

DBT Skills List

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) is a type of cognitive-behavioral therapy developed by psychologist Marsha M. Linehan. It was initially designed to treat individuals with borderline personality disorder (BPD), but it has since been adapted for various other mental health conditions that involve emotional dysregulation and difficulty in managing distress.

DBT skills are a set of coping techniques and strategies that individuals learn in order to manage their emotions, improve interpersonal relationships, and develop mindfulness.

DBT Skills – Four Main Modules

1. **Mindfulness:** Focuses on being present in the moment, observing without judgment, and cultivating awareness of thoughts, emotions, and sensations.
2. **Distress Tolerance:** Teaches individuals how to tolerate and survive distressing situations without making impulsive or harmful choices. It includes techniques like distraction, self-soothing, and using pros and cons.
3. **Emotion Regulation:** Aims to help individuals identify and manage intense emotions in healthier ways. It involves learning to understand emotions, reduce emotional vulnerability, and increase positive emotional experiences.
4. **Interpersonal Effectiveness:** Provides tools to improve communication and relationships, including setting boundaries, expressing needs, and handling conflicts.

Mindfulness Skills

1. **Observing:** Noticing and paying attention to internal and external experiences without trying to change them.
2. **Describing:** Putting words to experiences in a factual and nonjudgmental way.
3. **Participating:** Engaging fully in the present moment without distractions.
4. **Non-Judgmental Stance:** Approaching experiences without labeling them as good or bad.
5. **One-Mindfully:** Being fully present in whatever you're doing without getting caught up in multitasking.

Distress Tolerance Skills

1. **Distract with ACCEPTS:** Using activities that distract from distress, like activities, contributing, comparisons, emotions, pushing away, thoughts, and sensations.
2. **Self-Soothing with the 5 Senses:** Engaging the five senses to soothe distressing emotions.

3. **IMPROVE the Moment:** Imagery, Meaning, Prayer, Relaxation, One thing at a time, Vacation, Encouragement.
4. **Pros and Cons:** Weighing the pros and cons of a situation before making a decision.
5. **TIPP Skills:** Temperature, Intense Exercise, Paced Breathing, Paired Muscle Relaxation (skills to reduce intense distress).

Emotion Regulation Skills

1. **Identifying and Labeling Emotions:** Recognizing and naming emotions.
2. **Opposite Action:** Acting in ways that are opposite to the emotion you're feeling when it's not effective or appropriate.
3. **Check the Facts:** Evaluating the accuracy of your thoughts and interpretations about a situation.
4. **Problem Solving:** Identifying problems and brainstorming solutions.
5. **PLEASE Skills:** Treat physical illness, Balanced Eating, Avoid mood-altering substances, Balance Sleep, Get Exercise.

Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

1. **DEAR MAN:** Describing, Expressing, Asserting, Reinforcing, Mindful, Appearing Confident, Negotiating.
2. **GIVE Skills:** Being Gentle, Act Interested, Validate, and Use an Easy manner to communicate effectively.
3. **FAST Skills:** Being Fair, not Apologizing, Sticking to your values, and Using Truthful communication.
4. **DEARMAN GIVE FAST:** Combining the DEAR MAN, GIVE, and FAST skills for more complex interpersonal situations.
5. **Objectiveness Effectiveness:** Keeping your focus on your goals in a situation and not letting others distract or deter you.

Additional notes