



DIY Guide for Kids

How to Practice Distress Tolerance



MindWeal

DIY Guide for Kids: How to Practice Distress Tolerance



Hey there! Distress tolerance is all about learning how to handle tough situations and strong emotions without making things worse. This guide will show you some fun and easy ways to practice distress tolerance at home. Let's get started!

Disclaimer: This guide is intended to complement, not replace, your psychotherapy with a licensed therapist. It should be used under the supervision of a licensed professional.

What is Distress Tolerance?

Distress tolerance is about managing intense emotions and crises in a healthy way. It means finding ways to stay calm and collected, even when things get really tough.

Why It's Important:

- **Reduces Impulsive Actions:** Helps you avoid doing things that might make the situation worse.
- **Builds Resilience:** Teaches you to cope with difficult emotions and situations.
- **Improves Well-being:** Helps you feel more in control and less overwhelmed.

Self-Soothing Kit

What You Need:

- A box or bag
- Items that engage your five senses (e.g., a soft blanket, scented lotion, a favorite snack, a stress ball, calming music)

How to Use:

1. **Create Your Kit:** Fill a box or bag with items that you find comforting and calming.
2. **Use Your Senses:** When you're feeling overwhelmed, use an item from your kit to soothe yourself. For example, hug your soft blanket, listen to calming music, or smell a scented lotion.
3. **Focus on the Experience:** Pay attention to how the item makes you feel and try to stay present in the moment.

Why It Helps:

- **Provides Immediate Relief:** Engages your senses to help you feel calmer right away.
- **Reduces Stress:** Helps you manage strong emotions without reacting impulsively.

Distraction List

What You Need:

- A piece of paper or a notebook
- A pen or pencil

How to Use:

1. **Make a List:** Write down a list of activities you can do to distract yourself when you're feeling upset. Some ideas include drawing, reading a book, playing a game, or talking to a friend.
2. **Choose an Activity:** When you're feeling distressed, pick an activity from your list and do it for at least 15-20 minutes.
3. **Stay Engaged:** Focus on the activity and try to keep your mind off what's bothering you.

Why It Helps:

- **Takes Your Mind Off Problems:** Provides a temporary break from distressing thoughts and feelings.
- **Promotes Positive Distraction:** Helps you engage in activities that make you feel better.

Crisis Survival Cards

What You Need:

- Index cards or small pieces of paper
- A pen or pencil

How to Use:

1. **Write Down Strategies:** On each card, write down a distress tolerance skill or coping strategy. Some examples are “take deep breaths,” “count backward from 100,” or “call a friend.”
2. **Keep Them Handy:** Put the cards in a small box or container and keep them somewhere accessible.
3. **Use When Needed:** When you’re feeling overwhelmed, pick a card and follow the instructions.

Why It Helps:

- **Quick Reminders:** Provides easy-to-access coping strategies during a crisis.
- **Guided Support:** Helps you remember and use the skills you’ve learned.

Radical Acceptance

What You Need:

- A piece of paper or a journal
- A pen or pencil

How to Use:

1. **Identify a Situation:** Think of a situation that you find hard to accept.
2. **Write About It:** Write about the situation and how it makes you feel. Then, practice accepting it fully without judgment. Remind yourself that accepting doesn't mean liking or approving; it just means acknowledging reality.
3. **Reflect:** Notice how accepting the situation changes your feelings and reduces your distress.

Why It Helps:

- **Reduces Emotional Resistance:** Helps you come to terms with difficult situations.
- **Promotes Calmness:** Reduces the struggle against things you can't change.

Breathing Exercises

What You Need:

- A quiet space
- A timer (optional)

How to Use:

1. **Find a Quiet Space:** Sit or lie down comfortably.
2. **Deep Breathing:** Inhale slowly through your nose for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, and exhale through your mouth for 4 seconds.
3. **Focus on Your Breath:** Pay attention to how the air feels entering and leaving your body.
4. **Set a Timer:** Start with 5 minutes and gradually increase the time as you get more comfortable.

Why It Helps:

- **Calms Your Mind:** Reduces anxiety and stress.
- **Improves Focus:** Helps you concentrate on the present moment.

Conclusion

Practicing distress tolerance can help you handle tough situations and strong emotions without making things worse. By using these tools and activities, you can start building your distress tolerance skills at home. Remember, it's important to practice regularly and be patient with yourself. Always work with a professional therapist who can guide you through this process safely and effectively. Keep practicing, and you'll see great progress in how you manage your emotions!

