

Distress Tolerance Skills Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Activity one: Identifying distress	
What things, people or situations trigger distress for you?	
What warning signs do you get that let you know you are getting distressed?	
What feelings do you experience in these situations?	
Emotional:	Physical:
Activity two: Opposite actions	
What do you do to escape your distress in the above situations? Some examples of escape methods include avoidance, seeking reassurance or guidance from others, or using substances such as alcohol or drugs.	
1.	
2.	
3.	
While the urge to engage in an escape method can be powerful in distressing situations, it prevents you from learning helpful ways to tolerate distress and from challenging your own distress intolerant beliefs. For each of the above escape methods you identified, write down an opposite action you can do to practice engaging with your distress in a healthier way.	
1.	
2.	
3.	

Activity three: Accepting and improving distress

While sometimes we can control distressing situations through problem-solving and taking action, other times, there is no problem-solving to be done. Whether or not you are able to take productive actions to alleviate the distressing situation, the distress tolerance skills below can help you to tolerate your distress without resorting to unhelpful escape methods.

Under each letter of the ACCEPTS acronym below, fill out specific ways you can help yourself to tolerate your distress.

Distress tolerance skill	Description	For me, this could look like...
A - Activities	Work on engaging activities that will distract your mind and take the focus off your distress	
C - Contribute	Turn your focus to others, this could be reaching out to friends, volunteering in your community, or just doing something kind for someone else.	
C - Compare	Try to gain perspective by comparing this situation to something worse you or someone else has gone through	
E - Emotions	Engage your other emotions through music, books, movies or content that elicits different emotions for you	
P - Push Away	Refuse to mentally engage with negative thoughts.	
T - Thoughts	Replace the negative thoughts with new ones, such as counting, naming, reciting words or lyrics, or working on a puzzle.	
S - Sensations	Create distracting or soothing physical sensations such as a warm bath or cold shower, loud music, pleasant smell, or strong taste.	