little while.
It helped somewhat.*

3

4

*I could use skills,
tolerated distress, and
resisted problem urges.*

5

Did this skill help you cope with uncomfortable emotions or urges, or avoid conflict of any kind? Circle YES or NO.

Describe how the skill helped or did not help: _____

Skill 2. Describe the situation and how you practiced the skill:

How effective was the skill in helping you cope with the situation (keeping you from doing something to make the situation worse)? Circle a number below.

*I still couldn't stand
the situation, even
for one more minute.*

1

2

*I was able to cope somewhat,
at least for a little while.
It helped somewhat.*

3

4

*I could use skills,
tolerated distress, and
resisted problem urges.*

5

Did this skill help you cope with uncomfortable emotions or urges, or avoid conflict of any kind? Circle YES or NO.

Describe how the skill helped or did not help: _____

DISTRESS TOLERANCE WORKSHEET 8B

(Distress Tolerance Handouts 10–15a)

Reality Acceptance Skills

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

For each reality acceptance skill, describe the skill you used during the week, and circle a number (0–5) indicating your own experience of acceptance of yourself, your life, or events outside yourself. Use the following scale:

*No acceptance; I am
in complete denial
and/or rebellion*

1

2

*I was able to
accept somewhat or
for a little while.*

3

4

*Complete
acceptance; I am at
peace with this.*

5

Day: RADICAL ACCEPTANCE (describe what and how often you practiced)

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

Day: TURNING THE MIND (describe the cross-road you were at, and what you chose)

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

Day: WILLINGNESS (describe the situation, what you were willful about, and how you practiced)

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

Day: HALF-SMILING (describe the situation and how you practiced)

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

Day: WILLING HANDS (describe the situation and how you practiced)

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

Day: MINDFULNESS OF CURRENT THOUGHTS (describe what thoughts were going through your mind and *how* you observed your thoughts)

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

_____/_____ Effectiveness: _____

DISTRESS TOLERANCE WORKSHEET 9

(Distress Tolerance Handouts 11, 11a, 11b)

Radical Acceptance

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU NEED TO RADICALLY ACCEPT

1. Make a list of two **very important** things in your life right now that you need to radically accept. Then give each one a number indicating how much you accept this part of yourself or your life: from 0 (no acceptance, I am in complete denial and/or rebellion) to 5 (complete acceptance, I am at peace with this). *Note:* if you have already completed this section, you don't need to do it again unless things have changed.

What I need to accept (Acceptance, 0–5)

1. _____ (____)

2. _____ (____)

2. Make a list of two **less important** things in your life you are having trouble accepting this week. Then rate your acceptance just as you did above.

What I need to accept (Acceptance, 0–5)

1. _____ (____)

2. _____ (____)

REFINE YOUR LIST

3. Review your two lists above. **Check the facts.** Check for interpretations and opinions. Make sure that what you are trying to accept is in fact the case. **Check for judgments.** Avoid “good,” “bad,” and judgmental language. Rewrite any items above if needed so that they are **factual and nonjudgmental.**

PRACTICE RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

4. Choose one item from the very important list and one item from the less important list to practice on.

1. _____

2. _____

5. Focus your mind on each of these facts or events separately, allowing your Wise Mind to radically accept that these *are* facts of your life. *Check off* any of the following exercises that you did.

Observed that I was questioning or fighting reality.

Reminded myself that reality is what it is.

Considered the causes of the reality, and nonjudgmentally accepted that causes exist.

Practiced accepting all the way with my whole being (mind, body, spirit).

Practiced opposite action.

Coped ahead with events that seemed unacceptable.

Attended to my body sensations as I thought about what I need to accept.

Allowed myself to experience disappointment, sadness, or grief.

Acknowledged that life can be worth living even when there is pain.

Did pros and cons of accepting versus denial and rejection.

Other: _____

6. Rate your degree of acceptance after practicing radical acceptance (0–5): _____

DISTRESS TOLERANCE WORKSHEET 9A

([Distress Tolerance Handouts 11, 11a, 11b](#))

Practicing Radical Acceptance

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

Practice each skill twice, and describe and rate your experience below.

| | What was going on that you had trouble accepting (if anything)? | How long did you practice accepting? | Rate before/after skill use | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|---|
| | | | Acceptance (0 = none at all; 5 = I am at peace with this) | Emotion | |
| | | | Negative emotion intensity (0–100) | Positive emotion intensity (0–100) | |
| When did you practice this skill, and what did you do to practice? | | | | | |
| Considered causes of the reality: | | | / | / | / |
| Practiced with my whole self: | | | / | / | / |
| Practiced opposite action: | | | / | / | / |
| Practiced coping ahead: | | | / | / | / |
| Attended to body sensations: | | | / | / | / |
| Allowed disappointment/grieving: | | | / | / | / |
| Acknowledged life as worth living: | | | / | / | / |
| Did pros and cons: | | | / | / | / |
| | | | / | / | / |

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DISTRESS TOLERANCE WORKSHEET 10

([Distress Tolerance Handouts 12, 13](#))

Turning the Mind, Willingness, Willfulness

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

Practice each skill, and rate your level of acceptance of reality as it is before and after: from 0 (no acceptance at all) to 5 (I'm at peace with this). List what you tried specifically under the rating.

Turning the Mind: Acceptance Before: _____ After: _____

OBSERVE not accepting. What did you observe? What were you having trouble accepting?

MAKE AN INNER COMMITMENT to accept what feels unacceptable. How did you do this?

Describe your **PLAN FOR CATCHING YOURSELF** the next time you drift from acceptance.

WILLINGNESS (rate 0–5): Acceptance Before: _____ After: _____
Willfulness Before: _____ After: _____

Describe **EFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR** you did to move forward toward a goal.

NOTICE WILLFULNESS. Describe how you are not participating effectively in the world as it is, or how you are not doing something you know needs to be done to move toward a goal.

Describe how you **PRACTICED RADICALLY ACCEPTING YOUR WILLFULNESS.**

MAKE AN INNER COMMITMENT to accept what feels unacceptable. How did you do this?

Describe what you did that was **WILLING.**

DISTRESS TOLERANCE WORKSHEET 11

(Distress Tolerance Handouts 14, 14a)

Half-Smiling and Willing Hands

Due Date: _____ Name: _____ Week Starting: _____

Describe your practice with half-smiling and willing hands this past week. Practice each day at least once. Practice both when you are not emotionally distressed and when you are distressed.

Check off any of the following exercises that you did.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Half-smiled when I first woke up in the morning. | <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Half-smiled with willing hands when my feelings were hurt. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Half-smiled during my free moments. | <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Half-smiled with willing hands when I did not want to accept something. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Half-smiled with willing hands while I was listening to music. | <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Half-smiled with willing hands when I started getting really angry. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Half-smiled with willing hands when I was irritated. | <input type="checkbox"/> 11. Half-smiled when I had negative thoughts. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Half-smiled in a lying-down position. | <input type="checkbox"/> 12. Half-smiled when I couldn't sleep. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Half-smiled in a sitting position. | <input type="checkbox"/> 13. Half-smiled with another person. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Half-smiled when I was walking down the street. | <input type="checkbox"/> 14. Other: _____ |

Describe practicing half-smiling and willing hands.

1. Situation: _____

Describe strategies you used or give numbers from above: _____

Circle how effective this was at helping you be more mindful and less reactive:

1 2 3 4 5
Not effective *Somewhat effective* *Very effective*

2. Situation: _____

Describe strategies you used or give numbers from above: _____

Circle how effective this was at helping you be more mindful and less reactive:

1 2 3 4 5
Not effective *Somewhat effective* *Very effective*

3. Situation: _____

Describe strategies you used or give numbers from above: _____

Circle how effective this was at helping you be more mindful and less reactive:

1 2 3 4 5
Not effective *Somewhat effective* *Very effective*

