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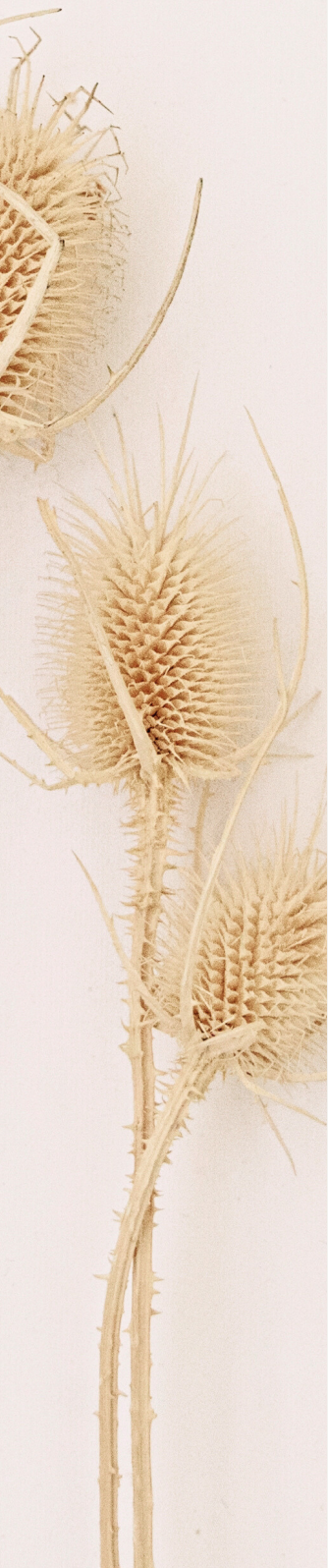
DISTRESS TOLERANCE



Crisis Survival Techniques

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The Goals of Distress Tolerance

To increase emotional resilience: Distress tolerance aims to enhance an individual's ability to cope with and tolerate distressing emotions, situations, or crises without resorting to harmful or ineffective behaviours. The goal is to build resilience and develop healthier ways of managing intense emotions.

To prevent impulsive and harmful behaviours: Distress tolerance helps individuals recognize and resist the urge to engage in impulsive actions or harmful behaviours when faced with distressing situations. By learning alternative strategies for coping with distress, individuals can avoid actions that may worsen their situation or lead to negative consequences.

To promote emotional regulation: Distress tolerance techniques and skills assist individuals in regulating their emotions effectively. The goal is to develop the ability to acknowledge and experience distressing emotions without being overwhelmed by them, allowing for a more balanced and controlled emotional state.

To enhance self-soothing abilities: Distress tolerance aims to empower individuals with various self-soothing techniques and coping mechanisms. The goal is to help individuals find healthy ways to soothe and comfort themselves during times of distress, promoting a sense of emotional well-being and stability.

To increase tolerance for distressing situations: Distress tolerance skills aim to increase an individual's capacity to tolerate and endure distressing situations, both in the short-term and long-term. The goal is to develop the resilience necessary to navigate through challenging circumstances without feeling overwhelmed or giving in to destructive impulses.

To improve decision-making under stress: Distress tolerance techniques help individuals make more effective decisions when faced with stress or crisis. The goal is to reduce impulsive decision-making and increase the ability to think rationally and logically, even in highly distressing situations.

Overall, the goals of distress tolerance are to equip individuals with the skills and strategies necessary to effectively manage distress, minimize impulsive or harmful behaviours, regulate emotions, and build resilience in the face of challenging circumstances.

How to Identify If You Are In a Crisis

Identifying when you are in a crisis is an important step in developing distress tolerance and crisis survival skills. Here are some signs that may indicate you are in a crisis:

Intense Emotional Distress	If you are experiencing overwhelming emotions such as extreme sadness, anger, anxiety, or fear that are difficult to manage or control, it may be a sign of a crisis.
Feeling Overwhelmed	When you feel completely overwhelmed by life's challenges, tasks, or responsibilities, and you're finding it hard to cope or make decisions, it could indicate a crisis.
Physical Symptoms	Physical manifestations such as rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath, trembling, sweating, or feeling dizzy can be signs of heightened distress and a crisis situation.
Disrupted Thinking Patterns	If you notice a significant change in your thought patterns, such as racing thoughts, intrusive thoughts, difficulty concentrating, or feeling disconnected from reality, it may indicate a crisis.
Impaired Functioning	When your ability to perform everyday tasks, fulfill obligations, maintain relationships, or engage in self-care activities is significantly impaired, it can be a sign that you are in a crisis.
Suicidal Thoughts or Self-Harm Urges	If you are experiencing thoughts of suicide or self-harm urges, it is essential to recognize this as a crisis situation and seek immediate help from a mental health professional or a helpline.
Social Isolation or Withdrawal	If you find yourself isolating from others, avoiding social interactions, or withdrawing from activities you previously enjoyed, it may indicate a crisis.
Increased Substance Use	Escalating or excessive use of substances like alcohol, drugs, or medication can be a sign of attempting to cope with a crisis situation.

Remember that everyone's experience of a crisis can be unique, and these signs may vary from person to person. Trust your instincts and listen to your body and mind. If you believe you are in crisis, it's crucial to reach out for support from a mental health professional, a helpline, or trusted individuals in your life who can help you navigate through the challenges you're facing.

When To Use Crisis Survival Techniques

Crisis survival techniques can help you effectively cope with overwhelming emotions and distressing situations. You can use these techniques when you find yourself in a crisis or when you anticipate a crisis might arise. Here are some situations in which crisis survival techniques can be helpful:

Emotional Overload	When you're experiencing intense emotions such as anger, sadness, anxiety, or fear that feel overwhelming and difficult to manage, crisis survival techniques can help you regulate your emotions and prevent them from escalating further.
Urges to Self-Harm	If you're struggling with urges to self-harm or engage in any self-destructive behaviours, crisis survival techniques can provide alternative coping strategies to help you resist these urges and keep yourself safe.
Suicidal Thoughts	When you're having thoughts of suicide or feeling hopeless and helpless, crisis survival techniques can assist you in finding reasons to live, reaching out for support, and creating a safety plan.
Moments of Impulsivity	If you tend to engage in impulsive behaviours during times of crisis, crisis survival techniques can help you slow down, think through your actions, and make healthier choices.
Overwhelming Stress	During times of high stress, crisis survival techniques can help you relax, reduce tension, and manage the demands of the situation more effectively.
Unexpected Crisis Events	When faced with unexpected crises, such as accidents, natural disasters, or sudden losses, crisis survival techniques can provide you with tools to cope, stay calm, and navigate the situation as best as possible.

Remember, crisis survival techniques are meant to be utilised as a part of a broader coping strategy and are most effective when learned and practised in non-crisis situations as well. If you are unsure whether you are in a crisis or if you need support, it's always important to reach out to a mental health professional or a helpline for assistance.

When To Not Use Crisis Survival Techniques

While crisis survival techniques can be valuable in managing distressing situations, there are certain situations where it may not be appropriate or effective to rely solely on these techniques. Here are some instances when caution should be exercised in using crisis survival techniques:

Routine Daily Stress	Crisis survival techniques are typically intended for more intense or overwhelming situations. If you're experiencing typical daily stressors or minor frustrations, it's usually more appropriate to use general stress management techniques or coping strategies specific to those situations.
Long-Term Mental Health Concerns	If you're dealing with ongoing mental health challenges or chronic distress, it's important to seek professional help and develop a comprehensive treatment plan. Crisis survival techniques may provide temporary relief, but they are not a substitute for ongoing therapy or medication if necessary.
Emergencies Requiring Immediate Professional Assistance	If you or someone else is in immediate danger or experiencing a life-threatening situation, crisis survival techniques should not delay or replace the need to contact emergency services or seeking immediate professional help.
Substance Abuse or Addiction Issues	If you're struggling with substance abuse or addiction, crisis survival techniques alone may not address the underlying issues. It's important to seek specialized help and treatment from professionals who specialize in addiction recovery.
Severe Mental Health Crisis	In cases where you or someone else is experiencing a severe mental health crisis, such as psychosis, severe mania, or extreme suicidal ideation, it's crucial to involve professionals trained in crisis intervention and psychiatric care. Crisis survival techniques alone may not be sufficient in these situations.

Remember, crisis survival techniques are meant to be utilized as a part of a broader coping strategy and are most effective when learned and practised in non-crisis situations as well. If you are unsure whether you are in a crisis or if you need support, it's always important to reach out to a mental health professional or a helpline for assistance.

STOP Technique

If you're feeling overwhelmed and anxious then...



STOP

Stop what you are doing and try not to react. Your emotions can make you react without thinking so freeze and stay in control.



TAKE A STEP BACK

Step back from the situation. Take a deep breath and try to let go.



OBSERVE

Take some time to notice what is going on around you. Notice your thoughts and feelings.



PROCEED MINDFULLY

Consider your thoughts and feelings and the situation around you. Identify the actions that will make it better or worse.

Advantages and Disadvantages for Acting on an Urge

Identify the specific urge or impulsive action you are considering in the midst of a crisis. Reflect on the potential positive and negative aspects of acting on the urge versus alternative courses of action. Use the provided table to list the pros and cons for acting on the urge.

Urges or impulsive actions that you're considering:

--

Pros for acting on these urges	Cons for acting on these crisis urges

Alternative action or coping strategy:

--

Pros for this alternative action	Cons for this alternative action

Consider the relative importance and impact of each item listed. Review and compare the pros and cons to help inform your decision-making process.

Advantages and Disadvantages: *Reflection*

Reflect on the significance of each advantage and disadvantage for both acting on the urge and the alternative course of action. Consider the potential impact on your well-being, values, goals, and the people involved. Assign a weight or value to each advantage and disadvantage based on its relative importance to you.

INTENSITY OF EMOTION BEFORE TIPP

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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LOW

HIGH

INTENSITY OF EMOTION AFTER TIPP

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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LOW

HIGH

<p>Review the overall balance between advantages and cons for acting on the urge versus the alternative course of action. Is one option clearly outweighing the other in terms of benefits or drawbacks?</p>	
<p>Take a moment to check in with your intuition and listen to your instincts. How do you feel about each option? Trusting your gut can be a valuable source of guidance.</p>	

TIPP Techniques

The TIPP techniques (Temperature, Intense Exercise, Paced Breathing, Paired Muscle Relaxation) are distress tolerance techniques designed to help you regulate and change your body chemistry to reduce extreme emotions quickly.

T

TEMPERATURE

Cold Water: Splash cold water on your face or immerse your hands in a bowl of icy water for 30 seconds. *Cold Pack:* Apply a cold pack or an ice pack to your forehead or the back of your neck for a few minutes. *Cold Beverage:* Sip on a cold drink or hold an ice cube in your mouth.



I

INTENSE EXERCISE

Jumping Jacks: Perform a set of jumping jacks or any other high-intensity exercise for 1-2 minutes. *Running in Place:* Run in place as fast as you can for a short duration. *Punching Bag:* If available, engage in boxing or hitting a punching bag to release pent-up energy.



P

PACED BREATHING

Deep Breathing: Take slow, deep breaths in through your nose and exhale slowly through your mouth. Focus on extending the exhale to activate the relaxation response. *4-7-8 Breathing:* Inhale for a count of 4, hold your breath for a count of 7, and exhale slowly for a count of 8. Repeat this cycle several times.



P

PAIRED MUSCLE RELAXATION

Find a comfortable position and close your eyes. Tense a specific muscle group, such as your hands or shoulders, for a few seconds. Release the tension abruptly and notice the sensation of relaxation. Repeat with different muscle groups, progressively working through your body. Focus on the contrast between tension and relaxation to promote deep relaxation.



TIPP Techniques: *Reflection*

Evaluate the Effectiveness: After using the TIPP techniques, assess the impact on your body and emotions. Rate the intensity of the initial extreme emotion on a scale of 1 to 10, and then rate the intensity after implementing the TIPP techniques. Note any changes or shifts in your emotional state and overall well-being.

INTENSITY OF EMOTION BEFORE TIPP

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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LOW

HIGH

INTENSITY OF EMOTION AFTER TIPP

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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LOW

HIGH

How effective was the chosen TIPP skill in reducing the extreme emotion?	
Were there any challenges or obstacles in implementing the TIPP skill(s)?	
Did you find the TIPP techniques helpful in changing your body chemistry and reducing distress?	

Remember, TIPP techniques are intended for use in crisis situations when you need to regulate overwhelming emotions quickly. If you continue to experience intense emotions or if you require additional support, consider reaching out to a mental health professional for further assistance and guidance.

Using Cold Water and the Dive Response

The dive response is a distress tolerance technique that involves immersing your face in cold water to trigger a physiological response that helps regulate intense emotions. Use this worksheet to practise utilising cold water and the dive response during moments of distress.

- Identify the specific intense emotion you are experiencing that you would like to regulate using the dive response.
- Fill a basin or bowl with cold water. Add ice cubes if available for an enhanced cooling effect.
- Choose a quiet and private space where you can immerse your face in the cold water without any distractions.
- Breathe deeply: Take a few deep breaths to prepare yourself.
- Slowly and mindfully immerse your face into the cold water, ensuring your eyes, nose, and mouth are submerged.
- Hold for 10-15 seconds: Keep your face underwater for approximately 10-15 seconds while continuing to breathe through your nose



Understand the Dive Response:

The Dive Reflex: When your face is submerged in cold water, the dive reflex is triggered. This physiological response slows down your heart rate, reduces blood flow to peripheral areas, and conserves oxygen, promoting a sense of calmness.

Pay attention to the sensations you experience during the immersion, such as the coolness of the water, the sensation of pressure, or any changes in your breathing or heart rate. Notice any shifts in your emotional state, such as a reduction in anxiety or a sense of calmness.

The Dive Response: *Reflection*

After using the dive response, assess the impact on your emotions and overall well-being. Rate the intensity of the initial intense emotion on a scale of 1 to 10, and then rate the intensity after using the dive response. Note any changes or shifts in your emotional state.

INTENSITY OF EMOTION BEFORE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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LOW

HIGH

INTENSITY OF EMOTION AFTER

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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LOW

HIGH

How effective was the dive response in regulating your intense emotion?	
Were there any challenges or obstacles in implementing the dive response?	
Did you find the dive response helpful in promoting a sense of calmness and distress reduction?	

Remember, the dive response is a distress tolerance technique that can be helpful in regulating intense emotions, particularly during moments of distress. If you continue to struggle with overwhelming emotions, consider seeking guidance from a mental health professional who can provide further assistance and tailored coping strategies.

Paired Muscle Relaxation

Paired Muscle Relaxation is a distress tolerance technique that involves systematically tensing and releasing muscle groups to promote physical and mental relaxation.

1

Choose a quiet and comfortable space where you can sit or lie down. Ensure you won't be disturbed during the practice.

2

Get into a relaxed position. You can sit in a comfortable chair with your feet on the floor or lie down on a mat or bed.

3

Begin by taking a few slow, deep breaths. Inhale deeply through your nose, hold the breath for a moment, and exhale slowly through your mouth. Focus on the sensations of breathing.

4

Direct your attention to different muscle groups in your body, one at a time. The following muscle groups can be used as a starting point, but feel free to adapt based on your needs:

- Hands and forearms
- Upper arms and shoulders
- Chest and upper Back
- Abdomen
- Buttocks and hips
- Thighs and lower legs
- Calves and feet

5

Tensing phase: Start with the first muscle group (e.g., hands and forearms). Tense the muscles in that area as tightly as you can without straining. Hold the tension for about 5-10 seconds while maintaining deep breathing.

6

Release phase: Suddenly release the tension in the muscle group and allow the muscles to completely relax. Focus on the sensation of relaxation and notice the contrast between tension and relaxation.

7

Repeat for each muscle group: Move systematically through each muscle group, repeating steps 5 and 6. Gradually progress from one muscle group to the next until you have gone through all the major muscle groups in your body.

8

Once you have completed the cycle of tensing and releasing each muscle group, take a few moments to experience the overall relaxation in your entire body.

Paired Muscle Relaxation: *Reflection*

Paired Muscle Relaxation can be an effective tool for promoting relaxation and reducing distress. It may take time and practice to fully engage in this technique. Feel free to modify the muscle groups or adapt the steps to suit your specific needs and preferences. If you have any physical limitations or medical conditions, consult with a healthcare professional before practising Paired Muscle Relaxation. Remember, if you continue to struggle with distress or require additional support, consider reaching out to a mental health professional for further guidance and assistance.

INTENSITY OF EMOTION BEFORE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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LOW

HIGH

INTENSITY OF EMOTION AFTER

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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LOW

HIGH

How did you feel during the practice of Paired Muscle Relaxation?	
Did you notice any changes in the tension or relaxation of your muscles?	
How did this technique affect your overall sense of well-being and distress levels?	

Rethinking and Relaxing

This worksheet combines effective rethinking and paired relaxation techniques to help you manage distress and promote a more balanced and calm state of mind. Follow the steps below to practise effective rethinking and paired relaxation in a structured manner.

Identify a specific distressing thought or situation that is causing you emotional discomfort.

--

Automatic Thought Analysis

Thought associated with the situation	Evidence supporting the thought	Evidence contradicting the thought	Alternative explanations for the situation	More balanced, realistic thoughts

Paired relaxation

When you are no longer in the stressful, distressing situation try the following:

1. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to relax your body and mind.
2. Imagine the stressful event in your mind without actually experiencing the stress.
3. As you inhale slowly, say to yourself a positive self-statement that counters the stress (e.g., "I am capable of handling this").
4. As you exhale, say the word "Relax" in your mind, and intentionally release any tension in your muscles, allowing them to become loose and relaxed.
5. Continue this practice of pairing the self-statement with relaxation as you visualise the stressful event, gradually working through any challenging aspects.

Rethinking and Relaxation: *Reflection*

After completing the cycle of effective rethinking and paired relaxation, reflect on any changes you observed in your thoughts, emotions, and overall well-being.

Changes you observed in your thoughts	
Changes you observed in your emotions	
Changes you observed in your overall wellbeing	
Consider whether the distressing thought feels less intense or if you have gained a new perspective.	
What other coping strategies or self-care activities you can engage in to further support your well-being and manage distress effectively?	

Distracting With ACCEPTS

Distracting is a distress tolerance skill that involves redirecting your attention away from distressing thoughts or emotions to reduce their intensity. To help remember this distress tolerance skill you can use the word ACCEPTS. Select one or more techniques from the ACCEPTS list and incorporate them into your distress tolerance practice. Experiment with different techniques to find what works best for you.

ACCEPTS: ACCEPTS is an acronym that represents various distraction techniques.

A

Activities: Engage in activities that capture your attention and focus. Examples: reading, writing, drawing, playing a musical instrument, gardening, cooking, or completing puzzles.

C

Contributing: Do something helpful or meaningful for others. Volunteer, assist someone in need, or engage in acts of kindness. Focusing on helping others can divert attention from distress.

C

Comparisons: Compare your current situation or feelings with others who may be facing greater challenges or difficulties. Gain perspective by recognizing that others have overcome similar obstacles.

E

Emotions: Allow yourself to experience different emotions by engaging in activities that evoke positive emotions. Watch a comedy, listen to uplifting music, or spend time with loved ones who make you laugh.

P

Pushing Away: Temporarily set aside distressing thoughts or emotions. Visualise placing them in a box or on a shelf and make a conscious decision to focus on other things.

T

Thoughts: Shift your focus by engaging in stimulating thoughts or mental exercises. Solve puzzles, play mental games, imagine a pleasant scenario, or engage in positive self-talk.

S

Sensations: Engage your senses to distract from distress. Pay attention to physical sensations such as holding a cold drink, feeling the texture of an object, taking a warm bath, or smelling a pleasant aroma.

Distracting With ACCEPTS

Distracting is a distress tolerance skill that involves redirecting your attention away from distressing thoughts or emotions to reduce their intensity. To help remember this distress tolerance skill you can use the mnemonic ACCEPTS. Select one or more techniques from the ACCEPTS list and incorporate them into your distress tolerance practice.

A

Activities: Engage in activities that capture your attention and focus. Examples: reading, writing, drawing, playing a musical instrument, gardening, cooking, or completing puzzles.

C

Contributing: Do something helpful or meaningful for others. Volunteer, assist someone in need, or engage in acts of kindness. Focusing on helping others can divert attention from distress.

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Distracting With ACCEPTS

Activities

A

- Read a book or magazine.
- Play a musical instrument.
- Do some exercise.
- Engage in a hobby or craft.
- Take a walk in nature.
- Play computer games.

Contributing

C

- Join a community service project.
- Write a thank-you letter to someone.
- Share your knowledge or skills with others.
- Volunteer for a charitable organization.
- Help a friend or family member with a task.
- Engage in a random act of kindness.

Comparisons

C

- Reflect on your strengths compared to others.
- Compare emotions to when you felt at peace.
- Compare situation to a challenge you faced.
- Compare your difficulties to your past.
- Think of someone who handles situations well.
- Find inspiration in stories of resilience.

Emotions

E

- Listen to emotional songs.
- Watch an emotional film.
- Enjoy a comedy or tell some jokes.
- Reread a letter from a loved one.
- Go to a musical concert or show.
- Do something out of your comfort zone.

Pushing Away

P

- Create a mental image of a protective shield.
- Write worries, then tear up the paper.
- Leave the situation mentally.
- Picture thoughts as clouds passing by in the sky.
- Visualize placing thoughts in a box.
- Imagine watching thoughts float away on a river.

Thoughts

T

- Do a crossword puzzle.
- Practise positive self-affirmations.
- Repeat a meaningful quote.
- Journal your thoughts.
- Concentrate on a focused task.
- Challenge negative thoughts.

Sensations

S

- Squeeze a soft object in your hand.
- Apply a scented lotion or essential oil.
- Sit comfortably and focus on your breath.
- Place a cold or warm compress on your neck.
- Surround yourself with comforting textures.
- Listen to calming nature sounds or white noise.

Distracting ACCEPTS: *Reflection*

After completing the cycle of distracting, reflect on any changes you observed in your thoughts, emotions, and overall well-being.

<p>How did engaging in distraction techniques impact your level of distress?</p>	
<p>Which ACCEPTS techniques were most helpful for you?</p>	
<p>Did you notice any patterns or preferences in terms of the distractions that were most effective in reducing distress?</p>	

Remember, distraction is a useful skill to temporarily shift your focus away from distressing thoughts or emotions. Experiment with different techniques and find what works best for you. If you continue to struggle with distress or require additional support, consider reaching out to a mental health professional for further guidance and assistance.

Using The 5 Senses

Using the senses is a distress tolerance skill that uses the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell) to intentionally engage in activities that provide comfort and promote a sense of calmness. It aims to soothe and nurture yourself during times of distress.



Using The 5 Senses

Sight

Surroundings: Create a visually pleasing and calming environment. Decorate your space with comforting colours, objects, or artwork that bring you joy.

Nature: Spend time outdoors and immerse yourself in the beauty of nature. Observe the colors of flowers, trees, or the sky, and find solace in the natural world.

Hearing

Music: Listen to calming music or sounds that soothe your mind. Create a playlist of relaxing tunes or explore nature sounds.

Guided Meditation: Find guided meditation or relaxation audios that help you unwind and find peace. Allow the soothing voice and calming words to guide you into a state of tranquility.

Touch

Self-Massage: Give yourself a gentle massage. Use lotion or oils to nourish your skin while paying attention to the soothing sensations of touch and the release of tension.

Soft Textures: Surround yourself with soft and comforting textures. Wrap yourself in a cozy blanket, cuddle with a plush toy, or feel the warmth of a soft, comfortable fabric.

Taste

Comfort Foods: Indulge in your favourite comfort foods or treats that bring you joy. Savour each bite mindfully and allow the flavours to provide a sense of pleasure and contentment.

Warm Beverages: Prepare a warm and soothing beverage such as herbal tea, hot chocolate, or a comforting drink of your choice. Focus on the warmth and flavours as you sip slowly.

Smell

Aromatherapy: Use scented candles or essential oils to fill your space with soothing fragrances. Lavender and chamomile are known for their calming effects.

Fresh Air: Step outside and breathe in the fresh air. Notice the natural scents around you, such as flowers, freshly cut grass, or the aroma of rain.

Using The 5 Senses: *Reflection*

After completing the self-soothing with the 5 senses, record what you did and how you felt as you self-soothed for each of the senses.

Hearing	
Sight	
Touch	
Taste	
Smell	

Using The 5 Senses: *Reflection*

After using 5 senses, reflect on any changes you observed in your thoughts, emotions, and overall well-being.

<p>How did engaging in self-soothing activities through each sense impact your distress levels?</p>	
<p>Which sensory techniques were most effective in soothing your emotions?</p>	
<p>Did you discover any new self-soothing techniques that you can incorporate into your daily life?</p>	

Remember, self-soothing through the five senses can be a powerful tool for distress relief and emotional regulation. Experiment with different techniques and find what works best for you. If you continue to struggle with distress or require additional support, consider reaching out to a mental health professional for further guidance and assistance.

Body Scan Meditation

Body scan meditation is a mindfulness practice that involves systematically bringing awareness to different parts of your body. This worksheet will guide you through a step-by-step process of practicing body scan meditation for distress tolerance.

1	Settle into a comfortable position	Find a quiet, comfortable position either sitting or lying down. Ensure your body is fully supported and relaxed.
2	Establish a relaxed breathing pattern	Begin by taking a few deep breaths. Inhale deeply through your nose, allowing your abdomen to rise, and exhale slowly through your mouth. Allow your breath to find its natural rhythm.
3	Bring attention to your feet	Focus your attention on your feet. Notice any sensations, such as warmth, coolness, or tingling. Observe any tension or relaxation in your feet without judgment.
4	Move to your lower legs and knees	Gradually shift your attention to your lower legs and knees. Notice any sensations, such as warmth, pressure, or tingling. Scan this area, observing any sensations or feelings that arise.
5	Shift focus to your thighs and hips	Direct your attention to your thighs and hips. Notice the contact of your body with the chair or surface you are sitting or lying on. Observe any sensations, tension, or relaxation in this area.
6	Continue to your abdomen and chest	Bring your attention to your abdomen and chest. Observe the rising and falling of your breath. Notice the gentle expansion and contraction of your abdomen and chest as you breathe in and out.
7	Move to your hands and arms	Shift your focus to your hands and arms. Observe any sensations, such as warmth, coolness, or tingling. Notice any tension or relaxation in your hands and arms as you maintain your awareness in this area.
8	Shoulders, neck, and face	Bring your attention to your shoulders, neck, and face. Notice any tightness or tension in these areas. Observe any sensations, such as warmth or tingling. Allow your facial muscles to soften and relax.
9	Expand awareness to your whole body	Expand your awareness to encompass your entire body as a whole. Notice the sensations, feelings, and overall state of your body. Observe any areas of tension without trying to change anything.
10	Breathe and be present	Take a few moments to simply breathe and be present with your body. Embrace the sensations and feelings that arise. Allow yourself to fully experience your body in this moment without judgment.

Body Scan Meditation: *Reflection*

After completing the body scan meditation, reflect on any changes you observed in your thoughts, emotions, and overall well-being.

<p>How did engaging in the body scan meditation impact your distress levels?</p>	
<p>How did focusing on each body part individually contribute to your overall sense of calmness and presence?</p>	
<p>Did you notice any areas of tension or relaxation in your body?</p>	

Body scan meditation can help promote relaxation, reduce distress, and increase body awareness. Remember that it may take time and practice to fully engage in this technique.

Feel free to modify the steps or adapt the practice based on your specific needs and preferences. If you continue to struggle with distress or require additional support, consider reaching out to a mental health professional for further guidance and assistance.

IMPROVE Technique

The IMPROVE technique is a distress tolerance skill that aims to enhance your current experience and increase positive emotions, even in challenging situations. It involves engaging in activities that can help you feel better and regain a sense of balance. The word "IMPROVE" serves as a mnemonic to help you remember different strategies for enhancing the present moment. Let's explore each strategy:

I	Imagery	Engage in visualising a pleasant, calming, or positive image in your mind. Close your eyes and imagine yourself in a peaceful or happy place. Allow the details of the image to unfold and immerse yourself in its serenity.
M	Meaning	Find or create meaning in the current moment or situation. Consider what lessons or growth opportunities can be derived from the experience. Reflect on your values and goals and connect with a sense of purpose.
P	Prayer	Engage in prayer, reflection, or any spiritual practices that resonate with you. Seek solace, guidance, and strength from your spiritual beliefs or connect with a higher power. Use this time to find comfort, seek clarity, or express gratitude.
R	Relaxing	Practice relaxation techniques to calm your mind and body. Explore breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, or other relaxation methods that work for you. Focus on releasing tension and cultivating a sense of peace within yourself.
O	One thing in the moment	Bring your attention to one thing in the present moment that you can fully immerse yourself in. It could be an object, a sensation, a sound, or any other aspect of your immediate environment. Allow your senses to fully engage with this one thing.
V	Vacation	Take a mental vacation from your distressing thoughts or situation. Allow yourself to mentally escape to a calm and peaceful place. Visualise yourself in your ideal vacation spot or any other destination that brings you tranquility.
E	Encouragement	Provide yourself with words of encouragement and support. Use positive self-talk to motivate yourself. Remind yourself of your strengths, resilience, and past successes. Offer kind words to yourself as you navigate through the difficult moment.

IMPROVE Technique: *Reflection*

Complete the table to explore how you used each of the IMPROVE techniques for distress tolerance.

I	Imagery	
M	Meaning	
P	Prayer	
R	Relaxing	
O	One thing	
V	Vacation	
E	Encouragement	

IMPROVE Skills: *Reflection*

After completing the IMPROVE techniques, reflect on any changes you observed in your thoughts, emotions, and overall well-being.

<p>How did engaging in the IMPROVE techniques impact your distress level and overall experience of the moment?</p>	
<p>Which strategies did you find most effective in improving your mood or mindset?</p>	
<p>Did you discover any new techniques that you can incorporate into your daily life?</p>	

Remember that improving the moment is an ongoing practice, and different strategies may work better for you in different situations. Be patient with yourself as you explore and experiment with the IMPROVE techniques. If you continue to struggle with distress or require additional support, consider reaching out to a mental health professional for further guidance and assistance.

Be Aware of Your Senses

This worksheet will guide you through a step-by-step process of having an awareness of your senses as a distress tolerance skill. Use the questions as a guide to help you engage with your senses and bring attention to the present moment. Find a quiet and comfortable space before beginning.

Sight	<p>What do you see around you? Take a moment to observe your surroundings.</p> <p>Are there any colours, shapes, or objects that catch your attention?</p> <p>How does the play of light and shadows impact your visual experience?</p>
Hearing	<p>What sounds do you hear in your environment? Take a moment to listen attentively.</p> <p>Can you identify any specific sounds, such as voices, music, or nature sounds?</p> <p>How does each sound make you feel? Do any sounds evoke specific emotions or memories?</p>
Touch	<p>Pay attention to the sensations on your skin. How does the surface you're sitting or lying on feel?</p> <p>Are there any textures or materials you can feel with your hands? Describe their qualities.</p> <p>Notice the feeling of your clothing against your body. How does it feel?</p>
Taste	<p>Are there any tastes lingering in your mouth? Take a moment to notice.</p> <p>If you have something to eat or drink nearby, take a small bite or sip and savour the taste.</p> <p>How does the taste impact your senses and your overall experience in the present moment?</p>
Smell	<p>Pay attention to any scents or aromas in your environment. What can you smell?</p> <p>Are there any familiar or pleasant smells that bring you comfort or evoke positive emotions?</p> <p>Take a deep breath and fully immerse yourself in the scents around you.</p>

Be Aware of Your Senses: *Reflection*

After completing the sensory awareness skills, reflect on any changes you observed in your thoughts, emotions, and overall well-being.

Reflect on the collective sensory experience. How do the senses interact with one another?	
Are there any sensations or experiences that stand out to you?	
How does engaging with your senses contribute to your overall sense of presence and calmness?	

Sensory awareness exercises can help ground you in the present moment, increase mindfulness, and provide a sense of calmness. Remember that it may take time and practice to fully engage with your senses and cultivate sensory awareness. If you continue to struggle with distress or require additional support, consider reaching out to a mental health professional for further guidance and assistance.