

SECOND EDITION

THE EXPANDED
DIALECTICAL
BEHAVIOR
THERAPY
SKILLS TRAINING
MANUAL

DBT FOR SELF-HELP, AND
INDIVIDUAL & GROUP TREATMENT SETTINGS

LANE PEDERSON

WITH CORTNEY SIDWELL PEDERSON

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**DBT for Self-Help, and Individual and Group
Treatment Settings**

**Lane Pederson, PsyD, LP, DBTC with Cortney Sidwell
Pederson, MSW, LICSW, DBTC**

“How do you make the best book about DBT by its most gifted trainers even better? You include more great ideas and pragmatic skills while making it even more accessible and immediately applicable.”

-Barry Duncan, PsyD

Author of *On Becoming a Better Therapist* and developer of the *Partners for Change Outcome Management System* “The second edition is easy to understand, practical, and a welcome addition to anyone's library—therapist or layperson. The manual presents the skills in a way that is self-explanatory, rather than requiring a trained professional to wade through pages of clinical jargon. Once again, Lane irreverently refuses to tiptoe through proprietary minefields in order to make DBT more accessible to everyone.”

-Stephanie Vaughn, PsyD

Clinical psychologist and DBT-Linehan Board of Certification, Certified Clinician “Marsha Linehan developed DBT. And Lane Pederson has expanded it! Many practitioners have knowledge of evidence-based practice, but few have the ability to translate that knowledge into practical, real-world tools that can truly help give struggling individuals a life worth living. Unlike the many books that go unused on your shelf, this companion is a daily “go-to” resource for any practice treating emotionally dysregulated clients. Dr. Pederson is a true leader in the field and his second edition has outdone his first!”

-Jeff Riggensbach, PhD, LPC

Author, *The CBT Toolbox: A Guide for Clients & Clinicians* and *The BPD Toolbox: An Evidence-Based Guide for Regulating Emotions* “This manual is the most thorough, up-to-date, and valuable resource for clinicians who use DBT. Now spiral-bound, it's easy and convenient to make copies for both individuals and groups. And the inclusion of strategies for using social media is brilliant, especially for those working with adolescents and young adults. It's becoming more and more evident that DBT skills are life skills, and this manual provides all the necessary tools. A most beneficial book.”

-Linda A. Curran, BCPC, LPC, CACD, CCPD

Author of bestselling *101 Trauma-Informed Interventions* “Dr. Pederson has provided therapists and clients with a very thorough, expansive and easy to understand explanation of the skills clients need to learn to regulate their emotions and live a full and satisfying life. Filled with new skills, helpful and clear handouts, creative and new acronyms that teach many new skills, and helpful lists of skills and behaviors, this book has much to offer any therapist,

whether or not the therapist is doing standard DBT or simply utilizing DBT skills in their work with clients. Pederson is able to explain concepts in new ways that bring additional clarity even to seasoned DBT therapists and trainers. The addition of modules on addiction and social media, as well as skills to learn behaviors that enhance anyone's life (such as problem solving, making friends or developing routines) make this book unique and indispensable for any therapist, for all clients and even for family members. I wholeheartedly recommend it and look forward to using its concepts and skills in my own work with clients.”

-Pat Harvey, ACSW, LCSW-C

DBT trainer and therapist, co-author of *Parenting a Child Who Has Intense Emotions, Dialectical Behavior Therapy for At-Risk Adolescents and Parenting a Teen Who Has Intense Emotions* “There are many books and resources about DBT, but Pederson's second edition rises above as an essential. His strategies have been proven in more than a decade of successful clinical practice, and this new book makes his important work accessible to all.”

-Cathy Moonshine, PhD, MSCP, MAC, CADC III

Author of *Acquiring Competency and Achieving Proficiency with DBT, Volume I & II* “Dr. Pederson's second edition is a must-have book for both clinicians and clients. As a leader in “Second-wave DBT,” Dr. Pederson continues to generate amazing and accessible content. This book provides new perspectives on the classic skill modules by expanding explanations and introducing new examples and handouts. One of the most exciting aspects of this book is the expansion of six other skill modules: Dialectics, Cognitive Modification, Problem-Solving, Addictions, Building a Satisfying Life, and Social Media. The new modules help clinicians and clients address their real world struggles by providing meaningful content and fresh ideas. I strongly encourage you to add this book to your desktop collection of works. I have been working with DBT theory, skills, and concepts since the 1990's with thousands of clients and this work will be immediately integrated into my training and practice.”

-Mark Carlson, PsyD, LP

Founder & CEO of Mental Health Systems, specializing in DBT treatment “An abundance of fresh, practical and reproducible tools for healthier emotions and stronger resilience. The second edition updates and expands the knowledge, research and skills so greatly needed by mental health professionals and those who depend upon us to deliver the most accessible, effective and well-proven treatments possible.”

-Henry Emmons, MD

Author of *The Chemistry of Joy* and *The Chemistry of Calm*

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Published by
PESI Publishing & Media
PESI, Inc
3839 White Ave
Eau Claire, WI 54703

Cover: Amy Rubenzer

Editing: Hazel Bird

Layout: Bookmasters & Amy Rubenzer Printed in the United States of America ISBN: 9781683730460

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To Sophie and Sawyer, awesome in their strong minds, pure hearts, and creative undertakings.

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About the Authors

Dr. Lane Pederson has provided dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) training and consultation to over 10,000 professionals in the United States, Australia, South Africa, Canada, and Mexico through his company Lane Pederson and Associates, LLC (www.DrLanePederson.com). Notable organizations for which he has provided training include Walter Reed National Military Hospital, the United States Navy, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the Ontario Psychological Association, and Psychotherapy Networker. He has provided DBT training for community mental health agencies, chemical dependency treatment centers, hospital and residential care settings, and therapists in forensic settings. Dr. Pederson also co-owns Acacia Therapy and Health Training in South Africa.

Dr. Pederson's DBT publications include *The Expanded Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Training Manual* (2nd ed., PESI, 2017), *Dialectical Behavior Therapy: A Contemporary Guide for Practitioners* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), and *Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Training in Integrated Dual Disorder Treatment Settings* (PEI, 2013).

A real-world practitioner, Dr. Pederson co-owns Mental Health Systems, PC (MHS), one of the largest DBT-specialized practices in the United States (www.mhs-dbt.com). At MHS Dr. Pederson has developed DBT programs for adolescents, adults, people with dual disorders, and people with developmental disabilities. He has served in clinical and training directorships, has directed practice-based clinical outcome studies, and has overseen the care of thousands of clients in need of intensive outpatient services.

Dr. Pederson also founded the Dialectical Behavior Therapy National Certification and Accreditation Association, the first active organization to certify DBT providers and accredit DBT programs (www.dbtncaa.com).

Dr. Pederson currently serves on the advisory board for the doctoral counseling program at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota and is a peer reviewer for *Forensic Scholars Today*.

Cortney Sidwell Pederson, MSW, LICSW, DBTC, is a DBT therapist who has designed and implemented customized DBT programs. She has worked with

adolescents and adults in multiple settings across various levels of care. She also participates in the ongoing training and supervision of DBT therapists at MHS.

The authors live in Minnesota with their children and dogs.

Preface

Our work with dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) began in 1999 at a nonprofit community mental health center. Back then, DBT was just starting to disseminate into the mental health field as an exciting and promising treatment for clients with borderline personality disorder.

The DBT program developed in that setting had a group format based on a day-treatment model and level of care. This program treated some of the highest-risk clients in Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and the surrounding areas and developed a reputation for effective work with difficult client problems.

Our DBT team was active, involved, motivated, and idealistic. We studied and discussed the foundations of DBT and made it our own, always looking to our clients for information on how to improve the program. We wanted to provide the best possible service, and we cared passionately about the program and our clients.

As our DBT program developed, we consulted constantly, pushed each other to be more effective therapists, and looked to our clients to inform the treatment. Our approach embodied evidence-based practice as defined by the American Psychological Association many years later. Many of the therapists from this DBT day-treatment program went on to develop successful DBT programs in other clinics or in their own practices over the next decade.

Today DBT continues to be at a critical crossroads. The direction promoted by the original developer of DBT, Marsha M. Linehan, is strict adherence to the model as she researched it, called standard DBT. Often falsely framed as a mandate that DBT therapists need to follow, this direction has and will continue to lead to an ossification of the approach. The other direction is applying DBT guided by contemporary evidence-based practices. This direction recognizes that the service delivery framework and protocols of standard DBT are effective for many clients, but that they also fail to address the needs of many other clients across settings and levels of care. One size does not fit all.

Rhetoric aside, what does the evidence say? The jury has been in for some time, and the evidence is clear that adherence to particular treatment manuals and the use of “specific ingredients” in therapy accounts for little change, whereas the

application of a credible approach in the context of therapeutic factors (i.e., common factors) results in robust change (Duncan, 2015; Duncan, Miller, Wampold, & Hubble, 2010; Wampold, 2001). Moreover, the amount of research on adapted DBT has far outpaced the research on the original model, and a recent randomized clinical trial component study comparing standard DBT to two dismantled conditions—DBT skills training and individual DBT therapy respectively—found no significant differences between the DBT applications in terms of the major variables of interest and no reliable differences in terms of the minor variables of interest (Linehan et al., 2015). This finding is especially interesting considering that the study had methodological flaws that favored standard DBT.

Bluntly, for those who can separate ego, money, politics, and blind allegiance from DBT practice, employing varied applications across settings fits best with the research evidence and provides much-needed diversity in DBT services for clients. For a full discussion of applications of DBT and the accompanying research, the reader is referred to Pederson (2015).

We therefore encourage DBT providers and programs to follow the evidence, *especially the clinical outcomes you monitor in your own settings with your own clients*. The theory and interventions that comprise DBT reside in the public domain and are owned by *no one*. DBT has already transcended its original developer to reach many diverse clients and settings, in many adapted service delivery frameworks, creating a “second wave” in DBT.

Whichever wave you ride, we wish you the best in your application of the skills in this book to your clients in your setting, DBT or otherwise!

Acknowledgments

Thank you to Mike Conner, Mike Olson, Linda Jackson, Claire Zelasko, Teresa Fisher, Shannon Becker, and all our friends at PESI. PESI operates with high integrity, and we appreciate their support.

Many thanks to Hazel Bird, an outstanding editor whose skill and judgment are second to none. Her contributions improved this book beyond measure. And thanks to Julia Fox, who compiled a long list of mindfulness exercises for the book.

A special acknowledgment goes to everyone at Mental Health Systems, PC (MHS). The staff and therapists at MHS are first rate, and we appreciate working alongside talented, committed, and fun people.

Next, we thank the thousands of people we have trained in DBT, who have continuously stimulated our curiosity and passion with their questions and comments. Many of the improvements in this edition come from our experiences together.

Finally, much gratitude goes to past, current, and future clients, who constitute the best teachers and the greatest inspiration. Thank you for your willingness to practice skills in the toughest of situations.

About This Book:

An Orientation for Therapists

Skills training is essential to dialectical behavior therapy (DBT), and the focus of this book is almost exclusively on teaching DBT skills to clients. We refer readers interested in full explanations of DBT theory, philosophy, and interventions to practitioner books such as *Dialectical Behavior Therapy: A Contemporary Guide for Practitioners* (Pederson, 2015) or *Dialectical Behavior Therapy in Private Practice: A Practical and Comprehensive Guide* (Marra, 2005).

Most DBT manuals focus on four main skills modules: Mindfulness, Distress Tolerance, Emotion Regulation, and Interpersonal Effectiveness. This book approaches the skills in these classic modules with fresh perspectives, expanded explanations, and new examples and worksheets. New skills have also been added to these modules on occasion, and a couple of original acronyms have been changed to improve their use. Readers who use a variety of skills manuals will notice these differences and can choose what to teach or apply based on what works best for their clients.

Building on the four original modules, this book expands into six other skills modules:

- **DIALECTICS:** The Dialectics module teaches clients how to find the middle path with thinking and behaviors. As with mindfulness, learning dialectics can be complicated, but the concepts are enormously helpful when understood and applied.
- **COGNITIVE MODIFICATION:** Cognitive skills have largely been absent from DBT. This manual takes a dialectical view of cognitive interventions and adapts them to fit DBT philosophies, teaching clients how to observe and shift thinking without invalidating feelings.
- **PROBLEM-SOLVING:** Clients often try to solve problems through Emotion Mind or through haphazard, trial-and-error approaches that are not grounded in values. The Problem-Solving module teaches clients how to define problems and options and how to take action guided by their

priorities, goals, and values.

- **ADDICTIONS:** This module explains the basics of addictions and assists with pattern recognition, decreasing vulnerability, managing triggers, and applying specialized skills to overcoming addictive behaviors of all types.
- **BUILDING A SATISFYING LIFE:** Research shows the importance of structure, and this module teaches clients how to structure a satisfying life with ongoing and balanced routines.
- **SOCIAL MEDIA:** Sorely needed in this age, the Social Media module teaches clients the essentials of using media responsibility to both harness its resources and avoid its pitfalls.

To be manageable to therapists and clients, each module and its component skills are made up of enough text to explain the concepts but not so much as to overwhelm the reader or compromise the book's direct usefulness in therapy. To an extent, the amount of text on each skill has been designed to make bibliotherapy a doable assignment for the majority of clients. In addition, as you or your clients study the skills in this book, you will notice a fair amount of repetition of concepts. The repetition and overlap are by design so that central ideas can be overlearned. Effective ideas can take on a mantra-like presence in time, orienting clients toward skill use.

Clients can typically start with the Getting Started section for a basic orientation to DBT and then work systematically through the book. An overview module on dialectics comes first and is followed by modules focusing on the original four skill sets. At the end of the book there is an additional section for therapists that covers skills training strategies, practical information about facilitating skills groups, and common clinical policies and related forms. Although this section is intended for therapists, clients can read these sections if interested to further demystify the approach.

What's New In This Edition?

The second edition of this book contains several changes and additions to improve its use. First, the original text underwent extensive rewrites and editing. This included reordering the skills to feature dialectics and the original four modules first followed by the supplemental modules, as well as putting all of the content that primarily addresses therapists at the back of the book. These changes maximize flow and readability.

Second, the binding was changed from a traditional format to a spiral-bound presentation. Seasoned skills trainers who want the book to lay flat during sessions and at the copy machine will appreciate this change. In another format change, this edition adds online access to worksheets and exercises.

Next, in terms of content, this edition elaborates on important concepts such as nutrition and exercise in the Emotion Regulation module and adds guidelines on making friends in the Interpersonal Effectiveness module. It also rolls the previously standalone module on boundaries into Interpersonal Effectiveness. Further, special attention was paid to the Dialectics and Mindfulness modules, with explanations that increase their understandability along with new exercises and practice for both modules. Moreover, and following the spirit of the first edition, completely new DBT skills and skills modules were added, including much-needed modules that address social media use and addictions. While the new skills and modules along with the supplemental skills and modules from the first edition should be considered “add-ons” to the original four DBT modules, there are certainly clients who will benefit from learning them.

Other add-ons to the original edition for the therapist section include suggestions and guidelines for training skills, establishing a curriculum, and developing a timeline for getting through skills curriculums.

Whereas additions were made to improve the manual, there were also a couple of instances of addition by subtraction. Although the Dialectics module was greatly expanded, the acronym MIDDLE Cs from the original edition was dropped based on feedback from therapists and clients who found it to be confusing. Other text or exercises found to be cumbersome or of limited usefulness were also deleted. Sometimes less is more.

Getting Started

Learning the Foundations of DBT Skills Training and Programs

DBT Programs and Therapists: A Brief Introduction

DBT stands for dialectical behavior therapy. It was developed at the University of Washington, Seattle, to treat people who have chronic suicidal thinking and behaviors as well as other behaviors that disrupt their lives. The first population studied with DBT was women with borderline personality disorder (BPD).

Today, we know that DBT can be used across clinical settings for a variety of problems (Dimeff & Koerner, 2007; Marra, 2005; Moonshine, 2008a, 2008b; Pederson, 2015) and that the skills and approach can be used proactively in health and growth models, too.

DBT is an approach that is both highly innovative and highly derivative (dialectically speaking). The developer of DBT largely borrowed and repackaged ideas and interventions that already had substantial research and practice to support their use. In *Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder*, the original book on DBT, the developer wrote: *The strategies used in this and the following chapters no doubt have many things in common with aspects of the other varieties of psychotherapy currently in use . . . In writing the original draft of this volume, I read every other treatment manual I could find, both behavioral and nonbehavioral. I also read books that tell new therapists how they are supposed to behave in therapy. Whenever I found a treatment component or strategy that was the same or similar to one used in DBT, I tried to use similar language to describe it. Thus, in a sense, much of this manual has been “stolen” from preceding manuals. (Linehan, 1993a, p. 200)* In therapy, few ideas are completely new and novel, but really committing to and emphasizing helpful concepts can be hugely effective. One established concept that DBT commits to and emphasizes is that we need to learn skills to replace behaviors that do not work and to address problems that cause difficulties in how we function in life.

Teaching skills is essential to DBT. Skills can be taught in either individual or group settings (or both), and they are the central focus of this book. In addition to skills training, DBT emphasizes an accepting, nonjudgmental, and validating approach to clients. This approach means that DBT therapists work hard to understand their clients' world and acknowledge how their clients' feelings, thoughts, and behaviors make sense given the context of their unique situation.

This validating approach is dialectically balanced with change strategies. Often, therapists will use validation to demonstrate that they understand the client's emotions and perspectives, which then opens the client to try something different with skills and behaviors. The DBT change strategies used by therapists follow traditional behaviorism but also borrow from cognitive, psychodynamic, strategic, and gestalt orientations, among others. DBT approximates a technically eclectic approach, yet it is a standalone therapy in that it has its own guiding theory, called the biosocial theory. This guiding theory postulates that people struggle with emotion dysregulation, which has a reciprocal relationship with invalidating environments. In other words, many people have sensitive and intense emotions, and important people in their lives can have difficulty understanding and supporting them.

Supplementing this great variety of change strategies, DBT incorporates the concepts of mindfulness and the philosophical underpinnings of dialectics, as explained in the Dialectics module.

DBT therapists use specialized tools in therapy such as diary cards and behavior and solution analysis. Diary cards are forms on which clients track symptoms, feelings, and skills; they also help therapists to determine the priorities for treatment and to monitor their clients' progress. Behavior and solution analysis is used to understand behaviors and highlight options to help clients use their skills. In addition to these tools, therapists address safety issues and anything that interferes with treatment (e.g., lateness, absences, nonparticipation) before any other issues.

DBT therapists are sometimes available by phone to coach clients between appointments, and they actively seek consultation from other therapists to stay motivated and effective.

Note that some therapists may not be DBT oriented but may follow another approach and/or integrate approaches along with teaching skills from DBT and other sources. It is fine for therapists to use different approaches: the key is

whether the approach works for their clients. Therapists and clients can address the therapist's approach during a discussion on informed consent prior to treatment.

Some DBT therapists treat clients only in individual sessions whereas other DBT therapists treat groups of clients in DBT programs. DBT programs vary in their design based on differing treatment settings. "How much" DBT clients require depends on their unique needs and the level of care indicated. As a general rule, if clients have ongoing safety issues or are chronically unstable, they will probably do best in a structured, comprehensive DBT program.

Professional opinions vary about whether structured DBT programs should follow the original researched treatment model—called standard DBT—but research is clear that high adherence to treatment models (i.e., therapists' close application of the therapy manual as it was originally researched) has no meaningful effect on clinical outcomes (Webb, DeRubeis, & Barber, 2010), so not all programs have to follow the standard model exactly. Be wary of therapists who talk of "real" DBT and who denigrate other therapists or programs. Effective therapists are backed up by their own clinical outcomes and need not talk down others.

The evidence-based practice of psychology, as defined by the American Psychological Association (2005), recognizes that researched models are not directly applicable to all real-world clients, so changes based on therapists' expertise guided by clients' culture, characteristics, and preferences are frequently indicated. Just as different treatment models may be equally beneficial, a variety of established DBT models are too. In other words, one size does not fit all. Monitoring clinical outcomes and adjusting treatment based on that information are also essential parts of evidence-based practice.

In the real world, DBT programs are developed to meet the needs of unique clients seen in unique settings because clients can be different in important ways from research subjects (e.g., differences in gender, ethnicity, diagnosis, and level of care needed). The approach should be customized to the client. The standard model and other applications of DBT are both valid, and the effectiveness of one over another depends on the needs of the client.

That said, clients choosing a DBT program or therapist should be sure to ask about how clinical outcomes (data showing how effective the treatment is) are monitored and used to adjust the therapy approach for clients and to make

monitored and used to adjust the therapy approach for clients and to make overall program improvements.

Overall, the therapeutic factors of “good” DBT (and other treatments for BPD) will include clear structure, rules, and expectations; a dialectical balance of validation and change; and an accepting, respectful, and active therapist who supports *and* challenges clients (Weinberg, Ronningstam, Goldblatt, Schechter, & Maltsberger, 2011). These factors, applied through active and collaborative alliances between clients and therapists with agreed-upon goals, will strongly predict positive change (Duncan, 2015; Wampold, 2001).

DBT Skills: An Orientation for Clients

DBT skills are life skills. Many people have said they wish these skills had been taught to them in school. A lot of people never had the opportunity to learn skills and perhaps did not have parents or anyone else model a skillful approach to life.

If we do not see examples of skills being used, it is more difficult to learn them. As you study these skills, be on the lookout for instances in which you might see skill use by others around you. Actively learn through seeking connections and through practice. Practice makes you prepared to use skills successfully in your life.

Learning DBT skills is like learning a new language. Try to encourage yourself to minimize frustration. Skills you might not have learned yet will be referenced as you study other skills. This cross-referencing is deliberate, so over time you can see the connections between skills and how they work together.

When we learn languages, words have limited meaning until they are put into sentences and then into conversations. Skills work the same way. Keep connecting skills to other skills until they form chains of new behaviors, creating a more satisfying life. We learn a language through speaking it, and we need to practice skill use every day until it is fluent.

Many of the skills’ names are referred to by their abbreviations (e.g., Opposite to Emotion is often called “O2E”). The relevant abbreviation is included after the name of the skill in the main headings, so you will associate the names with the abbreviations. For example, Wise Mind is abbreviated as WM, so it will appear as Wise Mind (WM) in the heading for the section about this skill. You can also reference the Master Skills List (Appendix 1) to see the skills’ names and abbreviations along with brief explanations.

abbreviations along with their explanations.

All of the teachings and applications have a “core concept” identified. This idea orients you to a primary function or purpose of the skill. As you study and practice each skill, try to see how the core concept might relate to your priorities, goals, and values. If you can make a connection, it will help to motivate you to continue refining that skill until it is a part of your life. Again, remember that learning skills requires daily review and practice.

Work on creating your satisfying life one step at a time, one day at a time. We all have setbacks. These setbacks and problems can be opportunities to learn and grow. Do not give up. There are many people like you on similar journeys. Keep moving and stay open to influencing and being influenced by your world.

Before jumping in, it helps to outline your Life Vision, which you can do using the information in the following section. Your Life Vision will help to guide you through the skills and keep your journey on track.

Your Life Vision (LV)

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Knowing why you want change motivates you to change.

A vision for your life helps to define your priorities, goals, and values and the roads you want to explore on your journey. Fill in each section of this worksheet and refer to it often. Do not judge what you write down: It is your vision based on your wants, needs, and dreams. You will start with a big picture and then fill in details. Imagine you are painting a picture of a life you can work toward.

Look to revise the picture every few months as you grow and improve. We are all works in progress, so changes will happen. Use the information from this exercise for treatment planning with your therapist.

It is difficult for some people to imagine a satisfying life, especially when they feel hopeless and out of options. If this is your situation, fill in what you can today and do not judge yourself for struggling with this exercise. As you learn skills over time, your Life Vision will come into focus.

Life Vision: Big Picture

Describe your priorities, goals, and values in life. What is important to you? What is your motivation to improve? How would you like life to be different? What would/will you be doing if you managed life more effectively? What are your dreams in life?

Describe what you do effectively and what you want to improve on in each of the following areas. See how what you do and what you want to improve on will be part of the big picture. Remember that even small details can impact your Life Vision in important ways. Create one manageable goal for each area that builds on what you do effectively or that addresses a desired improvement. Keep in mind that your goals may change each time you review and revise this section.

Mental health:

Physical health:

Chemical health (avoiding drugs and alcohol):

Education (school or self-education):

Productivity (work or projects):

Volunteering or contributions:

Finances:

Home environment:

Leisure:

Family:

Friends:

Spirituality (religion or other connection):

Choose one to three of your goals in these areas to get started on, and refer to them often.

Describe your strengths and other resources that will help you move toward your goal(s):

Describe how your life will be different when you accomplish your goal(s):

DBT Beliefs About Skills Training

- **CORE CONCEPT:** How we think about ourselves and skills training influences the success of our efforts.

The following beliefs provide a foundation for DBT and skills training. Consider these beliefs and use them to guide your approach to learning and practicing skills.

You are Doing Your Best

Everyone, yourself included, is doing their best in any given moment. None of us want to make mistakes, offend or put off others, or fall into behaviors that do not work. When you or someone else is struggling, remember this belief and dialectically balance it with the next belief.

Skills Help You to Do Better

Even though we are all doing our best, sometimes our best is not enough to be effective. We all have room for improvement, and skills help us to be better.

Skills Apply to All Areas of Your Life

Most of us are skillful sometimes, with some people, in some situations. The trick is to learn how to use skills in our trouble spots: with those people and situations in which we struggle to be effective. Practice your skills across all areas of your life.

No Matter How a Problem Happened or Who Caused it to Happen, You are Responsible for a Skillful Response Sometimes we cause our own problems and sometimes other people cause them. Sometimes stuff just happens. Blaming others and getting into behaviors that make situations worse tends to be self-defeating. Focus less on how something happened or who should be accountable, and focus more on how you can be skillful in the face of difficulties.

Skills Work When You Work the Skills

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines a skill as “the ability to do something that comes from training, experience, or practice.” You have to work the skills for the skills to work. It's that simple. Do not give up. Again, practice your skills to be more skillful.

Common DBT Program Expectations

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Program expectations create a safe and effective environment.

The following guidelines are intended to build and maintain a healthy and effective skills training program for you and others. Note that your particular therapist or program may have different or additional expectations. Whatever the expectations, they are intended to maximize benefit for all.

Be an active participant

Research is clear that the active participation of clients is essential to achieving a successful outcome (for any therapy). You will get out of treatment what you put into it. Commit yourself to throwing your whole self into the process!

Be on time, stay the whole time, and attend all scheduled sessions

Not only is following this tip respectful but it is also essential for the treatment to work for you. You cannot participate and benefit if you miss sessions. Prioritize your attendance and address barriers with your therapist and/or program group. If you have to miss a session or be late, be sure to call ahead.

Offer support, validation, and suggestions to others

Research shows that group cohesion, simply defined as how connected members are to one another, has a major effect on treatment outcomes. Building relationships between members happens through active involvement with one another, which is also a great way to develop your interpersonal effectiveness skills.

See and encourage the best in others (and yourself)

Give others the benefit of the doubt. People are in skills programs because they need to learn and practice new behaviors, including new skills for relating to other people. Remember that we are all doing our best, and continue to help those who are struggling with support, validation, and suggestions.

Never glamorize or promote harmful behaviors to others

Some programs strictly forbid discussing behaviors that could be “contagious” to others. Other programs allow members to discuss harmful behaviors such as self-injury or drug use in general, and not specific, detail. When this is allowed, the goal is to understand the behavior and provide alternatives and solutions in the form of skills. Research shows that behavior contagion can happen for better or worse; in other words, contagious behavior can be harmful or helpful. Never talk about harmful behaviors in ways that might tempt other people to try them out. In all skills programs, we want to promote skillful behavior. Make skill use contagious in your program.

Keep relationships skillful

Romantic and other private relationships are not allowed between members of the same skills program. Any time members spend time together outside the program, those members must commit to not engage in any problem or potentially problematic behaviors together (e.g., drinking alcohol, doing drugs, gambling, and self-injury are strictly forbidden). When relationships negatively affect the treatment process, the relevant therapy-interfering behavior issues will be addressed.

Be willing to ask for, and accept, help

If you allow yourself to be a little vulnerable to others and a lot willing to accept their feedback, other people will too, and you will have an effective program group.

Keep others’ information confidential

Confidentiality is vital for therapy to be a safe place to share. Do not disclose who else is in your DBT program or any information that other people discuss in the program. What is discussed in the program room stays in the program room.

Complete your diary card, homework, and behavioral and solution analysis as assigned

Your therapist(s) and the program have your best interests in mind, and they want to see you do well. Assignments are given for your benefit. If you are struggling with an assignment and need help, or otherwise wish to negotiate

struggling with an assignment and need help, or otherwise wish to negotiate what is assigned, then you must use your interpersonal effectiveness skills. As a rule, DBT therapists will not change expectations and assignments if clients are not skillful in negotiating because they do not want to reinforce unskillful behavior. Further, even when a client is skillful, the expectation or assignment sometimes cannot be changed.

The Diary Card: Monitoring What Is Important

- **CORE CONCEPT:** The diary card is an essential tool to build awareness and skill use.

DBT uses diary cards to track anything that is important to your well-being, treatment, and/or process of change as well as the skills you practice. In many ways the diary card is like an abbreviated journal that guides your progress, and it provides a wealth of information that allows your therapist to support you and set priorities for your time in session together.

Some DBT therapists and programs use a standard diary card that monitors issues common to DBT clients, and other therapists and programs create specialized diary cards for particular client populations (e.g., children, adolescents, people with chronic pain) or even for each individual client. Examples of a standard diary card and a blank one for you to customize are included in this section.

Standard diary cards usually track three key areas of concern for many DBT clients: urges to act on suicide (called “SI,” for suicide ideation), urges to act on self-injury (called “SIB,” for self-injurious behavior), and urges to act on therapy-interfering behaviors (called “TIB,” for therapy-interfering behavior). Urges toward suicidal behavior relate to any action that could or would result in your death; urges toward self-injury relate to any nonlethal action that causes harm and/or tissue damage; and urges toward therapy-interfering behavior relate to any action that would interrupt or otherwise interfere with having an effective course of treatment. Common therapy-interfering behavior includes being late to or absent from appointments, avoiding talking about relevant issues, violating boundaries in relationships, and not following skill plans.

In addition to tracking SI, SIB, and TIB, people with substance abuse and/or other addictions will typically track urges to engage in those addictive behaviors, and people with eating disorders will track urges to engage in overeating, bingeing, purging, and/or restriction and over-exercising, depending on the particular areas of concern.

To round out the diary card, there is space to list the skills you practiced, space to write down feelings, and space to record gratefulness. Some therapists and programs will also have clients monitor their treatment goals and objectives on the diary card.

Diary cards are typically completed every day, preferably at the same time, with information from the previous 24 hours from time it is filled out. Most people spend 5 to 15 minutes to thoughtfully complete the card. Forgetting to fill it out or choosing not to fill it out can be considered TIBs.

Some people feel overwhelmed when they first learn about the diary card, and they may initially struggle to complete it. If that happens for you, stick with it. It will get easier and will be a great aid to you reaching your goals. If you are not sure whether a diary card is worthwhile for you, consider these benefits of completing one consistently:

- What you track and monitor on the diary card is what changes. Observing and describing what you experience and being accountable to yourself to practice skills keep you moving forward.

- You will notice patterns in your emotions, urges, and symptoms over time, and this awareness will make you more effective in using your skills.
- You will be able to validate your emotions and reinforce your efforts and effective skill use, eventually seeing positive changes over time.
- When something is not improving, or even getting worse, you can rally your resources and skills around addressing it.
- You and/or your therapist can quickly see what is happening and determine your priorities, which will better guide your sessions and make better use of your time together.

To get started, you can either use the standard diary card provided or customize your own.

Diary Card Instructions

- **CORE CONCEPT:** The diary card develops awareness and accountability to help you build a satisfying life.

Follow these directions:

- Fill out your diary card *every* day. Do it thoughtfully and bring the card to all sessions.
- For the Medications (RX) section, use Y (yes) if you took all medications as prescribed. If you missed any medications, or if you did not take them as prescribed, use N (no).
- For the Depression (DEP), Anxiety (ANX), and Anger (ANG) sections, use a scale of 10 to 0 and rate the *range* of your feelings by noting the highest and lowest levels (e.g., 8–4 for ANX) or, alternatively, rate your average levels (e.g., 7 for DEP).
- For the Suicidal Ideation (SI), Self-Injurious Behavior (SIB), and Therapy-Interfering Behavior (TIB) sections, use a scale of 10 to 0 and rate the *range* of your urges by noting the highest and lowest levels or, alternatively, rate your average levels. Additionally, use a Y (yes) or N (no) to note whether you *acted* on SI, SIB, or TIB urges or if you took any planning steps toward acting on them (e.g., 9–3/N or, alternatively, 6/N for SIB urges). (Note: People with substance abuse, other addictions, or eating disorder behaviors can record urges and action under either SIB or TIB or under one of the “Other” columns on this diary card.)
- For the Energy section, use a scale of 10 to 0 and rate the *range* of your energy level or, alternatively, rate your average level or energy.
- For the Sleep section, note the total number of hours of sleep. Make a slash mark (/) through the number if the sleep was not restful or was broken.
- For the Eat section, use Y (yes) for *any* efforts to eat healthy foods in a balanced manner. If you did not make any efforts, use N (no).
- For the EX (Exercise) section, use Y for *any* efforts to get movement into your day in a balanced manner. If you did not make any efforts, use N

(no).

- For the Other sections, track any other symptoms, urges, behaviors, or issues important to your treatment.
- Under each category list the skills (see Appendix 1: Master Skills List) you used to address and manage what you recorded in that area (e.g., for DEP, you might list PL, O2E, and DM).
- On the back side of the diary card, write down your feelings, positive events, and what you are grateful for each day.
- Keep your diary cards. They are for you to track and monitor your progress.

If you use the blank diary card:

- Determine, perhaps with the help of your therapist, what you need to and want to monitor on the diary card. You will probably borrow from the categories above as well as develop your own customized areas.
- It is recommended that you follow the same principles and guidelines listed above even if the content of your diary card is different.

Standard Diary Card (Back)

	Feelings	Positive Experiences	Gratefulness
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

Blank Diary Card (Back)

	Feelings	Positive Experiences	Gratefulness
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

The Basics of Behavior

- **CORE CONCEPT:** The basics of behavior help you to understand why you choose certain behaviors and how you can change ineffective ones.

The principles of behaviorism are always happening around us, shaping our and others' behaviors. When we understand some basics about behaviors and how they work, then we are better able to change unhelpful behaviors and to replace them with skills. This section will get you started, but, because understanding behaviors can be complicated, you might want to do some of your own research and explore these concepts further with your therapist or program group.

Reinforcement

Reinforcement means rewarding a behavior so that it happens more often. There are two types of reinforcement, positive and negative. Related to reinforcement, positive does not mean “good” and negative “bad.” Instead, positive means that something desirable is *added* following a behavior, and negative means that something aversive is *removed* following a behavior. Another way to think about it is that there are reinforcements that reward (positive) and reinforcements that relieve (negative). Here are some examples.

Positive reinforcement:

- A child is praised and taken to the park after cleaning his room (the praise and park are both rewards).
- You feel accomplishment after doing your workout (the sense of accomplishment rewards your workout efforts).
- You are paid for completing work (money is a powerful reinforcer because it can be used for a variety of rewards).

Negative reinforcement:

- A person completes a task to stop another person from nagging him or her (the removal of the nagging is a relief and reinforces completing the task).
- You buckle your seatbelt to stop the car from beeping at you (removing

the annoying beep is a relief and promotes seatbelt buckling).

- You practice your skills instead of acting on a problem behavior so you do not have to complete a behavior and solution analysis (the removal of behavior and solution analysis is a relief and reinforces working on your skills).

Of course, behaviors can receive both positive and negative reinforcement at the same time: • A person abuses drugs because taking a drug feels good (positive reinforcement-reward), and it removes painful feelings (negative reinforcement-relief) and withdrawal symptoms (negative reinforcement-relief). Alternatively, a person avoids drug use and (in time) feels clear-headed (positive reinforcement-reward) and does not suffer hangovers (negative reinforcement-relief).

- You practice your skills and receive recognition from the peers in your program (positive reinforcement-reward) and notice that painful emotions are becoming less intense (negative reinforcement-relief).

Punishment

Punishment is intended to decrease behaviors, and, similar to how reinforcement works, punishment can be positive or negative. With positive punishment, something aversive is added following a behavior, and with negative punishment something desirable is removed following a behavior. Here are some examples.

Positive punishment:

- You break a dish and then are scolded by your parent (the scolding is a punishment).
- You show up late for work and get written up by your boss (the write-up is a punishment).
- A person breaks the law and goes to jail (being locked up is a punishment).

Negative punishment:

- You mistreat a friend and lose the friendship (losing a desired relationship is a punishment).

- Your partner gives you the silent treatment after an argument (losing desired company or companionship is a punishment).
- A child cannot stay overnight with a friend after speaking disrespectfully to his or her parent (losing the desired activity is a punishment).

Although punishment is a common response to unwanted behaviors (note that unfortunately effective behaviors can sometimes be punished too), punishment does come with three complicating problems:

- It does not teach something new and more effective in terms of behavior. Without replacement behaviors, people go back to doing the punished behavior in the absence of the punisher.

- It causes hostility in relationships, especially between the person being punished and the person doing the punishing.
- It causes emotional intensity that gets in the way of more effective behavior.

For these reasons it is best to minimize punishing others and maximize teaching and reinforcing positive behaviors to replace and crowd out ineffective ones.

How to reinforce behaviors

The best way to get a new behavior to “stick” is to continuously reinforce it until it is established. That means reinforcing it every time it is performed. For example:

- You receive recognition and praise each time you practice a new skill (or praise yourself!).

- A child gets a star every time he or she completes a homework assignment. The star itself may be sufficient reinforcement, or the child may be able to save up a certain number of stars to cash in on a bigger reinforcement, such as a play date with a friend or a special outing with a parent.

Continuous reinforcement is not necessary once the behavior is established, but periodic reinforcement remains important to maintain the behavior. A powerful reinforcement schedule called “intermittent reinforcement” is often used to maintain desirable behaviors. With intermittent reinforcement, a behavior is rewarded only occasionally in an unpredictable manner (at least to the person receiving the reinforcement). Intermittent reinforcement is how slot machines work; the unpredictable payoffs keep people feeding money into these machines!

It is important to remember that sometimes ineffective behavior remains because others unwittingly reinforce it on an intermittent schedule. For example: • A parent gives in to tantrum behavior every so often, so the child continues to use tantrums.

- A person intimidates others, and some people acquiesce to the behavior.

Always be careful what you reinforce!

Shaping behaviors

Shaping means reinforcing steps toward a goal behavior. This behavioral technique is especially helpful when a goal behavior is too big of a jump and needs to be developed gradually. For example: • Someone is afraid to complete a shopping trip at the grocery store. First the person goes to the store to get one easily found item. Next the person goes to the store to purchase three items. Through successive steps the person is eventually able to complete an entire shopping trip successfully. Reinforcement is provided at each successful step.

- A person who is inactive goes for a 5-minute walk, then a 10-minute walk, and so on until the person can walk continuously for an hour. Again, each successful step is rewarded.

Generalizing behaviors

Many of us learn (or already have) effective behaviors in some areas or with some people, but we cannot yet do the behavior in another area or with another person. Generalizing happens when the behavior reliably transfers to the new area or person. For example: • You practice assertiveness skills with your therapist in session and then generalize assertiveness to other people and situations (e.g., with your partner, with people at work) • A person practices distress tolerance behaviors in hospital, and then transfers those skills to his or her home environment.

General behavior change strategies

Learning to be more effective and developing new behaviors takes effort, and remembering the basics of behavior can be tricky, especially when you are in the

middle of it all. As you work through this book you will learn many new skills and strategies that will help you build a more satisfying life, and you will learn a lot more about effective behavior, perhaps becoming a bit of an expert yourself. Here are a few ideas to get you started: • **Observe the skillful behaviors of an effective person:** What skills does he or she use? Act “as if” and see if you can emulate the behavior of this person.

- **Strive to become a model for others with your skillful behavior:** Think, “What do I want to show others?” and “Who can I model effective behavior to?” Practice your skills and start shaping more effective behaviors to demonstrate to others.
- **Understand your vulnerabilities that set up ineffective behavior:** Too little self-care and stress management set people up to act on problem behaviors. What are your vulnerabilities? Not enough quality sleep? Missing meals? Lack of exercise? Getting behind on work at home, school, or work? Identify your vulnerabilities and use skills to address them to short-circuit acting on ineffective behaviors.
- **Crowd out ineffective behaviors:** Resolve to practice at least five skills before engaging in a behavior you want (and need) to change (e.g., self-injury, overeating or bingeing, substance use behaviors). Better yet, practice dialectical abstinence with your harmful behavior(s) and commit to using your comprehensive skills plan (e.g., a safety plan or a relapse prevention plan). When you start meeting your needs and passing time through skillful behavior, eventually there is no “room” for self-defeating and harmful behaviors.
- **Give yourself credit:** Your environment may or may not reward you. Even if you do receive reinforcement from others for using skills, it is still important that you learn to praise yourself for efforts and accomplishments. You might even develop your own reward program for skillful behavior.
- **Practice your skills until they become self-reinforcing:** Some skills have immediate rewards and others have delayed benefits. The more time and consistency you put into skillful behaviors, the more rewarding they become in and of themselves. Being skillful feels good!

Using Behavior and Solution Analysis to Create Change

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Behavior and solution analysis helps you to understand and change problem behaviors.

Behavior analysis (also called chain analysis or change analysis) is a tool used to understand what precedes and follows a behavior, usually called a “problem behavior” or “target behavior.” The more we understand about our behaviors, the more options we have for changing ineffective ones. It should be noted, though, that behavior analysis can be used to understand more about effective behaviors too: what helps to prompt them, and how the results of performing those behaviors differ from the consequences of target behaviors. Understanding more about our effective behaviors can lead us to strengthen them.

Do not be intimidated by behavior analysis. Although it can get quite detailed, the simplest behavior analysis is “A-B-C.” What are the **A**ntecedents leading to the **B**ehavior of interest, and what **C**onsequences follow it? When a sequential, step-by-step picture of the antecedents and consequences of any behavior is established, you can look at each step to problem-solve with skills or actions that will create positive change. These problem-solving steps are called “solution analysis.”

Behavior analysis starts by identifying the specific target behavior. Examples might include drinking or getting high, self-injury, not participating in therapy, missing an appointment, not taking medications, or breaking a program rule. After the behavior is identified, the prompting event, or what triggered or set off the behavior, is described. Then, leading up to the prompting event, it is necessary to investigate what made you more vulnerable to acting on the target behavior in the first place. For example, did you experience poor sleep, miss medications, get into a fight, or leave open opportunities to engage in unskillful behavior?

Once the target behavior, vulnerabilities, and the prompting event are well defined, you can begin to establish the links that bridge the prompting event to the target behavior. Potential links include emotions, thoughts, physical sensations, and other behaviors leading up to the target behavior. This step slows

sensations, and other behaviors leading up to the target behavior. This step slows down the action so that you can see everything that comes between a prompting event and a behavior, building awareness of what is often missed unless explored in detail.

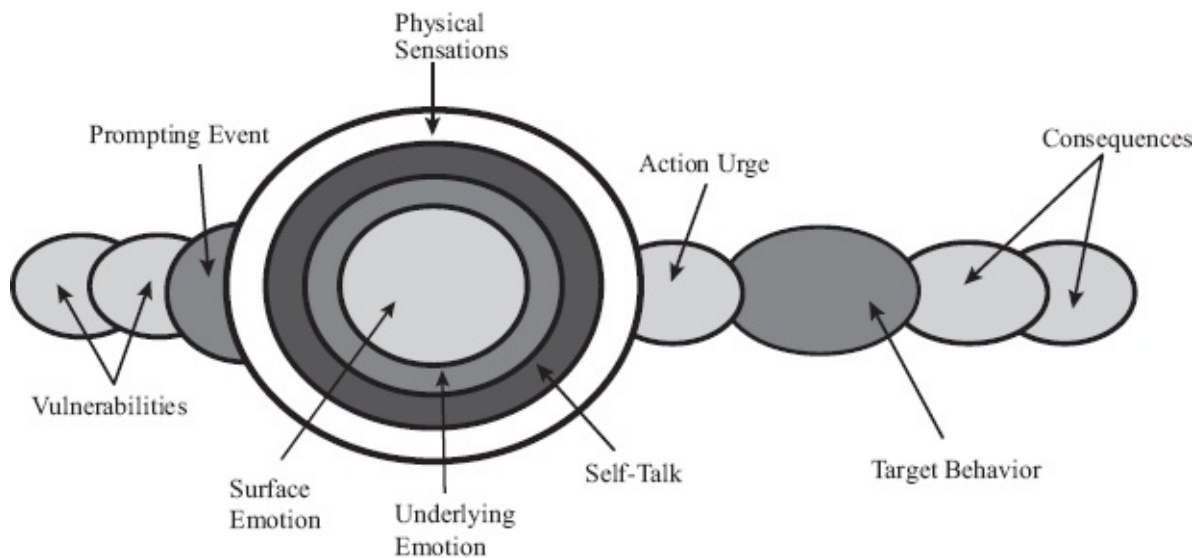
The last part of the behavior analysis is identifying the consequences of the target behavior. Consequences involve the impacts of the behavior on you, on other people, and on the environment. Some consequences reinforce the target behavior while most other consequences are detrimental. It is also important to see whether certain consequences become vulnerabilities for future target behaviors. For example, if a consequence was feeling shame, that feeling could make one vulnerable to escaping that painful emotion through a target behavior such as self-injury.

With the sequence from vulnerabilities through consequences established, you can then develop the solution analysis for each step, starting with skills to reduce vulnerabilities and ending with skills for dealing effectively with the consequences, including making appropriate amends with others by repairing mistakes and correcting whatever harm was done.

As you complete a behavior and solution analysis, remember to be nonjudgmental and yet accountable to yourself. The goal of this tool is to help you apply your skills so you can be more effective next time.

The following pages contain sample behavior and solution analyses. Use the form or forms that work best for you. Also note that many of the worksheets in this manual follow the basics of behavior analysis: building awareness of what comes before and after particular behaviors in order to problem-solve with skills.

Visual Behavior and Solution Analysis



Directions

The more you understand about behaviors you want to change, the more you can be effective in the use of your skills to meet that goal. Start anywhere on the behavior and solution analysis and work forward and/or backward to figure out each link, then identify other skills you could use or choices you could make with your new awareness. Remember to be *nonjudgmental* with yourself, the situation, and others. The following explains each identified link, but remember that you can add as many links as you need to understand what happened and that *every link presents an opportunity for change*. Also, look for skills that you might already have been using but not have noticed or for which you need more practice. The chances are you have been using skills!

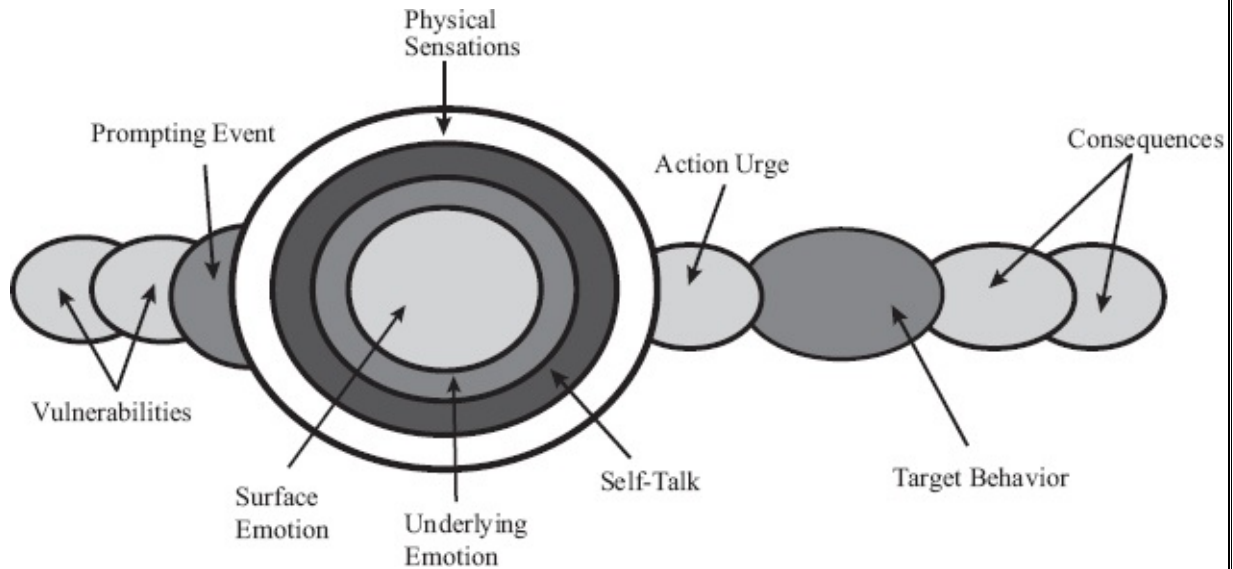
- **Vulnerabilities:** What made you vulnerable to acting on the prompting event with the target behavior? Examples might include not doing self-care, having a tough day, getting into a conflict, or other stressors. Be as specific as possible.
- **Prompting event:** What triggered or set off the target behavior? Describe in nonjudgmental, descriptive words.
- **Surface emotion:** What emotion(s) occurred after the prompting event that was/were most easily noticed?
- **Underlying emotion:** Was/were there an emotion or emotions further below the surface? Examples might include feeling hurt or embarrassed underneath anger or feeling guilty underneath depression.

- **Self-talk:** What automatic thoughts or beliefs were happening that fed your emotions and the following action urge?
- **Physical sensations:** What was happening in and with your body?
- **Action urge:** What did the emotions and other factors motivate or pull you to do? This link is a critical moment of choice in changing the behavior, knowing that we do not need to act on our urges.
- **Target behavior:** This is the behavior you want (and need) to change. You will want to develop skillful alternatives to this behavior, but remember that using skills at earlier links might effectively short-circuit the behavior too.
- **Consequences:** What happened after the behavior? What did you gain and/or lose, in both the short term and the long term? Did the outcomes cause a new vulnerability or stressor and/or cycle back to the beginning again?

Solutions

At each step, brainstorm skills or choices that could create behavior change and more effective consequences. Also plan for how you can deal skillfully with the consequences you are experiencing, *including how you may need to make amends with others.*

Visual Behavior and Solution Analysis



Describe your vulnerabilities:

Describe the prompting event (what triggered or set off the target behaviors?):

Describe your emotion on the surface (the one mostly easily noticed):

Describe any underlying emotions (the ones hidden underneath):

Describe your self-talk:

Describe your physical sensations:

Describe the action urge:

Describe the behavior:

Describe the consequences:

Solutions:

Fill in alternative skills and choices that would be more effective at each step.

Consider how these alternatives would have altered the consequences for you and for other people.

Describe how you will use skills effectively to deal with the consequences that exist:

Describe who else was affected by your choice(s):

Describe how you will make amends with these people (if appropriate):

Behavior and Solution Analysis: Short Form

Name: _____ Date: _____

PURPOSE: To get your needs met more effectively through problem-solving ineffective behaviors and planning for skillful behaviors.

What was the target behavior? Be specific.

What led up to the target behavior? Give specifics of what made you vulnerable and each factor (e.g., emotions, thoughts, behaviors, sensations, situations) that came before the problem behavior.

What did you gain or expect to gain by making the choice you did? How did you think it might help or benefit you? Did it meet your needs?

What were the negative consequences of your choice for you and others?

What skills could you use to meet your needs more effectively next time (in the short term and long term)?

Short-term plan:

Long-term plan:

Behavior and Solution Analysis: Long Form

Name: _____ Date: _____

PURPOSE: To get your needs met more effectively through problem-solving ineffective behaviors and planning for skillful behaviors.

Step 1: Describe the target behavior

What did you do?

How did you do it?

Where did you do it?

When did you do it?

Who else was involved?

Step 2: Identify what was going on in your life before the target behavior

What event set off the target behavior?

What were the events leading up to the event that set off the target behavior?

Which of the events leading up to the target behavior were the most important?

What were you feeling prior to and during the target behavior?

What were you thinking prior to and during the target behavior?

What need(s) were you trying to meet with the target behavior?

At what point did you make your decision to use the target behavior?

Step 3: Identify the consequences of the target behavior

How may you have benefited from the target behavior (in the short and long term)?

How may you have been hurt by the target behavior (in the short and long term)?

What changes happened with the following (in the short and long term):

Emotions:

Thoughts:

Physical sensations:

Behaviors:

Events around you:

The way others treat you:

Step 4: Identify what DBT skills you could use to be more effective in a similar situation (Review steps 1, 2, and 3, and look for ways to insert DBT skills at each step and substep.) What DBT skills could you have used or could you use next time when similar events take place?

What consequences (or potential consequences) to the target behavior might help you to control or avoid that behavior in the future?

How can you remove access (i.e., burn the bridge) to the target behavior?

What else might you do to get your needs met in an effective way that would not hurt you, others, and/or your treatment?

Step 5: Summarize the problem-solving in Steps 1–4

What were the most important events leading up to the target behavior?

What was the target behavior?

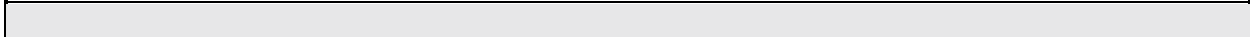
What were the consequences of the target behavior?

What DBT skills can you use and at what stage could you use them to get your needs met more effectively when similar events happen?

What is the earliest point at which you could insert skills?

Step 6: Identify resources/assets you have to implement DBT skills instead of using the target behavior What resources/assets do you have available that will assist your DBT skill use?

Additional input from your therapist, group, or significant other(s):



Dialectics

Introduction to Dialectics

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Dialectics are syntheses of opposites that lead to a balance in life.

Dialectics refers to a philosophy that recognizes the tensions and conflicts that happen within us, between us, and in the world at large. In dialectics, we seek to synthesize and resolve these opposite tensions to achieve more balance in thought and behavior.

To use a straightforward example, many of us view situations as cut and dried, or black and white. However, life is typically more complicated than the all-or-nothing dichotomies we get caught in.

Using dialectics, we see the relative truth on both sides and the resulting synthesis moves us away from the extremes of black and white into shades of gray. We then discover the middle ground and/or what we previously missed in our thinking, in our behavior, and in how we relate to others. This discovery leads us to more effective behavior.

A few basic assumptions make up dialectics:

- We experience opposing tensions, often perceived as contradictory. As noted above, these dialectical tensions can be internal or can happen between people, and they may arise only in certain situations. For example, many people in therapy experience tension between doing what is familiar (staying the same) and doing something new (change).
- Each position in tension or conflict has its own truth or validity, depending on the vantage point. There is no such thing as absolute or complete truth, and even the most contradictory ideas or forces have their own validity and are interrelated. No one position can exist without a relationship to another, with each part making up a larger whole. In the

present example, there are valid reasons to stay the same and valid reasons to change, and all of those reasons are intertwined.

- Resolution of dialectical tensions or conflict occurs when one opposing force gradually or suddenly overcomes another, creating movement, change, a new synthesis, and ultimately a new dialectical tension. In this “stay the same versus change” example, each resolution point between the tensions leads to a movement of one type or another. Choosing to try something different, such as using a skill, is an easily seen change. But even choosing to stay the same creates change too, though it is not always as easily seen. For example, resisting change and continuing to do what is familiar may lead to an escalation of a problem. As the problem escalates, the push for change might become more pronounced, creating a new dialectical tension.
- We all continually experience opposing tensions that evolve, and we make the most effective choices when we seek to understand the dialectic nature of these conflicts, carefully consider our options, and remain open to adjusting our course with the winds—controlling what we can while accepting what we cannot.

As you proceed through treatment, you may experience a couple common dialectical tensions.

Self-acceptance versus making personal changes

The interrelatedness of these concepts is apparent. Self-acceptance is often the prerequisite to making personal changes (and is change itself). There are times and places for both. DBT therapists consider the movement between acceptance and change to be the most fundamental dialectic in DBT.

Doing your best versus needing to do better

At any given time you (and others) are doing the best that you can with what you have. When you allow this assumption, you find compassion and self-acceptance. Yet doing your best is dialectically counterbalanced by the need to do better. That is the reason you are practicing skills: to create a more satisfying life.

Confusing? Like any philosophy, dialectics can be difficult to understand. The following pages continue to detail basic principles of dialectics, list frequent

dialectical conflicts, highlight dialectics in other DBT skills, and provide opportunities for understanding and practice. In time you will be thinking and acting dialectically!

Dialectical Principles

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Following these dialectical principles will lead to dialectical thought and behavior.

Step out of the black and white

Thinking in black and white is characterized by extremes in which we take on either one position or the opposite, or bounce back and forth between them. It is either–or, all or nothing. Try to avoid extremes unless an extreme response fits your priorities, goals, and values and the needs of the situation as viewed from Wise Mind (this will be rare). Examples of extremes include: • You either intensely love or hate your partner, friend, coworker, *etc.*

- You think you or someone else is all bad or all good.
- You approach others in an overly strict or overly lenient manner.
- You do not start a task or change unless you think you can do it all at once.
- You separate viewpoints into right and wrong categories.

I am black and white with the following people and/or in the following situations: _____

Move into shades of gray in thoughts, behaviors, relationships, and situations Thinking in shades of gray is characterized by understanding other perspectives and adopting middle-ground behaviors. Exploring the “grays” can seem risky when you are used to black and white, but discovering the complexity of people and the world is part of dialectics. Examples of moving into the gray include: • You show respect and love and/or regard to your partner, friend, coworker, *etc.* even when he or she performs behaviors you do not like.

- You recognize that you and other people have both positive and negative qualities.
- You approach others in a centered manner, observing and respecting boundaries and being appropriately flexible as needed.
- You start tasks and initiate changes that you are able to do now.

- You avoid separating viewpoints into right and wrong categories and notice the relative truth of different viewpoints. You seek to understand rather than judge.

I can move into shades of gray with the people and situations listed above by:

Be flexible and adaptable

Meet other people and situations where they are at and learn to do what is needed. Recognize and respect that there are many ways of seeing things and many ways to approach the same situation, bringing options to your life. Without losing your center, practice bending from time to time, just as a strong tree bends in heavy winds. To illustrate flexibility and adaptability:

- You decide to “go with the flow” instead of trying to control everything.
- You let other people have their way at times and/or compromise.
- You try a new or novel way to accomplish a task or goal.
- You listen and find the validity in a viewpoint you disagree with (i.e., you find something to agree with about the viewpoint).
- You remain open to what each moment has to offer.

I can be more flexible with people, in situations, and in life by:

Act from your values and do what works!

Although dialectics often call for entering the grays, being flexible, and finding the middle ground, *true balance comes from maintaining a solid core*. Dialectics do not mean being wishy-washy, being a chameleon, or having an “anything goes” attitude. Remember to stay centered within yourself and in relation to other people and the world through connecting with your values and doing what is effective for the moment, in both the short and the long term. This includes practicing dialectical abstinence with harmful and/or addictive behaviors.

Dialectics 1: Conflicts 1

CORE CONCEPT: Identify shades of gray in common dialectical conflicts.

The following are common examples of dialectical tensions. For each conflict, identify what is valid about each side of the dialectic and then identify middle options. You can write notes here, write on a separate sheet of paper, or plug a conflict into the worksheet Dialectics 2: Conflicts 2. If a conflict does not seem to apply to your life, imagine how it might in a different situation or for a different person.

Self-acceptance versus change:

Wanting a different life while resisting change:

Being the real you versus being vulnerable to others:

Structure versus freedom:

Novelty versus predictability:

Fear of needing people conflicting with fear of being independent:

Desire to succeed while actively destroying your progress:

Setting goals that are too easy or goals that are too hard:

Caring for others and still maintaining boundaries:

Balance focusing on yourself versus focusing on others:

Letting go of control to gain control:

Seeing only pros or only cons of a situation:

Not being a doormat and not being demanding:

Asserting your values while respecting the values of others:

Being too passive or too aggressive:

Both being capable and asking for help:

Being too private versus being an open book:

Doing your best and needing to do better:

Balance of “old” self with “new” self:

“Want-tos” versus “have-tos”:

Taking a situation personally when it is not about you:

Wanting perfection and knowing you are human:

An all-or-nothing approach to anything:

Picking your battles:



Dialectics 2: Conflicts 2

CORE CONCEPT: Use this worksheet when stuck in a dialectical conflict.

Describe your conflict (be specific):

Describe the other skills you need to be dialectical (e.g., Wise Mind, Nonjudgmental Stance, FAST, GIVE, DEAR MAN):

Describe your current “place” on the dialectic and how it makes sense (find the context and validate it!):

Describe the opposite (or another) position and how it makes sense (find the context and validate it!):

Describe the balance or synthesis of both positions and how this dialectic makes sense: _____

Describe your specific dialectical action plan (your movement toward change): _____

Describe how your life will be different when you resolve this conflict:

Dialectics 3: Exercises

CORE CONCEPT: Practice these exercises to be more dialectical in your life.

The following exercises can bring about dialectical balance and assist you in seeing options in your life. Remember that in dialectics we can see both sides: Experiencing a difficult problem or crisis does not mean that we are hopelessly stuck, and seeing another side of the problem or crisis does not invalidate how serious or painful it is to you. Remember to validate yourself and look across the dialectic.

Dialectical exercise 1: What is going right?

Often we focus on what is wrong and neglect the other side of the dialectic. Asking what is going right, well, or in your direction, however small, helps to bring another perspective and balance.

EXAMPLES:

- Someone does poorly on a test but also has an opportunity to use a tutor or complete an assignment to gain extra credit, or may be doing well in another subject or area.
- A significant problem occurs at work but you have the knowledge and/or support to address it effectively.
- Your child has a disability but shows resiliency and a positive attitude.

If you feel down, what is going right, well, or in your direction?

Dialectical exercise 2: What are your resources?

We often think of our limitations and overlook the resources that will help us reach our goals.

EXAMPLES:

- You are out of shape but have running shoes, exercise equipment, a

gym membership, or a safe place to walk.

- You experience depression but have a therapist, self-help books, and DBT skills to practice.
- A person cannot currently get ahead in his or her current job but has access to classes to advance his or her career or has in-demand job skills and can look for new employment.

With any particular problem, what are your resources?

Dialectical exercise 3: Is there a silver lining?

Few things in the world are all good or all bad. When a painful situation occurs, consider whether there is a silver lining. Sometimes problems and even tragedies reveal opportunities.

EXAMPLES:

- A person is served divorce papers and now has the opportunity to reinvest in hobbies and other interests given up during the marriage or has the opportunity to find a more suitable mate in time.
- You lose your house in foreclosure and find relief in not struggling to make a high mortgage payment every month.
- You change schools but have the chance to have a fresh start and make new friends.

Pick a current problem you are experiencing. What is the silver lining?

Dialectical exercise 4: The dialectics of control

Some people have more of an external locus of control. They think that things happen to them, they frequently blame others, and they miss opportunities to make effective changes that are actually under their control. Other people have more of an internal locus of control and believe that they have influence over their environment and can take charge of their choices and lives.

EXAMPLES:

- One person believes he will fail a test no matter how hard he studies

whereas another person believes that her preparation will make a significant difference in the outcome.

- One person thinks she cannot ever be happy and does little to try to improve her life whereas another person invests himself in creating a happy life.
- You blame others for the problems in your life instead of taking responsibility for your choices and behavior.

Think about a problem you have. Where is your locus of control and would you be more effective if you shifted it?

Dialectical exercise 5: All or something!

Often we get in all-or-nothing places in regard to change. All or something means that, if you cannot totally throw yourself into the change process, at least do something that moves you closer to a goal. Some movement is preferable to no movement!

EXAMPLES:

- A person who wants a healthier lifestyle overhauls his diet and starts exercising every day.
- You are overwhelmed by a dirty and disorganized home so you clean one part of one room.
- One person fills out and practices a skills plan to solve a problem while another person starts reading and thinking about skills to practice someday.

Think about a problem you have. How can you throw yourself totally into change or at least do something toward the change?

Dialectical exercise 6: Compassion for others

We can often be harsh in our assessments of others, holding them to high standards and being judgmental. Sometimes compassion is a better route for both others and ourselves. Note that being compassionate does not mean that people automatically get a “pass” for ineffective behavior. We can be both compassionate and accountable, which is dialectic.

EXAMPLES:

- You get cut off in traffic. Rather than getting angry, you think that the offending driver may be having a bad or stressful day.
- Your child is having a tantrum and you remember that being a toddler is no walk in the park.
- A person's boss is critical of her employees. That person recognizes that the boss is overwhelmed by too much responsibility and wants the business to do well.

Think about a person with whom you are struggling. How can you be compassionate toward this person?

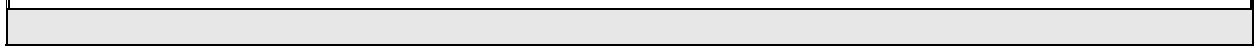
Dialectical exercise 7: Movement through scaling techniques

Sometimes it is difficult to imagine big changes happening in your life. When you struggle with thinking about large changes, you can conceptualize smaller changes using scaling techniques. Start by listing the severity of your problem from 10 (extreme problem) to 0 (no problem). After you have rated your problem, consider what you would be doing differently in terms of behavior if the problem improved by one or more points. Then commit yourself to your new behavior(s) to create the incremental change.

EXAMPLES:

- An overweight person rates his problem as an 8. He concludes that when his problem is at a 6 he will be going to his local health club at least three times a week. He commits to going to the club.
- You are depressed and rate your depression's severity at a 10. You think that at a 9 you will be actively sharing and talking in your program group. You start to talk more in program.
- A parent has a child with behavior problems rated at a 7. The parent says that when the problems are below a 5 she will be having more fun with her child. The parent starts engaging in more playtime with her child.

Think about a problem you have and rate it from 10 to 0. What behavior(s) will you be doing when the problem improves by two points? Remember to do what you identify!

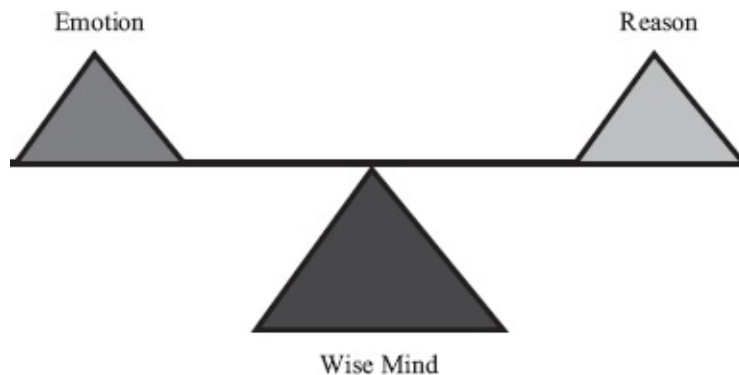


Dialectics Applied to Other Skills

■ **CORE CONCEPT:** Dialectics are central to DBT skills.

We can apply dialectics to many of the skills and concepts learned in DBT. Even when dialectics are not explicitly mentioned, it may be useful to think about how they apply.

In the Mindfulness module, balancing emotion and reason to enter Wise Mind is a dialectic.



It is common for emotions and reason to conflict with one another, and finding the balance between emotion and reason in a given situation depends on what works. When we go too far in one direction—way into Emotion Mind or way into Reason Mind—the need for the opposite is created. To reach a resolution we need to respect both emotions and reason, and creating balance between the two is what brings us to Wise Mind, that centered place where we can validate our emotions *and* make effective choices.

Another example in the Mindfulness module is the dialectical balance between attending to emotional (or other) pain in life versus redirecting attention to a pleasant distraction. There are times to relate mindfully to your pain and times to turn your mind to other people, to your environment, or to a skill from another module. Again, what we chose to be mindful of is based on effectiveness: Attend to what is needed in the moment without judgment.

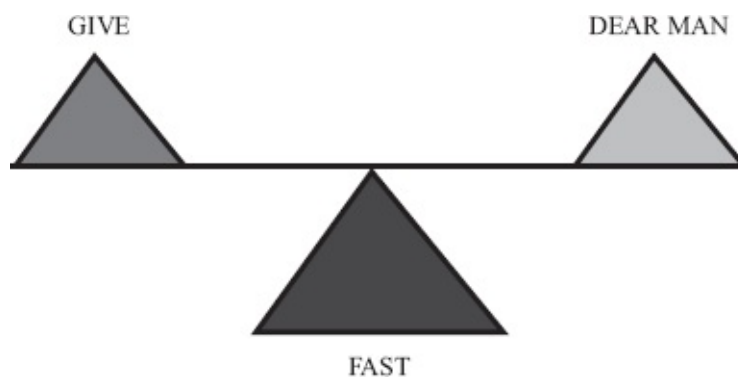
In the Distress Tolerance module there is a basic dialectic tension between tolerating a problem and surviving it through the use of distress tolerance skills

versus actively working on solving the problem. Distraction is helpful when you cannot solve the problem in the short term, but it becomes counterproductive if it becomes overused and you continue to distract from problems you are actually able to resolve. In other words, there are times to distract yourself from problems and times to get down to solving them.

There are other dialectics in the Distress Tolerance module too, such as using distress tolerance skills that are energizing versus using distress tolerance skills that are soothing, or getting into distress tolerance skills that are self-focused versus getting into skills that focus on other people. Yet another example from distress tolerance is the Pros and Cons skill, which is a dialectical exercise in and of itself. The very nature of Pros and Cons highlights how choices can have both upsides and downsides to consider when resolving conflicts, making choices, and solving problems.

In the Emotion Regulation module, dialectics can be seen in achieving balance through self-care skills that include regulating diet, sleep, and exercise. To use self-care, we frequently have to make difficult choices that involve compromise. Choosing a healthy diet may result in giving up certain foods you love, getting enough sleep may mean going to bed early and missing out on other activities, and engaging in exercise often requires prioritizing it over other demands. Some emotion regulation skills also strike natural dialectical balances, such as Build Positive Experience (fun) counterbalancing Build Mastery (responsibility) and Opposite to Emotion (acting opposite to ineffective behaviors that emotions pull you into) counterbalancing Mood Momentum (continuing to engage in behaviors that generate positive emotions that you want).

Next, dialectics underscore the skills in the Interpersonal Effectiveness module. In particular, the skills GIVE and DEAR MAN require a dialectical balance in order to be effective.



The balance between others' wants and needs (captured by the GIVE skill) and our wants and needs (captured by the DEAR MAN skill) is important for successful relationships. If you get too focused on others or too focused on yourself, conflicts are likely to arise. To resolve those conflicts, you will need to reestablish balance in your relationships. To find an effective balance, we often we rely on our FAST skills (e.g., being fair and sticking to values) to guide how much GIVE versus DEAR MAN we use in relationships.

The examples mentioned above just scratch the surface. As you work through this book, try to notice how dialectics apply to other skills and their use too.

Distress Tolerance

Introduction to Distress Tolerance

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Distress tolerance helps us cope with crisis without making our situation worse.

We sometimes cope with intense emotions in ways that make our situation worse or cause us to neglect our long-term priorities, goals, and values. This coping may work in the short term, but it sabotages our long-term Life Vision. For example, drinking, using drugs, or engaging in self-injury often relieves stress, tension, and emotional pain, but none of these ways of coping are sustainable in our lives. Further, ineffective coping behaviors often cause additional emotional intensity and pain in the long term. Distress tolerance skills provide alternatives to help us cope in the short term without making our situation worse, and they keep us true to our priorities, goals, values, and Life Vision.

One key to distress tolerance skills is making sure that we consistently practice them when we are not in distress. Skills work when we work the skills because practice is how we gain competency with skills. Trying to use skills in a crisis without previously practicing them would be like trying to hit a home run in a big ballgame when you have never picked up a bat. Fortunately, distress tolerance skills are often enjoyable to do in and of themselves, so practicing them does not have to feel like a chore.

Another key to distress tolerance is putting a proactive plan together. We often end up reacting to life situations rather than having a plan for how to respond to them. It is difficult to be effective when we react rather than respond, and the plan we create while in Reason Mind or Wise Mind provides needed balance and direction when in extremes of Emotion Mind.

Luckily, we can simply look to our past to make plans for our future. From our histories, we can identify our vulnerabilities and triggering situations and create a responsive plan that combines the effective coping behaviors we already do

with the new skills we are learning. Note that your distress tolerance plan will include skills from the other modules too, as you have to combine skills from all modules to be most effective.

Once you have an effective distress tolerance plan, you can more easily strike the dialectical balance between mindful acceptance and tolerance of emotions (especially painful ones) and effective distraction. With that balance, you can validate your emotions while you also cope in healthy ways.

Distress Tolerance: Guidelines for Use

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Understand when and how to use distress tolerance to increase effectiveness.

Distress tolerance skills are more effective when the guidelines listed here are followed. Like other skills, the effectiveness of distress tolerance is based on knowing when to use these skills and on recognizing their limitations.

As a rule, distress tolerance is used when we cannot solve a problem. If we *can* solve a problem and it is an okay time to do so, solving it will usually be the best strategy.

However, there are times when we have the solution to our problem but it is not a good time to solve it. In these cases, we can use distress tolerance until we can solve the problem at a better time.

At other times, we need to use distress tolerance to soothe our emotions before we can solve a problem effectively. In other words, sometimes we know the solution and it is an okay time to proceed, except we are not in Wise Mind enough to be effective. In these cases, we might benefit from distress tolerance before problem-solving.

Ask yourself the following three questions to help you to decide between solving a problem and using distress tolerance: • Am I able to solve the problem? Yes or no. If no, use distress tolerance.

- Is it an okay time to solve the problem? Yes or no. If no, use distress tolerance.
- Am I in Wise Mind enough to solve the problem? Yes or no. If no, use distress tolerance.

If you answer yes to all three questions, work on solving your problem instead of using distress tolerance.

If you answer yes to these three questions but avoid attending to and solving your problems, you will eventually end up overwhelmed. It is important to avoid the use of distress tolerance to distract from life, because excessive use of

distraction leads to our problems piling up.

When we cannot attend to or solve our problems, distress tolerance skills replace unhealthy coping behaviors such as self-injury, drinking and drug use, and other behaviors that can damage self-respect or cause other short-and long-term problems.

Nonetheless, we are sometimes reluctant to give up our unhealthy coping behaviors even when we know they are destructive to ourselves or others. If you are unsure about giving up a behavior, you may start by simply increasing your options through learning and practicing distress tolerance skills. Over time, you may have the confidence to let go of your old ways of just surviving.

As you learn and practice these skills, remember that they are meant to be used in the short term. We need to have many distress tolerance skills ready to use in cases when a crisis lasts for a long time, so keep adding more of these skills to your “toolbox.” The more we explore and practice the skills in this module, the more we can manage ourselves and our lives—maybe even proactively changing our vulnerabilities and emotions.

Finally, remember to use your mindfulness skills along with your distress tolerance skills. Distress tolerance skills are much less effective if we continue to focus mentally on our crisis. Mindfulness of the skills we use is the foundation for successful use.

As you start to use distress tolerance skills, it is helpful to consider the following dialectics: Attend to the problem versus distract from the problem, and be mindful of the emotion versus be mindful of the distraction. The key to navigating these dialectics is considering the most effective choice in the moment.

Distress Tolerance 1: Crisis and Safety Plan

CORE CONCEPT: Develop a plan to manage crisis and safety issues.

Begin to fill out this plan and continue to add to it as you learn more skills. Treat this plan as a “living” document: It needs to be continuously reviewed, practiced, and updated.

Make several copies and always know where to find your plan. It is hard to know what to do when you are in the heat of the moment. That is why you have a written plan.

Give copies to the people in your support system and discuss your use of the plan proactively. Again, practice, practice, practice—practice makes you prepared to be effective in life.

My reasons for managing crisis effectively and/or staying safe: List all of your priorities, goals, values, and people that matter to you. These are your “whys” that motivate you to use the plan:

My strengths and resources: List what you have going for you. Ask for help if you are unsure:

Warning signs: These are the signals that you may be in crisis or unsafe or about to be in crisis or unsafe. Be as specific as possible. Look to your history for clues: _____

Feelings: Ask yourself what you are/were feeling before or during this time:

Thoughts: Ask yourself what you are/were thinking before or during this time:

Behaviors: Ask yourself what you are/were doing and/or not doing before or during this time: _____

Sensations: Ask yourself what you are/were experiencing physically or in your body before or during this time:

Environment: Ask yourself what your environment is/was like and/or what is/was happening in your environment before or during this time:

Key triggers: Ask yourself what sets off a crisis and/or being unsafe for you:

Barriers to skill use: List what will get in the way of using your skills and this plan *and* list the skills you will use to address each barrier:

Burn the bridges: Write how you will remove the means to act on urges (be specific): _____

Self-care skills to use: List all of the ways you can care for yourself during this time: _____

Distress tolerance skills to use: List specific behaviors:

My personal support system: List names and numbers of people/resources you can call, when they are accessible, and the specific interpersonal and other skills you will need to use these supports:

My professional support system: List names and numbers of people/resources you can call, when they are accessible, and the specific interpersonal and other skills you will need to use these supports:

My medications and dosages:

My hospital of choice:

My commitment: I commit to practicing my plan proactively and during times of crisis. I further commit to be safe and call 911 or go to the hospital *before* acting on suicidal urges.

Signed by Client: _____ Date: _____

****Original to client; copy to chart****

Distract with ACCEPTS

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Mindfully practice distraction skills when in high distress.

When we experience distress or a crisis or feel unsafe, we have a few choices. We can work on problem-solving, be mindful of our painful emotions, or work on distraction skills.

Use the acronym ACCEPTS to remember the building blocks (Activities, Contributing, Comparisons, Emotions, Push Away, Thoughts, Sensations) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Activities

Activities help you to decrease depression, anxiety, and other symptoms and can create positive emotions. You need to plan activities as part of your daily routine and follow through with the plans. For ideas, consult the Activities List in Module 9: Building a Satisfying Life.

Activities work best when they engage you physically and/or mentally. Remember mindfulness skills (and the other distress tolerance skills, too) need to be used in connection to activities.

You may have difficulty with activities because you lack interest or energy. When writers have writer's block, they continue to write anyway, because inspiration finds us when we are at work. If we wait to be interested, we might wait a long time. You can control the choice to engage in activities, and in time interest and enjoyment will follow if you do not obsess on them. In other words, mindfully engage in activities without concern for being caught up in interest or enjoyment. Nonetheless, starting with activities that have been interesting and enjoyable in the past is a good strategy.

Use Opposite to Emotion when energy is low and/or DEAR MAN to get others to help you get kick-started. The first law of physics applies: A body at rest tends to stay at rest, and a body in motion tends to stay in motion.

Describe how you can use **Activities**:

Contributing

Contributing gets you out of yourself and your distress and into participating with others and in the world. We all need a break from ourselves sometimes. Contributing also helps you feel connected and less alone, and it creates positive feelings.

Contribute in small but impactful ways: Smile at others, give compliments, hold a door, or do a favor. Thoughtful and unexpected acts of kindness, random or not, fit the bill. Let someone else have a parking spot or move ahead of you in line. Assist others, be part of a team effort, and participate. Simply listening to others can be a great contribution, too. Also consider longer-term ways of contributing, such as volunteering.

Describe how you can use **Contributing**:

Comparisons

Comparisons bring perspective to your current situation. You can compare yourself to other times when you have dealt with more difficult problems or been less effective with skills. You can also compare yourself to others who struggle with even greater problems than you. It is important to remember to validate ourselves as we use comparisons—we can experience tough times *and* have perspective through this skill.

Describe how you can use **Comparisons**:

Emotions

Seek out activities, events, and thoughts that create feelings that are different from the painful ones you are experiencing. Remember that emotions can be influenced by what you choose to do and what you choose to think about.

Listen to music that creates specific emotions: loud and fast music when fatigued, calming music when anxious or upset, and uplifting music when sad. Watch favorite shows or movies, fondly remember fun times (without

watch favorite shows or movies, fondly remember fun times (without comparing them to your current situation), or work on a project.

Alternatively, sometimes we can use emotions to validate our feelings. For example, we can listen to melancholy music when sad. However, be careful not to get stuck! The concept is self-validation, not wallowing.

Describe how you can use **Emotions**:

Push Away

Put away distress by mentally locking it in a box and putting it on a shelf in a locked room. Make the imagery as vivid as possible, practicing it over and over. Say “this is a tomorrow problem” and then focus on something else. Or, write something down about the problem and put it away in a drawer or someplace where you will remember to find it when you are ready.

Remember to take out your distress or problem at a safe time in the future to attend to it. Putting and pushing away is a short-term strategy.

Describe how you can use **Push Away**:

Thoughts

Mindfully focus on distracting thoughts. You can only think about one thing at a time, and your distress may diminish when you think about something else. The classic example is counting to 100 when angry; thinking about something else (counting) allows us to cool down and be more rational.

Read a magazine or book, do Sudoku or other puzzles, or think about inspirational sayings and quotes. Bring your thoughts mindfully to other distress tolerance skills or activities.

Describe how you can use **Thoughts**:

Sensations

Sensations include anything that is physically vigorous or actively awakens your

senses. The skill is different from the Self-Soothe skills in that it seeks to stimulate rather than relax.

Take a brisk walk or engage in exercise, such as running or weight-lifting. Get into a hot or cold bath or shower or splash cold water on your face. Engage your senses with loud music, bold colors, or strong tastes or smells.

Some people hold ice cubes or a frozen orange when in distress as a substitute for self-injury because the physical pain distracts from the emotional pain. These practices can work in a “harm-reduction” approach, meaning they can be used as safe step-down techniques when you are trying to stop self-injury but are not yet completely ready. Remember that ultimately the goal is to learn that you do not need physical pain to cope with emotional pain.

Describe how you can use **Sensations**:

Distress Tolerance 2: Activities

CORE CONCEPT: Use this worksheet to monitor your activities and their benefits.

Activities provide healthy distractions and create enjoyment. Getting active alleviates the symptoms of mental illness and provides alternatives to ineffective behaviors. Use this worksheet to list activities you plan to do for each day of the week. Notice how you feel and/or your urge level before and after each activity.

Monday: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Tuesday: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Wednesday: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Thursday: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Friday: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Saturday: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Sunday: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Self-Soothe (SS)

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Create relaxation with a mindful connection to the senses.

Self-Soothe involves entering into the world around us through our five main senses individually or in a multisensory way. We can also soothe ourselves mentally and spiritually. Remember that Self-Soothe requires the use of mindfulness skills.

Sight

Notice what is around you and see the details. Look at pictures or take your own photos. Look at art or do your own drawing or another artistic pursuit that involves vision.

See people, pets, and your favorite possessions and be mindful of what is attractive or visually pleasing. Alternatively, see the beauty in “ordinary” objects or your everyday surroundings.

Look at nature and the landscape around you. See trees and leaves sway and blow in the wind. Look at the sky, the sun, the moon, and the stars. Watch a candle or fire.

Describe how you can self-soothe with **sight**:

Sound

Listen to sounds that comfort you, or notice complete silence. Concentrate on pleasant music, white noise, or the sound of a washing machine or dishwasher if those sounds please you. When listening to music, isolate and focus on each instrument or voice with intention.

Close your eyes, be still, and hear what is happening in your environment. Listen for novel sounds or for sonic patterns and rhythms you never noticed before.

Describe how you can self-soothe with **sound**:

Smell

Put on a favorite cologne or perfume and breathe it in. Smell clean and fresh laundry or sheets. Use incense or other scented products you enjoy. Close your eyes and inhale, choosing to linger on the smell.

Deeply inhale the smells of cooking or baking and your food before eating it or without eating it. Like with sound, noticing the absence of smells can be soothing for some people. Take a deep breath of fresh air (Willie Nelson (2006) says it is the greatest natural high).

Describe how you can self-soothe with **smell**:

Taste

Enjoy each small bite of food or sip of a drink mindfully. Eat one piece of candy or have a small treat with your full attention. Pretend it will be the last time you will eat something and savor each morsel.

Do not mindlessly eat to comfort yourself or eat excessively to self-soothe; these approaches are not skillful.

Describe how you can self-soothe with **taste**:

Touch

Touch and pet a dog or cat or other animal. Use DEAR MAN to ask for a hug or massage from someone, or rub and stroke your own neck or body. Put oils or lotions on your skin.

Wear comfortable clothing or get under a warm, soft blanket or clean, cool sheets. Mindfully notice what your body is in connection with and seek out what pleases it.

Describe how you can self-soothe with **touch**:

Multisensory

Integrate your senses into a rich experience. Make a special meal with nice dishes, place settings, candles, and relaxing music. Spend time outside, focusing on each sense, deciding what sense to attend to in the context of the total experience. Go to a movie with intricate sound and visuals while also noticing the smells of popcorn and the comfort of the seat.

While we can experience each sense individually, the idea here is to create a holistic sensory experience where you chose to attend to each element in connection to the whole. Notice how each sense can complement the others in a total experience.

Describe how you can self-soothe by **combining senses**:

Mind sense

Engage in those parts of your mental life that bring you relaxation and happiness. Examples include peaceful thoughts, affirmations, and meditations as well as daydreams and fantasies.

Describe how you can self-soothe through your **mind sense**:

Spiritual sense

Your spiritual sense is an individually defined sense of connection to a higher power, spirit, or nature. This sense, less tangible than the others, can create peace, serenity, and well-being.

We self-soothe with a spiritual sense through mindful reflections, rituals, and contemplation.

Describe how you can self-soothe through your **spiritual sense**:

Distress Tolerance 3: Self-Soothe Application

CORE CONCEPT: Use this exercise to overcome barriers to the practice of Self-Soothe.

For most of us, the concept of Self-Soothe is straightforward, but allowing ourselves to engage in these skills or addressing other barriers may be more difficult. Use this worksheet to identify Self-Soothe skills and other skills to overcome barriers.

Describe how you can use Self-Soothe skills:

Describe barriers to Self-Soothe skills (e.g., judgments about self, judgments about deserving, environmental factors):

Describe other skills you will use to address each barrier:

Describe how your life will be different when you practice Self-Soothe:

IMPROVE the Moment

■ **CORE CONCEPT:** Make the here and now better when in distress.

Like ACCEPTS, these skills provide healthy distractions.

Use the acronym IMPROVE to remember the building blocks (**I**magery, **M**eaning, **P**rayer, **R**elaxation, **O**ne thing or step at a time, **V**acation, **E**ncouragement) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Imagery

Your mind is powerful. Think of times when you have distressed yourself with negative imagery. In contrast, you can harness the power of positive imagery to feel better and more relaxed. Concentrate on a scene in your mind (a beach, the forest, a safe and happy place). Your mind can convince your body that it is there.

Use guided imagery with a CD, app, or YouTube video. Enter a daydream. Consider practicing imagery before bedtime as part of your sleep routine. Practice skill use in your mind's eye (this has been proven to be effective in sports).

As distractions creep in, gently let them go and refocus.

Describe how you can use **Imagery**:

Meaning

Validate that the cloud is there *and* find the silver lining. Is there an opportunity in this problem? What is the lesson or the learning that will come from your difficulties? Victor Frankl, renowned existential psychiatrist and concentration camp survivor, once said, "If you can find a why, you can tolerate almost any how." List your reasons for surviving crisis.

Describe how you can use **Meaning**:

Prayer

Pray for strength and resolve in distressing times. Seek connection with and guidance from your higher power. Avoid “why me?” or bargaining prayers as those prayers tend to demoralize us rather than build us up.

As an alternative, “talk” to anyone important to you: A deceased relative you loved, a person you admire (whether you know him/her or not), or anyone who helps you feel connected outside yourself.

Describe how you can use **Prayer**:

Relaxation

Practice breathing exercises, self-soothe skills, progressive muscle relaxation with each major muscle group, or anything that calms you. Engage in activities you find relaxing every day.

Describe how you can use **Relaxation**:

One thing or step at a time

When overwhelmed, go back to the most important priority again and again. If you have many problems, pick the most important one to focus on or the one you have the most resources to solve. In the context of solving problems, taking one step at a time helps to manage your distress.

Describe how you can use **One Thing or Step at a Time**:

Vacation

Most of us cannot take a real vacation when in distress or maybe even at all. Vacation means taking a break when we are in distress or even before we are in distress. Step outside, breathe fresh air, and take a short walk. Spend 10 minutes listening to music or surfing the internet. Talk with a friend or coworker. “Take a load off.” Plan some time for yourself as part of your routine.

Remember to keep these “vacations” brief. We want to take a break from problems but not let them continue to build.

Describe how you can use **Vacation**:

Encouragement

We all talk to ourselves, so we might as well say something positive! Validate your feelings and then encourage yourself like you would a close friend. Life is not impossible; it just feels that way sometimes. Be mindful of your self-talk and make it positive.

Describe how you can use **Encouragement**:

Pros and Cons (P&C)

- **CORE CONCEPT:** The Pros and Cons skill leads us to Wise Mind decisions.

We can use Pros and Cons any time that we struggle with a decision. This skill allows us to weigh the options in light of expected results in both the short and the long term. Pros and Cons is proactive and leads us to Wise Mind before we commit to any action. Moreover, if we use Pros and Cons to decide whether we want to engage in a harmful behavior, often we will find that the urge has subsided by the time the exercise is complete.

To use this skill, start by identifying your basic choices. Examples include drinking or using drugs versus staying sober, using self-injury versus staying safe, and practicing an old behavior versus practicing a skill.

When you have identified the basic choices, plug them into the worksheet that follows. After you have determined both short-and long-term pros and cons, check to see whether you are in Wise Mind and make a decision. If you find that you are not in Wise Mind, table your decision and try another skill.

Pros and Cons (P&C) Application Example	
My Basic Choices Are: Using self-injury versus using skills	
Short-Term PROS of Self-Injury	Short-Term CONS of Self-Injury
Numbed my feelings! Worked Blood grounded me	Missed chance to use plan WORRIED about upcoming group Had to hide it
Long-Term PROS of Self-Injury	Long-Term CONS of Self-Injury
None really	Lost trust Lost self-respect More scars Shame sets me up
Versus	
Short-Term PROS of Skill Use	Short-Term CONS of Skill Use
No need to lie or cover up Feel good if I make it No hassle with blood and stuff NO BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS!!	Hard and might not work Don't know Maybe more emotional pain
Long-Term PROS of Skill Use	Long-Term CONS of Skill Use
RESPECT! Learn to handle life and get somewhere	More expectations? Pressure, I don't know

My Decision: Skills, I guess!!

Distress Tolerance 4: Pros and Cons

Pros and Cons (P&C) Application

My Basic Choices _____ Are versus _____.

Short-Term PROS of _____	Short-Term CONS of _____
---------------------------------	---------------------------------

--	--

Long-Term PROS of _____	Long-Term CONS of _____
--------------------------------	--------------------------------

--	--

Versus

Short-Term PROS of _____	Short-Term CONS of _____
---------------------------------	---------------------------------

--	--

Long-Term PROS of _____	Long-Term CONS of _____
--------------------------------	--------------------------------

--	--

My Decision:

Grounding Yourself (GY)

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Grounding exercises bring you back to the here and now.

Grounding exercises assist us when we drift from the present moment or when we struggle with dissociation, feeling unreal, or PTSD symptoms. Leaving reality is a skill when reality would be too painful for anyone bear. At the same time, leaving reality is less effective when we are distressed but not in imminent psychological and/or physical danger. In these situations, we need to develop more useful coping skills.

Practice these exercises proactively, and they will decrease symptoms of dissociation and derealization. Remember to bring your mindfulness skills along:

- Open your eyes and Observe and Describe your surroundings in detail.
 - Who or what is around you? You are here, now. The more detail, no matter how minor, the better.
 - Work your senses: Name what you see, hear, smell, and touch right here and now, again using as many details as possible.
 - Use the Sensations skill from ACCEPTS. Practice the variations of Sensations.
 - Observe your body in contact with your chair. Feel your back, behind, and back of your legs in connection with the chair. Feel your arms in connection with the armrests or your lap. Feel your feet firmly planted on the ground. Now think about how your body is connected to the chair, which is connected to the floor, which is connected to the building, which is connected to the earth.
 - Breathe slowly and deeply, counting your breaths.
 - Get up and stretch out, feeling your body and moving about.
 - Repeat a mantra such as “this is now and not then.”

List other ways to ground yourself:

Radical Acceptance (RA)

■ **CORE CONCEPT:** Acceptance decreases suffering.

At times, we have great pain due to trauma, difficult life circumstances, and losses. Suffering is part of everyone's life.

If we are unable to accept situations that cause pain, the result is being stuck and trapped in chronic suffering. Refusal to have a relationship with our suffering creates unending suffering. Paradoxically, we decrease suffering by being willing to accept it and relate to it rather than fight it. We may still have pain to tolerate, but there will be a qualitative difference in our experience of it. Further, acceptance instead of resistance releases our resources to move forward.

When you find yourself in pain, you have four basic choices.

1. Change the situation that is causing you pain

This change may involve ending a hopeless relationship or leaving a dead-end job, or it might involve seeking medical advice or trying to solve some other problem. Changing the situation involves a realistic appraisal of what is and what the options are, grounded in values. Ask yourself: What would you be willing to do to end your suffering?

2. Change how you see the situation or what you think about it

Can you find the upside, silver lining, or meaning in the pain? Would more dialectical thoughts help? Remember that our minds can be powerful in overcoming obstacles, including suffering. Is it a tragedy or "good practice"? Is it a terrible situation or a situation to teach strength, patience, or resilience?

3. Radically accept the situation

Give up fighting reality and release your psychological and emotional resources to move forward. When you accept the situation, you might still have to tolerate pain but you are no longer adding to it. Radical Acceptance means you are willing to experience a situation or state without trying to change it, protest it, or escape it. You will be in a relationship with the pain.

4. Stay stuck in suffering until you are ready to accept reality

Radical acceptance springs from deep within ourselves and requires that we continually orient ourselves toward accepting.

Remember that acceptance is *not* approval, liking it, or giving in. When we recognize, acknowledge, and accept a problem or reality, we actually take control of our lives and emotional health. Acceptance is freedom because it allows us to be effective with what is rather than to stay stuck in denial. Acceptance is the prerequisite to change.

It is helpful to know that Radical Acceptance is a process similar to Kübler-Ross' (2005) stages of acceptance: **1. Denial:** Not believing our loss, problem, or situation is real.

2. Anger: Being angry about why this has or is happening to us.

3. Bargaining: Trying to make a deal with someone or a higher power to change reality.

4. Depression: Feeling despondent as reality sets in.

5. Acceptance: Acknowledging reality without fighting.

These stages do not always happen in sequence. Instead, we often go back and forth in the process, sometimes getting stuck in one stage and/or skipping others. When you experience these stages and emotions, you are in the process of acceptance.

In the words of William James, “Be willing to have it so. Acceptance of what has happened is the first step to overcoming the consequences of any misfortune.” Allow it to be so and experience the pain. *You are not and do not need to be the story of your suffering.*

Distress Tolerance 5: Radical Acceptance

CORE CONCEPT: Use this exercise to practice Radical Acceptance in a painful situation.

Describe a situation that causes suffering:

Describe what you can realistically change through problem-solving and/or shifting your thoughts:

Describe what you may need to radically accept:

Describe other skills you may need to practice Radical Acceptance of this situation:

Describe how your life will be different when you have radically accepted this situation: _____

Everyday Acceptance (EA)

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Adopting an accepting attitude each day will change your life.

Radical Acceptance is the skill used to deal with painful and difficult-to-accept situations. Starting to practice acceptance in everyday situations will orient you to the practice of Radical Acceptance when life gets extremely difficult. But what is meant by Everyday Acceptance? Consider the following examples:

- You have to wait in a long line.
 - Your spouse, partner, or friend is in a lousy mood.
 - The delivery person is 30 minutes late.
 - Your coworker makes a mistake.
 - A guitar string breaks.
 - Homework is assigned.
 - A friend cancels a date.
 - Dinner is not your favorite.
 - Your favorite sports team is losing.
 - You run out of paper towels.
 - The weather does not fit your plans.
 - A task needs to be completed.
 - Someone cuts you off in traffic.
 - MTV shows only 10 seconds of your favorite video.
 - You forget to save changes to a computer file.
 - You step in gum.
 - A dish breaks.
 - Your toddler acts like a toddler.
 - Gas prices have risen.

- Your partner forgot to pick up milk.

We often cause ourselves to feel frustrated, annoyed, anxious, and stressed out by these common inconveniences. Instead, we can save our resources by meeting these small realities with Everyday Acceptance rather than resistance.

Do not confuse this approach to life with giving in, being walked on, or remaining helpless. Many of these problems have solutions or interventions that are needed (e.g., using assertiveness, running to the store, changing the channel, setting a boundary). However, the use of Everyday Acceptance allows us to have the emotional balance to solve our everyday problems more effectively. Let it be so, and then deal with it effectively.

Willingness (W)

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Use willingness versus willfulness when stuck.

Many of us learned that “where there is a will there is a way.” In other words, our shortcomings come from a lack of willpower.

This belief system is the opposite of what DBT teaches. Sometimes we need to exert our will, but often Willingness is more effective. With willfulness, our options are limited, whereas with Willingness, options to reach goals and solve problems open up through our ability to be creative and flexible. Where there is Willingness there is a way.

This approach works because Willingness aligns us with the realities of a situation rather than pitting ourselves against them. Fighting reality (or anything) rarely creates an effective outcome. Think about power struggles and how ineffective they can be for everybody involved.

Meeting others and situations where they are at instead of where we wish they were frees us to be effective. The parallels to Radical Acceptance and Everyday Acceptance are apparent. Willingness also fits with Effectiveness in the Mindfulness module. Check your priorities, goals, and values to help find your Willingness!

When faced with a problem (and/or when stuck in willfulness), ask yourself what you are willing to do to:

- End your suffering
- Solve a problem—yours, someone else’s, or a shared one
- Create a satisfying life.

With time and practice, you will find that Willingness allows you to be more peaceful and effective in life.

Distress Tolerance 6: Skills Practice

CORE CONCEPT: Use this worksheet to monitor your use of distress tolerance skills and their benefits.

Many people develop a few distress tolerance skills and then quit actively exploring and practicing new skills. Just as carpenters, computer programmers, artists, mechanics, students, therapists, and other people work to acquire new tools and techniques, you need to continue to work on new distress tolerance skills to be effective in challenging situations. Use the checklist spaces below to list new distress tolerance skills to practice today or this week, and be sure to check them off after you have practiced them. Notice how you feel before and after each distress tolerance skill.

Distress tolerance skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Distress tolerance skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Distress tolerance skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Distress tolerance skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Distress tolerance skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Distress tolerance skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Distress tolerance skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

TIP

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Behaviors that tip your physiology can help you cope with intense emotions.

Intense emotions create intense physiological responses. For example, anger and fear create muscle tension, increased blood pressure, rapid breathing and heart rate, and the release of adrenaline. On the other end of the continuum, depression causes physiological responses such as body aches and pains as well as general loss of energy and fatigue.

Purposefully changing, or “tipping,” your physiology can help you to tolerate or even change intense emotions. The acronym TIP describes these strategies. Some of these strategies “shock” the system, some of them use up or conserve energy, and some of them relax the body.

Remember that the TIP skills, like other skills, need to be used mindfully and carefully. The key is tipping your body chemistry and physiological responses in *healthy* ways. Avoid extremes of these strategies that could cause pain or injury.

Used thoughtfully and in balance, TIP skills will be an effective addition to your distress tolerance toolbox.

Temperature

Step out into chilly or cold weather (climate permitting!); place an ice pack on your forehead; fill a sink with extremely cold water (using ice, ice packs, or frozen vegetables) and dunk your face or whole head. By submerging your face in cold water you can stimulate the “dive reflex,” a natural set of physical responses that include slowing the heart rate and conserving energy.

Alternatively, you can affect body temperature by taking a hot shower or bath, going in a sauna, or wrapping yourself in warm blankets.

Note how changes in temperature affect emotional responses.

Intense exercise

Walk briskly, run, or sprint; go for a fast bike ride; lift weights or work out with kettlebells; do jumping jacks, push-ups, or other exercises that do not require special equipment; dance.

Vigorously move your body!

Progressive relaxation

Breathe deeply and mindfully for several minutes (or longer); one by one, systematically tense each major muscle group (face, shoulders, arms, hands, torso, buttocks, legs, and feet) for several seconds and then release the tension. Noticing the extremes between tension and release can deepen the sense of relaxation. You can also use guided imagery or search YouTube and the internet for some outstanding demonstrations in progressive relaxation.

Emotion Regulation

Introduction to Emotion Regulation

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Emotion regulation lowers vulnerability and brings balance to your emotions.

Emotions serve many important functions. They provide information about ourselves in relation to other people, situations, and the environment, teaching us and influencing and motivating our behaviors. Emotions also provide the foundation for relationships, being essential for attraction, compassion, and being connected to other people. We would not have the motivation or desire to participate with family, friends, or other people without emotions and what they bring to our relationships. That said, intense and dysregulated emotions sometimes short-circuit their purposes and can be painful and lead to ineffective behavior. Consider these dialectical examples related to emotions:

- A low level of anxiety about a test might motivate a person to study and be successful, but a high level of anxiety might paralyze the person and stymie success.
- Anger that is proportional and effectively directed can motivate people to solve issues in relationships or to champion a cause, but intense anger can destroy relationships or sabotage action related to a cause.
- Attraction can motivate you to initiate a healthy and respectful relationship, but sometimes attraction can keep you going back to a harmful relationship.
- Depression can be informative about what needs to change in your life, such as adopting a healthier lifestyle or making a life change, but intense depression can immobilize you and make change difficult.

To achieve balanced and regulated emotions that provide benefits, we use emotion regulation skills. Emotion regulation has several purposes. First, we want to identify our emotions and then, more importantly, we want to understand the process by which they happen. When we see how events and interpretations color our emotions, we can make changes that influence our emotions differently

to release ourselves from negative emotional patterns.

Second, we want to learn how to change our relationship to our emotions. Instead of judging or attempting to “get rid” of negative feelings, we want to accept them and try to understand their messages. A curious and understanding approach to our emotions can replace fear and suffering, and, as we begin to relate to emotions differently, we can learn to “hold” them mindfully. Mindfulness of emotions reduces suffering because it does not involve adding to emotional pain, although we often need to dialectically balance this approach with other skills.

In addition to influencing emotions differently and changing our relationship with them, we can also work on decreasing our emotional vulnerabilities through more effective self-care skills and through scheduling positive experiences. Further, we can learn how to continue positive feelings through Mood Momentum and get unstuck from negative feelings through Opposite to Emotion.

To begin, understand that emotional health and well-being involve a dialectical balance between physical and mental health, and then start to practice self-care skills that decrease vulnerability to intense emotions through regulating them.

Well-Being

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Well-being is a balance between physical and mental health.

Well-being is a state characterized by feeling comfortable, content, healthy, and happy. Well-being does not just happen. Rather, it is created by taking a holistic approach to our health with the understanding that our minds and bodies are interconnected with profound mutual influence. It is difficult to have a general sense of well-being without prioritizing and balancing both physical and mental health.



The PLEASED skill in the next section teaches important self-care skills to improve and maintain physical health so we can feel better all around. As we learn PLEASED, we should consider how we can improve our well-being through our goals for both physical and mental health.

Describe your goals for improving **physical** health:

Describe your goals for improving **mental** health:

Describe how you see your goals for physical and mental health being interconnected:

Describe how your life will be different when you improve your well-being:

Pleased (PL)

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Self-care skills reduce emotional vulnerability and promote well-being.

Self-care is the foundation of feeling well and being ready to weather emotional storms.

Use the acronym PLEASED to help you remember the building blocks (**P**hysical health, **L**ist resources and barriers, **E**at balanced meals, **A**void drugs and alcohol, **S**leep between 7 and 10 hours, **E**xercise 20 to 60 minutes, **D**aily) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Physical Health

Attend to your physical health to feel well. That means staying current on your health through regular medical checkups and engaging in proactive skills and behaviors that keep your body as healthy as possible. It also means treating illness when it arises and complying with medical advice. Take medications as prescribed, consult with your prescriber if medications are not working or side effects are intolerable, and make life changes to minimize use of medications with the advice of your physician. Always consider how your physical health may be impacting your mental health.

List resources and barriers

Resources include skills you might already use (such as O2E, Pros and Cons, and Willingness), people who support you, having a growing knowledge base about health and wellness, and having practical means of increasing self-care (e.g., having a physician, owning exercise equipment, and having access to healthy food). Consider your resources for each part of the PLEASED skill.

Barriers also abound with PLEASED skills. Identify barriers that interfere with any part of effective self-care and develop a plan to use skills to address those barriers.

Eat balanced meals

Eat three balanced meals plus a couple of healthy snacks mindfully throughout the day. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein are must-haves. Eat “whole” (unprocessed or minimally processed) or single-ingredient foods when possible. Drink eight full glasses of water a day. Avoid eating too much or too little and minimize sugars, saturated fats, and food or beverages with little or no nutritional value. Replace “diets” with lifestyle changes and keep current on reputable nutritional information. Start small and build on success. Consult with a physician or nutritionist if needed. Read the next section—Focus on Nutrition and Exercise—for more information.

Avoid drugs and alcohol

The risks associated with drugs and alcohol, along with the emotional, physical, relational, financial, and other effects, can make their use problematic. If you find you need larger amounts to reach a “desired” effect and/or experience an inability to cut down or quit use, you probably need some help and support. Refer to the Addictions module for more information.

Sleep between 7 and 10 hours

Sleep is important to regulate our moods and to maintain physical health. Find an amount of sleep that works for you. Refer to the suggestions in the Sleep Routine section for more information.

Exercise for 20 to 60 minutes multiple times weekly and move throughout the day

Exercise for a minimum of 20 minutes three to five times per week. Balanced exercise will positively impact almost any symptom of mental illness. Find natural ways to move about, such as taking stairs, parking at the far end of a parking lot, gardening, cleaning, and playing with pets or children. Humans are not biologically designed to be sedentary, so movement is vital. Consult a physician if you have any concerns about starting an exercise routine. See the Focus on Nutrition and Exercise section for more information.

Daily

PLEASED skills need to be daily habits for you to reap their tremendous

benefits. Record PLEASED skills on a diary card (see the Diary Card section in Getting Started) and/or include them in written routines and schedules.

Focus on Nutrition and Exercise

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Use these guidelines to improve your nutrition and exercise habits.

Poor nutrition and a lack of exercise are leading causes of and contributors to illness and diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. While the links between nutrition, exercise, and mental and chemical health issues are less well established (but getting there), it is absolutely naive to think that what we put into our bodies and how we move (or do not move) our bodies has little effect on our well-being. In fact, the smart bet is that what we eat and the amount of movement we get have major and profound effects on how well we feel physically, psychologically, and emotionally. The good news is that, just as poor nutrition and exercise cause and contribute to problems, an emphasis on eating well and getting exercise can be healing and lead to better overall health.

The first step toward changing your lifestyle (some people call it a “healthstyle”) is making a commitment to be in it for the long haul, for life. *There are no shortcuts. It takes effort and consistency.* But it is worth it. As the adage says, “If you do not make time for your health, you will have to make time for illness.”

If you have a long way to go or are already suffering from obesity and/or other health problems, you should strongly consider seeing your physician and getting a referral to a dietitian or nutritionist as well as getting cleared for an exercise program.

Below are some tips and guidelines to get you started on better nutrition and exercise habits. These lists are not meant to be exhaustive, though following them consistently will get you on the road to wellness.

Nutritional tips and guidelines

Humans were not biologically designed to eat many of the foods that are created, processed, and marketed to us, and we are certainly not designed to eat these foods in the quantities that they often get eaten. These tips and guidelines will get you on a better path:

- Drink at least eight glasses of water a day. Water detoxifies, is essential for our bodies, and is needed for physical energy and for mental attention and concentration. What if you don't like the taste of water? Remember that our tastes change with time and water might become your favorite drink. Alternatively, you can lightly flavor your water with cucumber, lemon, or another healthy addition. Avoid drinking calories in any form. Juices, sodas, and flavored coffees add needless calories with limited or no nutritional value. Black coffee and tea are ok in moderation, but be careful in regard to caffeine.
- Try to stick to whole and minimally processed foods. Can you picture where that food came from? There is no cookie, cracker, or jelly donut tree! Shopping on the exterior of the super market creates a focus on whole, single-ingredient foods. As a general rule, avoid foods in boxes.
- Cut out foods that have little or no nutritional value and/or are actively harmful. Examples include candy, pastries, donuts, and chips. Start to think about sugar that does not occur naturally in foods as *poison*. Research shows that excessive sugar consumption is a leading cause of obesity, diabetes, and liver disease. Other foods with little nutritional value that cause harm include fried foods and foods with a lot of saturated fat, both of which cause heart disease. Stop eating fast food. Stop stocking unhealthy foods in your home.
- Eat at least six servings of fruits and vegetables a day. At most meals at least half of your plate should be fruits and vegetables. In time, you will come to enjoy these foods if you do not already. If you are on a budget then buy seasonal selections or buy frozen fruits and vegetables, which are much cheaper but retain the nutritional value. Eat these foods first to crowd out less healthy options.
- Eat starches and grains in moderation. These should not cover more than a fourth of your plate. Some of the most healthy choices are whole-grain cereals, whole-wheat breads and pastas, brown rice, and quinoa. Sweet potatoes and yams are also healthy choices.
- Limit dairy to no more than three servings a day, favoring low-fat milk, unsweetened yogurt, and lower-fat cheese such as mozzarella or cottage cheese.
- Limit meat to six ounces or less per day, favoring lean cuts of beef and pork or poultry without the skin. A serving of meat is about the size of a

deck of playing cards and should take up no more than a fourth of your plate. Incorporate fish into your diet and consider meat alternatives such as lentils and tofu.

- Overall, maximize fruits and vegetables and increase fiber while you limit saturated and trans fats, sugar, and sodium. Follow the adage “eat not too much, and mostly vegetables.”
- Have a “crowd out” instead of a “cut out” state of mind: Focus on healthy foods first and crowd out poor food choices. When you focus on eating what is good for you first, there is less temptation to eat much of what is not good for you. It works!
- Do not let yourself get too hungry. Preplan healthy snacks such as nuts, vegetables with hummus, or a piece of fruit.
- Consider taking a multivitamin and/or other supplements, but remember that they *supplement* healthy eating and cannot be a replacement for it.
- Create a meal plan to stay focused. Track your food choices and consumption. Worry less about calories and instead focus on the *quality* of food you eat. You can treat yourself from time to time with less healthy food, but the treats have to be the exceptions and not the rule. Obtaining and maintaining a healthy weight is roughly 80 percent what you eat and 20 percent movement and exercise.
- Use your mindfulness skills to slow down and be present while you eat. Enjoy your food, notice the flavors and textures, and stop eating before you are overfull. Be mindful of the portion sizes you choose to have and the amount of food you eat. Eat because you need the nourishment and not to soothe emotions or manage stress (with the exception of using Self-Soothe with Taste with a *morsel* of food).
- Remember that consistency and time are the keys to having a healthy lifestyle and enjoying the benefits of eating well.

Exercise tips and guidelines

Humans were not biologically designed to be sedentary. These tips will get you moving down a better path.

- Exercise for at least 20 minutes multiple days a week at a moderate intensity. Moderate intensity means that your heart rate is elevated but that

you are still able to carry on a conversation. Break up the time if needed; three 10-minute sessions can have the same benefits as 20 minutes straight. Brisk walking, perhaps with occasional stretches of jogging or running, works for a majority of people. Schedule and prioritize your exercise time. Get a walking or workout buddy, and keep each other on track.

- Mix it up and have fun. Try biking, light weights, kettle bells, or yoga, or join a particular exercise class or even a sports league. Sign up for a fun run and set a personal goal. Reward your efforts.
- Use technology (e.g., a Fitbit, an online program, fitness apps, or a pedometer) to track and inspire efforts.
- In addition to scheduled exercise time, it is important to move around throughout the day. Every waking hour take 5 to 10 minutes to get up, do some light stretching, and walk around.
- Find natural ways of increasing movement. Take a walking break, park at the far end of a parking lot, take the stairs, carry your groceries, do housework, garden, or play with your children or a pet.
- Sometimes when you exercise your hunger spikes. Eat a healthy snack. Do not fall into the trap of thinking that exercise gives you a free pass with what you eat or that you can double your portions. *You cannot exercise yourself out of poor eating choices!*

Emotion Regulation 1: PLEASED 1

CORE CONCEPT: Use this worksheet to problem-solve and establish PLEASED skills.

Describe your motivation to improve self-care skills (think of priorities, goals, and values):

Describe your strengths and resources in using PLEASED:

Describe your barriers to using PLEASED:

Describe the skills you will use to address your barriers:

Describe your action plan to start today (share your action plan with others and get started!):

Describe how your life will be different when you use effective PLEASED skills:

Emotion Regulation 2: PLEASSED 2

CORE CONCEPT: Use this worksheet to monitor your use of the PLEASSED skills.

Improving your PLEASSED skills significantly impacts how you feel and lowers your vulnerability to feeling negative and intense emotions. PLEASSED skills also require daily attention and follow-through. Use the checklist spaces below to list your PLEASSED behaviors and be sure to check them off when they are completed. Notice how you feel before and after each PLEASSED skill.

PLEASSED skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

PLEASSED skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

PLEASSED skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

PLEASSED skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

PLEASSED skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

PLEASED skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

PLEASED skill: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Sleep Routine

- **CORE CONCEPT:** A consistent sleep routine is essential to better sleep and health.

Often we try to solve sleep difficulties with medication without trying behavior interventions. While medications have their place, using them as a daily, long-term strategy without trying behavior interventions is probably a poor choice. Further, if you suffer from nightmares, developing a relaxing sleep routine to enable you to go to bed in a peaceful rather than stressed-out state is one of your best strategies. Also note that sleep avoidance will exacerbate nightmares because of what is called “REM rebound.” REM rebound is the scientific finding that sleep-deprived people will eventually have a spike in dream sleep that is characterized by more intense and vivid dreams. Again, the remedy is avoiding avoidance and instead focusing on a relaxing and consistent sleep routine.

The following guidelines will greatly improve sleep for most people. However, to be effective, these guidelines must be used nightly for a period of weeks and maintained over the long term. Your efforts will reap benefits and will probably be enjoyable, too.

- Create a sleep routine that begins at least 1 hour before going to bed. Like landing an airplane, healthy sleep involves getting into a pattern and getting the landing gear down well ahead of time. A sleep routine should consist of relaxing activities that cue the mind and body for sleep. Deep breathing, muscle relaxation, and mindfulness work well in a sleep routine.
- Establish consistent sleep and wake times and stick to them, even on weekends. Avoid using the “snooze” button on your alarm clock.
- The bed should be for sleeping and intimacy only. Wakeful activities in bed confuse the mind and body, and the bed no longer becomes a cue for sleep and rest.
- Create a relaxing environment. A clean and uncluttered environment with fresh bed linens and comfortable blankets and pillows will help to create the conditions for sleep. Also, block out sources of light and keep the temperature at a comfortable level, preferably a few degrees cooler than

during daytime.

- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine for 4 hours (or more) before bedtime.
- Avoid heavy meals and spicy foods before bedtime.
- Turn down your lighting and power off electronics at least 1 hour before bedtime.
- Avoid any stimulation before bedtime, including arguments or conflict, vigorous activity, or anything else that is likely to activate your mind or body.
- Get exercise during the daytime.
- Avoid daytime napping.
- Keep a notebook by your bed for ideas, concerns, or other thoughts you may want to remember tomorrow.
- Practice peaceful imagery or deep breathing as you are falling asleep.
- Minimize catastrophizing when you struggle with sleep. Use your mindfulness skills to refocus your thoughts.
- If you are unable to sleep after 20 minutes, get up and do something boring and/or relaxing until you are sleepy and ready to return to bed.

List other ways to create an effective sleep routine:

Build Mastery (BM)

■ **CORE CONCEPT:** Complete tasks to feel competent and in control.

We all have those daily tasks that lead us to feel competent and in control when they are completed. The flip side is that, when these tasks build up, we feel more overwhelmed and out of control.

For example, basic activities of daily living (see Using ROUTINE (RO) in Module 9: Building a Satisfying Life) often need our attention. The following brief list includes basic Build Mastery activities for many of us:

- Hygiene (e.g., brushing teeth, cleaning self, wearing clean clothes)
- Doing the dishes
- Shopping for food and necessities
- Cleaning whatever needs it
- Doing laundry
- Accomplishing important tasks or chores
- Opening mail and/or paying bills
- Completing homework or work tasks
- Tending to our children and/or pets
- Maintaining a certain level of organization
- Answering emails and voice messages.

Describe daily tasks that help you feel competent and in control when completed:

Build Mastery skills also include taking on realistic challenges and working toward goals. Here are some examples:

- Practicing virtually any skill
- Developing a hobby
- Exercising
- Taking steps to resolve a problem
- Accomplishing tasks outside your comfort zone
- Dealing with an interpersonal issue
- Standing up for yourself
- Volunteering
- Doing your best in a tough situation.

Technically, any attempt to be effective or any accomplishment could be a Build Mastery technique.

Describe other ways you can Build Mastery:

Be mindful of your efforts and give yourself due credit. We frequently dismiss those things in life that we “should” be doing or are expected to do. We invalidate ourselves by saying those efforts are no big deal and are not worthy of recognition. Alternatively, we minimize their importance or get into judgments about what we did not do as a way to erase our efforts.

As a rule of thumb, if you tend to judge yourself when you think you have not made enough of an effort or have not accomplished something, then you deserve credit for the effort or accomplishment when you do try and when you get something done. Using Build Mastery skills helps us feel better, decreases our emotional vulnerability, and increases our self-respect.

Emotion Regulation 3: Build Mastery

CORE CONCEPT: Use this worksheet to monitor the use of your Build Mastery skills.

Certain activities and behaviors lead to us feeling competent and in control (or overwhelmed and out of control when we neglect them). Build Mastery behaviors may vary day to day or week to week. Use the checklist spaces below to list your Build Mastery behaviors for today or this week, and be sure to check them off when they are completed. Notice how you feel before and after each accomplishment.

Build Mastery behavior: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Build Mastery behavior: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Build Mastery behavior: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Build Mastery behavior: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Build Mastery behavior: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Build Mastery behavior: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

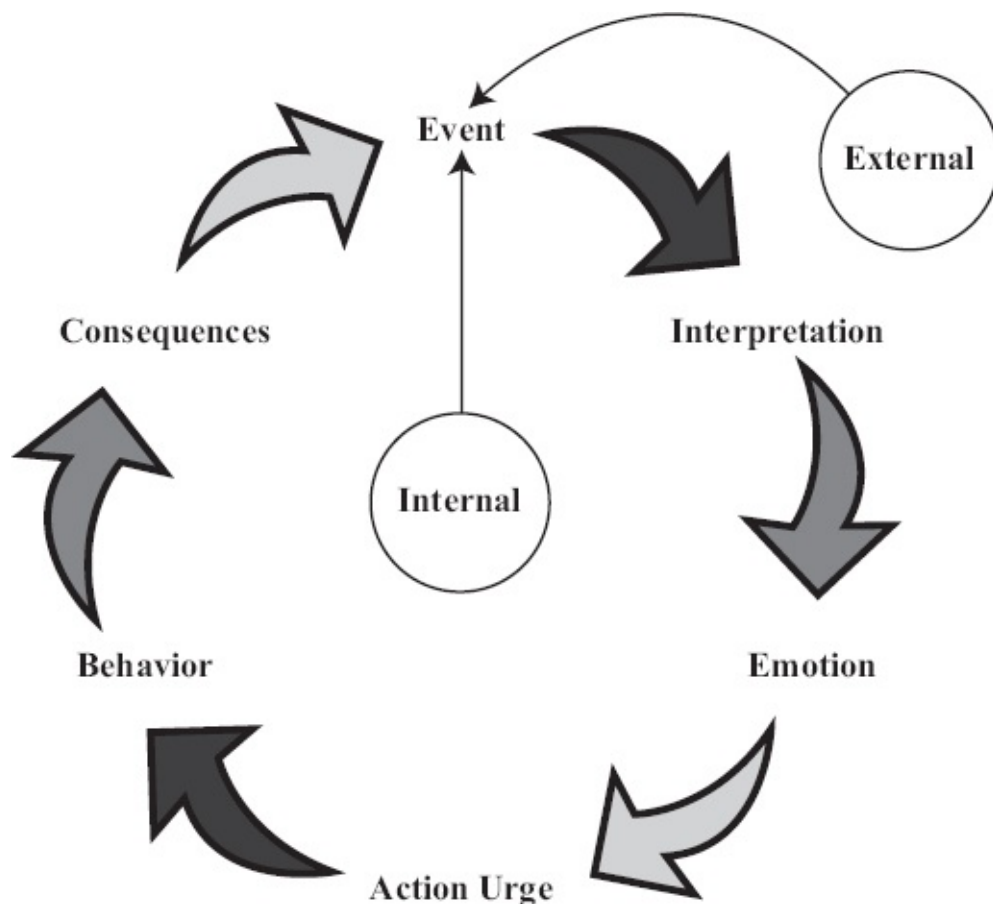
Build Mastery behavior: _____

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Model of Emotions

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Knowing how emotions happen helps us influence them.

Emotions seem to happen out of the blue for many people, complete with ineffective and reactive behaviors that flow from those emotions. Fortunately, you can learn to influence and even change many emotions and resulting actions by understanding how emotions happen in the first place. The model of emotions below will assist your efforts. At any given time you can stop and use your mindfulness skills to reflect on this model and how it relates to your emotions, and then make any necessary changes.



Event

Events begin the cycle of emotion, and they can be internal (within us) or external (in our environment). Use your mindfulness skills to connect an emotion to its source.

Interpretation

How we interpret events has a tremendous influence on what we feel. Step back and Observe and Describe the available facts to check your interpretation (also called self-talk or automatic thoughts) of the event. Ask yourself whether the interpretation works in the situation, and consider other ways of looking at the situation. Is the interpretation from Wise Mind? Is Nonjudgmental Stance needed? Are there dialectical alternative interpretations?

Emotion

Use Observe and Describe to notice your emotional experience. What is happening in your body (e.g., muscle relaxation or tension, heart rate)? What is happening externally with your body (e.g., facial expressions, posture)? What are you communicating both verbally and nonverbally? Use the available information to name your emotion. Remember to Observe and Describe the emotion nonjudgmentally.

Also, try to see whether another feeling is underneath what you Observe and Describe on the surface. For example, hurt or embarrassment might underlie anger or guilt, and shame might underlie depression. Getting to the emotions underneath the surface emotion increases understanding, and increased understanding creates more options.

Action urge and Behavior

What is the emotion urging or pulling you toward? Or, is a behavior already happening? From what state of mind are your action urges and behaviors flowing? Remember to validate your emotion(s) and choose behaviors from a centered, Wise Mind place. Participate with Effectiveness and respond rather than react. Delay your behavior if you anticipate that it will be ineffective.

Note that some action urges can be effective and it is important to act on those, but other actions should not be acted on because they will be ineffective. Can

you think of examples of each?

Consequences

Observe and Describe what consequences result from your behavior. Evaluate what worked and what did not work, and learn from your experience.

Emotions and choices in response to them influence what happens with subsequent events, perpetuating the cycle. Use this knowledge to continue positive emotions with Mood Momentum or break out of ineffective emotions with Opposite to Emotion.

Emotion Regulation 4: Feelings Model

CORE CONCEPT: Use this worksheet to discover how emotions (and emotional patterns) happen.

Describe the **event**: What happened; who, what, when, and where?

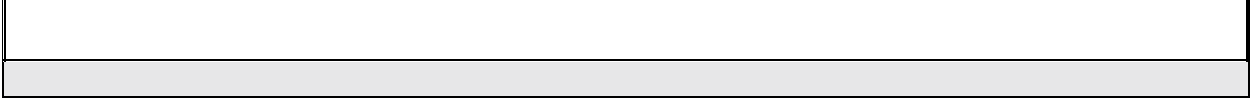
Describe your **interpretation**: What judgment, evaluation, self-talk, or belief was activated?

Describe your **emotion**: What is happening physically? What body language do you detect? Put a name on the emotion; using a feeling chart if needed. Identify underlying emotions, too, if possible:

Describe your **action urge**: What action, inaction, or communication are you being emotionally pulled toward? Would it fit Wise Mind? This is a moment of CHOICE:

Describe your **behavior**: What action or inaction can be made? Participate using Effectiveness:

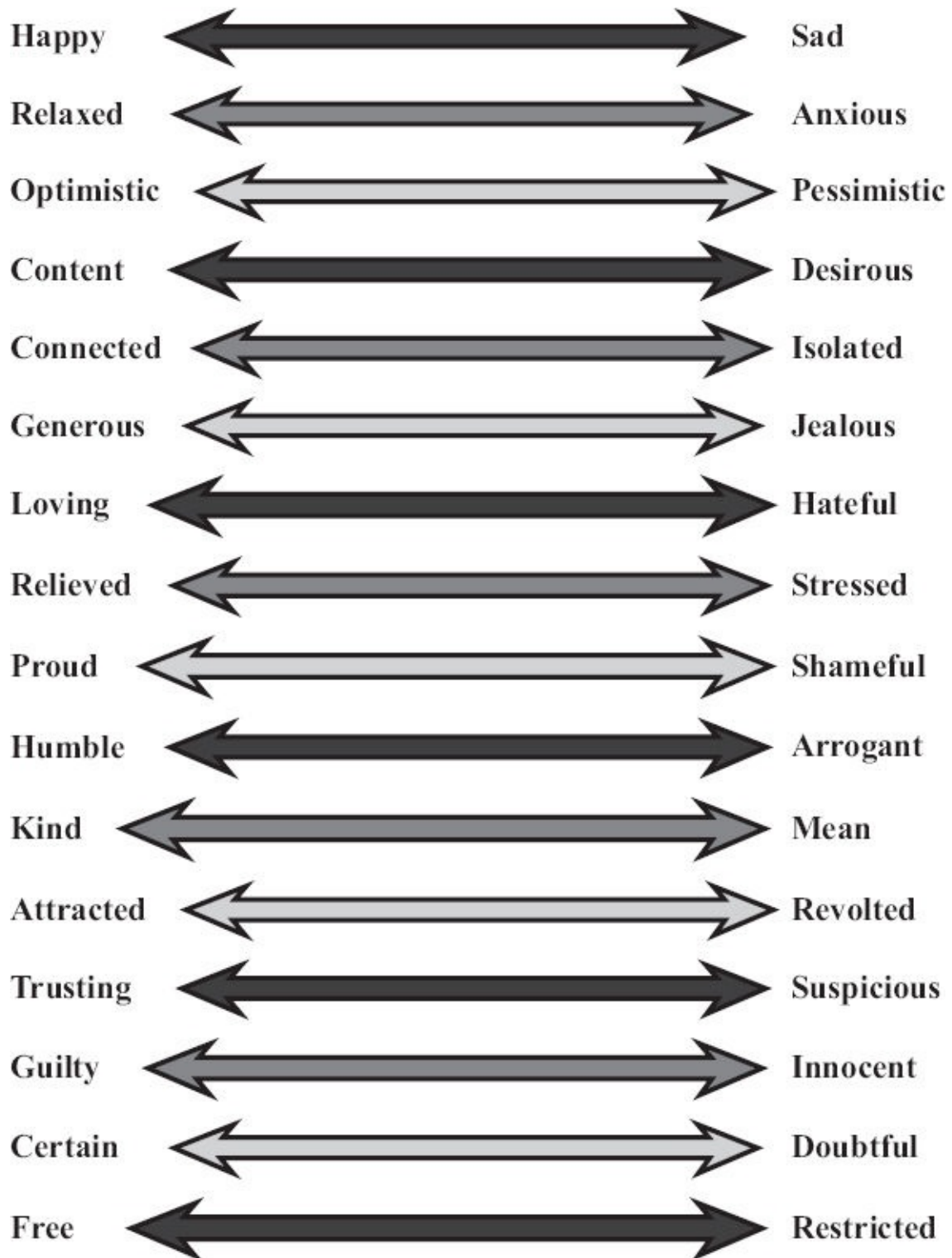
Describe the **consequences**: What consequences occurred? Include other emotions, thoughts, actions, and inactions, and their effect on relationships and situations. How did the results set up the next event (e.g., did a pattern continue or did the cycle change?):



Basic Emotions and Their Opposites

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Emotions have dialectical opposites with intensities on a continuum.

Following is a list of basic emotions and their opposites. Start to think about and discuss emotions to gain a better understanding of them, using the diagram below.

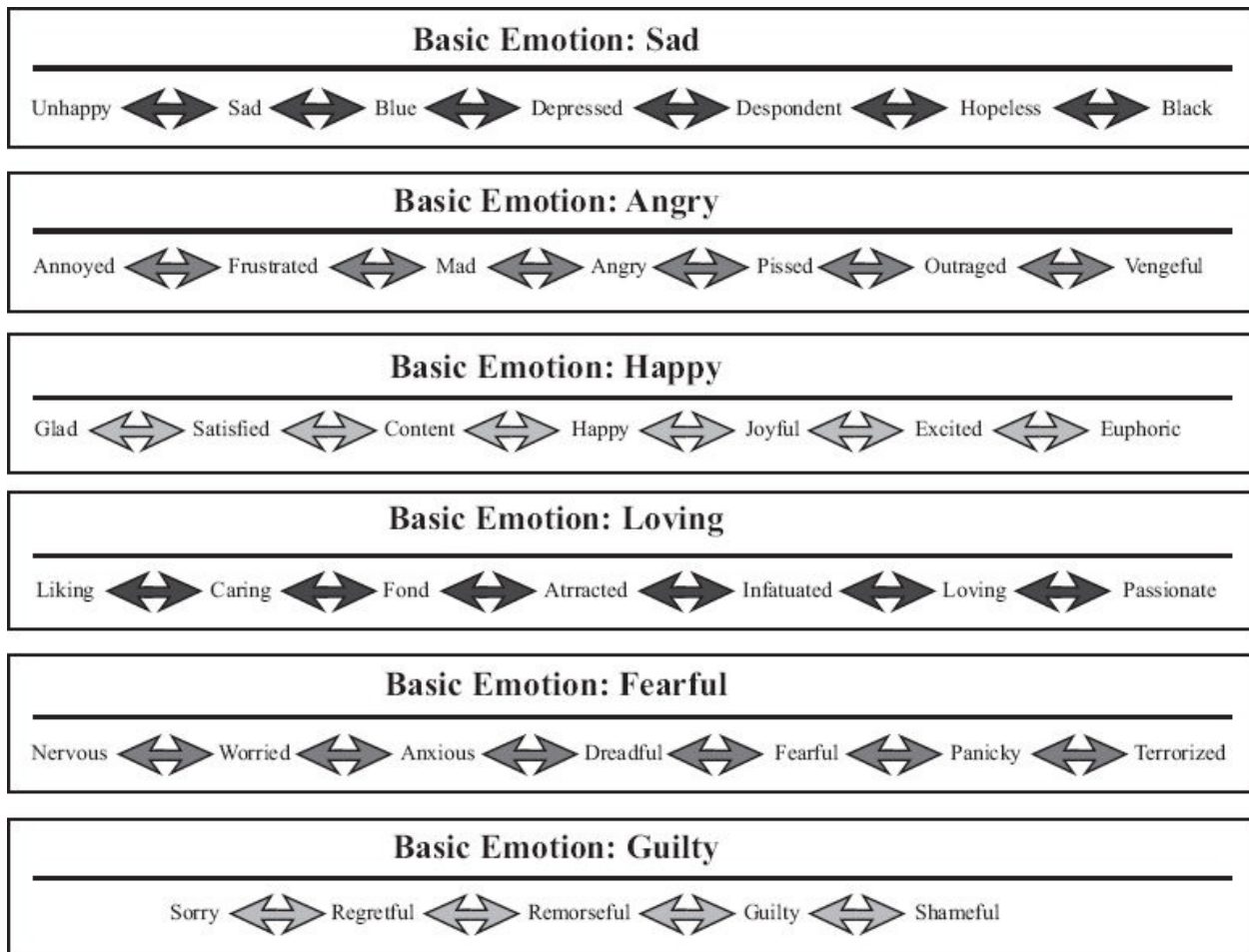


Note that we use Mood Momentum to continue or increase the emotions we want to keep around and Opposite to Emotion to decrease the emotions we want to change.

Emotions on a Continuum

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Identify lower intensities of an emotion for early intervention.

Emotions come with various intensity levels. Use Observe and Describe to notice lower-intensity emotions for early and proactive skill use. Although it is important to use skills with emotions of all intensities, skills work best when emotions are at their lower intensity levels.



Remember that we can rate any emotion on a continuum from 1 to 10 (low to high) or simply observe it as low, medium, or high. Also remember that we Observe and Describe emotions with Nonjudgmental Stance to avoid adding to or intensifying them.

Changing Your Relationship to Emotions

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Making an attempt to understand emotions changes our relationship to them.

Emotions are not good, bad, right, or wrong. The first step to changing our relationship to emotions is to become curious about them and use Nonjudgmental Stance. What purpose do they serve?

Emotions exist so we can connect and relate to other people and create meaningful relationships. They allow us to share joy and love with those around us and to be compassionate and empathic with others. Our emotions also communicate quickly to people around us without needing words. Emotions bring us together.

Emotions motivate us not only in relationships but also in other aspects of life. Often, they provide us with intuitive information that motivates our behavior without our thought. This emotional guidance can be highly effective in certain situations. It can even enable us to overcome seemingly impossible obstacles.

When our emotions seem to cloud our lives, such as when we are depressed or anxious or angry, it is important to remember that those emotions are still giving us important information. Rather than judging our emotions, we want to practice acceptance of them and open our minds to listen to their messages. When we reject emotions or try to “get rid” of them, it often has the effect of intensifying them; the message is not getting through, so it needs to get louder.

When others invalidate our emotions, those emotions often become more intense. Self-invalidation has the same effect. Practice nonjudgmental acceptance of your emotions and listen to their messages. Also, remember that emotions are not facts and that a healthy relationship to emotions comes from Wise Mind.

Mindfully “Hold” Emotions to Soothe and Reduce Suffering

■ **CORE CONCEPT:** Mindfulness of our emotions can soothe them.

When we try to get rid of, fight, or judge our emotions, we risk adding suffering to emotional pain. Like any rejection, these approaches create a negative counter-response. Our emotions are a part of us with information to share, and refusal to accept them increases their intensity.

Willingness to be with your emotions soothes them. It is like truly listening to a friend’s concern or sitting with another person’s distress without having to fix it. *Not* trying to fix your emotions and instead simply being present with them is a solution. Even strong emotions often do not require immediate action.

You can be present and “hold” your emotions through mindfulness. Holding emotions means that you recognize them as a part of your experience while also recognizing that they are not you. When we simply *be* with our emotions, we open ourselves to their ebbs and flows nonjudgmentally and usually find that the intensity subsides.

Observe your emotions without getting stuck, and practice Radical Acceptance when they are painful. If you do find your emotions to be overwhelming in the moment, change strategies and use distress tolerance skills. You can go back to mindfulness of your emotions when their intensity subsides a little.

You will find that emotions have important information for you, and they soothe themselves when we listen to them. Be open to relating to and learning from what your emotions have to say.

Build Positive Experience (BPE)

■ **CORE CONCEPT:** Positive events create positive emotions.

Emotions such as happiness do not just happen but are a byproduct of what we think and what we do: Positive events build positive emotion. As straightforward as this concept seems, it can be difficult to put into action when you are experiencing difficult times. Nonetheless, the bottom line is that *you have to invest in positive behaviors to have positive emotions.*

A lack of interest and energy can be barriers that prevent us from engaging in positive events. It is important to know that you cannot wait to feel interested and energetic. Instead you have to throw yourself into positive events in spite of these difficulties, and interest, energy, and enjoyment will eventually follow in time. This process works best when you invest in positive experiences without a strong desire or need to control the outcome and let positive emotions happen organically.

Other barriers sometimes exist too. For example, if you feel like you do not deserve positive experiences, if you worry about expectations, or if you dread the end of a positive experience, then treat these issues like distractions and use mindfulness to instead focus on the positive experiences.

Take a moment to look at your barriers and make a plan for how you will address them.

Describe your barriers to using Build Positive Experience:

Describe the skills you will use to address each barrier:

We can think of using Build Positive Experience in a few ways. We have positive experiences that are possible right now, positive experiences that we can plan and look forward to in the short term and positive experiences that we work toward step by step in the long term.

Positive events right now

What can be a positive event in the here and now or immediate future? Maybe it is a conversation, hearing or telling a joke, or helping someone. It might be taking a break, taking a quick walk, or taking a few minutes to practice mindfulness. You may find that the positive event is simply soaking in some sunshine, seeing rain wash everything clean, or feeling a warm breeze.

There is an enormous number of positive events that are possible now, sometimes occurring naturally around you without any effort on your part. You just need to turn your mind toward them and be open to participating in the experience with your full attention.

Positive events planned in the short term

These positive events can include a regular family meal, an outing alone or with a friend, a Friday movie night, or anything you can plan and schedule over the short term.

Start by listing the interests, hobbies, and activities you like to do (or used to do) and add activities to try from the Activities List in Module 9: Building a Satisfying Life. If you have a short list, you may have to develop some additional interests through trying out a lot of new activities with an open mind. Plan time for these positive events in your schedule and follow through with them.

Short-term positive events need to be regular occurrences and planned daily to be effective. Having regular positive events to look forward to moves you toward a satisfying life.

If interest and energy are low, it may take weeks to experience the benefits. Do not give up on the process or enter into judgments about not getting the desired outcomes right away. Participating in the journey will eventually get you to the destination.

Positive events to work toward in the long term

Make a list of your long-term priorities and goals. It may be going to school, learning a craft, making a career change, taking up an instrument, being in great physical shape, or having a vision for making a difference in the world.

physical steps, or having a vision for making a difference in the world.

Pick something from your list and break it down into manageable steps. Plan and schedule time to work on that first step, and follow through on it. As you accomplish each step, give yourself credit and plan the next step. A thousand-mile journey starts with a single step.

Your work toward long-term positives is a major part of building a satisfying life. Remember that some steps can be hard or frustrating. Do not give up, and stay focused on what you want in the long term.

Positive event planning, scheduling, and your routine

You may not know what to do to Build Positive Experience or how to plan these experiences. As stated earlier, first, you should identify possible positive experiences and schedule them, or they are less likely to happen (see the Activities List and Using ROUTINE (RO), both in Module 9: Building a Satisfying Life). Then you have to follow through with your plan using Opposite to Emotion when needed.

Mindfulness and positive events

Using Build Positive Experience requires your mindfulness skills to be effective. Stay focused on the event and not when it will end, how your expectations might change, or anything else that could take away from the experience.

Describe how your life will be different when you effectively use Build Positive Experience:

Emotion Regulation 5: Build Positive Experience

CORE CONCEPT: Use this worksheet to monitor the use of Build Positive Experience.

Identify at least one positive experience for each day this week, including the details of where and when you will participate in those experiences. Also record your distress and/ or urge levels before and after the mindful participation in each positive experience. Notice how positive experiences tend to be beneficial to improving emotions and managing urges. Check off the completion of your daily use of Build Positive Experience (BPE).

Monday BPE: _____ Where and when:

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Tuesday BPE: _____ Where and when:

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Wednesday BPE: _____ Where and when:

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Thursday BPE: _____ Where and when:

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Friday BPE: _____ Where and when:

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Saturday BPE: _____ Where and when:

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Sunday BPE: _____ Where and when:

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after:

Attend to Relationships (A2R)

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Use Attend to Relationships to keep relationships healthy and to create positive emotions.

Life events, problems, and symptoms can disrupt our relationships. We may have neglected friends and family or have simply lost track of those connections. At other times, we may have actively damaged relationships or burned others out with our struggles. We may be lonely, and isolation tends to create and maintain unwanted emotions.

Attending to relationships is a way to Build Positive Experience that tends to create positive emotions over time. When you use this skill, remember to also use the skills in the Interpersonal Effectiveness module, Nonjudgmental Stance, and Opposite to Emotion.

Remember that we get out of relationships what we put into them. Actively invest in friends, family, co-workers, neighbors, etc., and the dividends will follow.

Emotion Regulation 6: Attend to Relationships

Start with two lists of people: those who are currently in your life and those from the past who you would want in your life again. Only list people with whom you currently have or previously had an overall positive connection. *Do not list unhealthy people or people with whom you have had hopeless relationships.*

These people are in my life now:

Describe how you can better attend to each person and how you can repair relationships if needed:

These are people from my past with whom I would like to be reconnected:

Describe how you can reconnect with at least one person on this list, how you can attend to that person, and how you can repair the relationship if needed:

If you find that your lists are short, you are not alone. Many of us need new people in our lives for a variety of reasons; start thinking about making new relationships.

Describe your resources and places where you might reach out for new relationships:

Describe the other skills (in addition to Attend to Relationships) you will use to start making new relationships:

Describe how your life will be different when you effectively use Attend to Relationships:

relationships:



Mood Momentum (MM)

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Notice positive moods and choose skills and behaviors to keep them going.

We influence emotions with the behaviors we choose. When we Observe and Describe an emotion that we want to continue to experience, we can use Mood Momentum. This skill directs us to stay involved in events and thoughts that keep our positive emotions around so we can benefit from the momentum of already feeling well.

Emotions tend to unconsciously draw us to behaviors that are congruent or fit with them. Mood Momentum is a mindful effort to choose these mood-congruent behaviors when they will be helpful. Ways to continue positive moods include the following:

- Engage in using Build Positive Experience.
- Balance using Build Positive Experience with using Build Mastery.
- Use mindfulness to reflect on a positive emotion.
- Engage in using PLEASED.
- Balance active positive events with relaxing positive events.
- Engage in healthy relationships.
- Work on a responsibility and stay mindful of your efforts and accomplishments (and distract from judgments).
- Practice mindfulness exercises.
- Work on a hobby or project or try something on the Activities List in Module 9: Building a Satisfying Life.
- Think of other ways you can use Mood Momentum.

An important aspect of Mood Momentum is to pick from a variety of positive experiences, activities, and behaviors to keep it interesting. Even the most fun or relaxing event will eventually reach the point where it no longer creates a positive effect. We benefit most from Mood Momentum when we take a balanced approach, switch up our strategies, and keep it fresh.

Opposite to Emotion (O2E)

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Use Opposite to Emotion (also known as Opposite Action) to get unstuck from ineffective behaviors that arise from certain emotional states.

We get stuck in negative or ineffective emotional states partly as a result of mood-congruent behavior. Mood-congruent behavior occurs when, without awareness, we fall into behavior patterns that keep certain emotions around. For example, when we feel depressed, we may perform the following actions or inactions:

- Get isolated (e.g., be disconnected from relationships, not answer the phone, miss social engagements and appointments)
- Be inactive (e.g., stay in bed or on the couch, not participate in hobbies or potentially positive experiences, let the chores at home and other responsibilities pile up)
- Engage in stuck thinking (e.g., focus only on the negative, ruminate, want to die)
- Neglect self-care and hygiene
- Eat and sleep too much or too little
- Decide to stop therapy and medications
- Engage in other behaviors that perpetuate negative emotional states.

Unfortunately, these automatic reactions to depression keep us depressed and may even make it worse. This is where Opposite to Emotion is helpful. This dialectical skill directs us to act in ways that are the opposite of the behaviors toward which our difficult emotions pull us. For the depressive examples just given, we would use Opposite to Emotion to:

- Reach out to others with whom we have relationships for help and positive experience
- Get moving by doing activities, hobbies, and important tasks; use ROUTINE, the Activities List in Module 9: Building a Satisfying Life, Build Positive Experience, or Build Mastery, or engage in distress

tolerance skills

- Practice dialectics, take a Nonjudgmental Stance, or use Encouragement
- Use PLEASED
- Go to therapy appointments and discuss medication issues with your prescriber before making changes
- Use other skills to address additional behaviors that perpetuate negative emotional states.

See the following explanations and examples for ways to use Opposite to Emotion to address common difficult emotions.

Opposite to Emotion with anxiety or fear

We tend to avoid when we feel anxiety and fear. We also tend to ruminate on anxious thoughts. Avoidance gets reinforced because it protects us from distress. However, the more we avoid, the more our anxieties build over time and the more we end up feeling overwhelmed. In addition, avoidance results in our world getting smaller and smaller.

Using Opposite to Emotion means approaching our fears one step at a time and learning to tolerate the distress that comes with it. To do this effectively, we use mindfulness to desensitize ourselves and distress tolerance when we feel too overwhelmed. The more we approach rather than avoid, the more our nervous system learns to be “bored” and the less anxious we feel.

With some fears we might not go one step at a time, instead choosing to jump fully in. Going all in to approach a fear is like jumping into a cold swimming pool: At first it is shocking, but then your system acclimates. Whether you take on a fear one step at a time or go all in depends on the situation, so choose your strategy according to what will be most effective for you.

Last, we can also learn to accept our anxious thoughts rather than fight them or catastrophize about them. This approach takes the power out of the thoughts.

Opposite to Emotion with anger

We often want to lash out with words or behavior when we feel anger, and we may replay the situation we are angry about over and over in our minds. Using

may replay the situation we are angry about over and over in our minds. Using Opposite to Emotion includes avoiding the person you are angry with until you calm down while also being kind and compassionate to others, choosing to spend quality time with our pets, friends, and/or family, and being careful to be gentle and not to displace our anger onto others.

Additionally, we might imagine compassion for the person we feel anger toward (which is difficult to do sometimes). Remember that most people (including ourselves) do not want to make mistakes and do not want others to be angry at them, no matter how unskillfully they act. Compassion can be dialectically balanced with accountability.

We can also distract ourselves from angry thoughts and from replaying situations that cause anger by using the Thoughts skill. Count to 100 or recite the alphabet, or focus on thoughts that are the opposite of angry thoughts.

However, Opposite to Emotion with anger does not mean denying or stuffing anger, because this sets the stage for rage. After you have calmed your anger by using Opposite to Emotion, see whether the emotion fits Wise Mind and use interpersonal effectiveness skills to address the situation with others if needed.

Opposite to Emotion with guilt and shame

We feel guilt when we have done something to hurt ourselves or others or when we make mistakes. Often we try to avoid or hide from others when we feel guilt, or we try to blame or otherwise avoid accepting responsibility for our actions.

Using Opposite to Emotion means addressing what we did or the mistake that we made with whoever was affected. We apologize and try to make the situation better if possible. If we cannot make the situation better, we try to do something better somewhere else; this is a symbolic way to right a wrong. Be committed to not repeating the same mistakes and develop a plan to act differently in the future.

Remember that a genuine apology is for the benefit of the other person and not a means of avoiding consequences. Other people may still be upset for a time after your apology. Be patient with the process. Accept consequences with grace unless they do not fit the situation as evaluated in Wise Mind. *Do not participate in guilt or consequences that are out of proportion with the situation.*

After you have completed the steps listed here, let go of the situation and the

thoughts that caused the guilt. Use Radical Acceptance.

Sometimes guilt does *not* fit Wise Mind. For example, we have a right to say no and to have boundaries, and we do not need to feel guilty for exerting this right. At other times, we experience guilt in the absence of wrongdoing for a variety of reasons. Examples include feeling guilty for practicing Self-Soothe skills, for having a good time, or for taking time for ourselves. This type of guilt leads us to avoid behaviors such as saying no, setting boundaries, and participating in beneficial activities.

When we have guilt that does not fit Wise Mind, the Opposite to Emotion is to approach rather than avoid. Keep practicing saying no, setting boundaries, and participating in activities until you no longer feel guilty. Remember to use REASON and Encouragement to address your thoughts and judgments that prompt guilt. We need to coach ourselves in these situations!

We feel shame when guilt is not addressed, when we have done something serious, or when something serious has happened to us. Shame involves experiencing judgments about being damaged, unlovable, or unforgivable as a person.

We can also feel shame for how we look or who we are as people even when it does not fit Wise Mind. This type of shame frequently originates from others' judgments and from being mistreated. Shame causes us to hide, and hiding keeps the shame around.

Using Opposite to Emotion with shame involves coming out of hiding and talking about what causes us shame with *someone safe, nonjudgmental, and accepting*. As we work through shame, we can often open ourselves up to more and more supportive people and begin to heal. The process of working through shame also requires a Nonjudgmental Stance and distress tolerance skills.

Opposite to Emotion with other emotions

We can use Opposite to Emotion with other emotions too. For example, you might feel attraction or love toward someone who is not worthy of it or who mistreats you, and those emotions keep you engaging in the ineffective relationship. In this case Opposite to Emotion would involve avoiding this person, blocking his or her advances to engage in the relationship, and reminding yourself why the person is not healthy for you. You might also approach other

relationships.

As another example, we have times when we feel jealous and go on the offensive toward the person we are jealous of or try to overcontrol the people involved in the event causing the jealousy. In this situation the Opposite to Emotion would be avoiding going on the offensive and letting go of the tendency to control others.

A last example is feeling unmotivated or like you do not “feel like” doing a behavior that you know will be helpful. You consequently avoid doing what you know to be effective, whether that is doing the dishes, going for a walk, engaging in a conversation, or doing whatever is needed. We all have these moments, usually every day. Of course you can use mindfulness to explore the reasons you don’t feel like doing the thing you are avoiding, but the Opposite to Emotion is to follow the Nike slogan and ‘just do it’. An oversimplification? Maybe, but there is a reason that this almost 30-year-old slogan resonates with so many people.

In your use of Opposite to Emotion, consider one final note. Whether or not your emotion or the intensity of it is justified depends on the situation, the facts, and other potential factors. Opposite to Emotion is not meant to invalidate the real emotions we experience. Instead, Opposite to Emotion is intended to get us unstuck from prolonged and overly intense emotional states by recognizing behaviors that do not work and instead choosing those opposite behaviors that are more effective. In other words: Do less of what does not work and more of what does in order to change your emotions.

Emotion Regulation 7: Opposite to Emotion

CORE CONCEPT: Use this worksheet to practice Opposite to Emotion.

Describe your current emotion:

Describe what actions (or inactions) this emotion is pulling you to do (what is mood congruent?):

Describe the predicted outcomes from these actions (or inactions):

Describe how you can use Opposite to Emotion:

Describe the predicted outcomes from your use of Opposite to Emotion:

Describe how your life will be different when you effectively use Opposite to Emotion:

Do your A-B-Cs: Accumulate Positives, Build Mastery, and Cope Ahead

- **CORE CONCEPT:** The A-B-Cs keep you balanced in the present and immediate future.

The A-B-Cs capture important elements for emotion regulation and health. We do better emotionally when we focus on positives, take care of important tasks and responsibilities, and develop coping plans for troubles we can anticipate. Of course you will also notice the parallels between A-B-Cs and Build Positive Experience, Build Mastery, and developing skills plans.

Use the acronym A-B-C to remember the building blocks (**A**ccumulate positives, **B**uild Mastery, and **C**ope ahead) of this skill. The building blocks of this skill are described in the following paragraphs.

Accumulate Positives

Positives are consistently around us if we open ourselves to them. However, we often hold on to a negative and let it overshadow our other experiences. For example:

- We remember one person who treats us rudely and fail to recognize several people who treat us with kindness and respect.
- We stay fixated on a problem and do not notice what has gone well or according to plan.
- We overfocus on negatives and fail to notice positives happening naturally in our environment.

The first part of accumulating positives is to recognize the positives that go unnoticed. Add those up!

Next, involve yourself in activities and build positive experiences that you can do right now. Check the Activities List in Module 9: Building a Satisfying Life, choose an activity and do it, or use the Build Positive Experience skill. Engage in what is happening around you, including attending to people and relationships with the Attend to Relationships skill. Be mindful and participate in the moment

with the Attend to Relationships skill. Be mindful and participate in the moment.

Longer term, think about your priorities, goals, and values. What is important to you and what do you want to work toward? Work on the Building a Satisfying Life module.

Build Mastery

Do what makes you feel competent and in control. Take care of your home environment or throw yourself into completing a task that has gone undone. When you have completed a chore or task or when you have taken a step toward a larger goal, take a few moments to appreciate the accomplishment and give yourself credit. See the Build Mastery skill for more details.

Cope Ahead

Most of us have hot-button situations in which we are vulnerable to ineffective behaviors. Think of one of these situations. Next, imagine yourself in this situation, but, instead of imagining your ineffective reactions, picture yourself responding and coping with your skills. Continue to replay the coping response to the situation over and over in your mind. This is called “imaginal rehearsal.” After you have visualized how to cope ahead, write down the details of your hot-button situation and the skills you imagined using to deal with it effectively.

Take the information and skills you imagined and formulate a written plan for coping that you can refer to later.

Your Emotions and Your Body: Discovering the Connection

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Your emotions and body communicate and influence one another.

Our minds, including emotional experiences, and our bodies are connected and can influence one another for better or worse. The good news is that, when you are aware of the connection, you can mindfully influence your emotions for the better. Consider the following examples:

- Depressed people frequently slouch and avoid eye contact. Sitting up straight with a confident posture and making eye contact are incompatible with depressed emotions. Changing how you hold your body and making eye contact can make a difference in the level of depression you feel.
- When life is difficult you can adopt a serene expression on your face, often referred to as a half-smile. The half-smile communicates acceptance to your mind, making changes in the emotional impact of your difficulties. Alternatively you can look in the mirror, make a “V” with your first and second fingers, and push up the corners of your mouth. Maybe this is a silly example, but give it a try. Doing something silly can be a great break from feeling an intense emotion!
- Anxious or angry people can decrease the intensity of these emotions through practicing muscle relaxation, deep breathing, and being mindful of how they are holding or communicating with their bodies.

Of course positive emotions are also reflected in our bodies. Any time you are aware of your emotions, or your body, check in on how they are influencing one another and make adjustments accordingly.

Module 5

Interpersonal Effectiveness

Introduction to Interpersonal Effectiveness

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Interpersonal skills lead to healthy relationships.

Interpersonal effectiveness enables us to make and maintain relationships, resolve conflict when it occurs, and get our and others' wants and needs met effectively in a balanced manner.

This module has three main sets of skills: FAST, GIVE, and DEAR MAN. FAST skills build self-respect. You have a relationship with yourself, and the way that you talk to yourself and the behaviors you choose affect how you feel about yourself. FAST skills orient us to make choices and act in relationships in ways that increase our self-respect. Self-respect is based on actions grounded in our priorities, goals, and values. Respecting yourself provides the foundation for skill use in your relationships with others.

GIVE skills are other-focused. We want to treat others with care, interest, validation, and respect. This approach allows us to form and nurture meaningful relationships that will enrich our lives. GIVE also enables us to be dialectic in conflicts so we can resolve them effectively.

DEAR MAN is assertiveness that is self-focused. We use DEAR MAN to get our wants and needs met more reliably, to say no, to set boundaries with others, and to negotiate when needed.

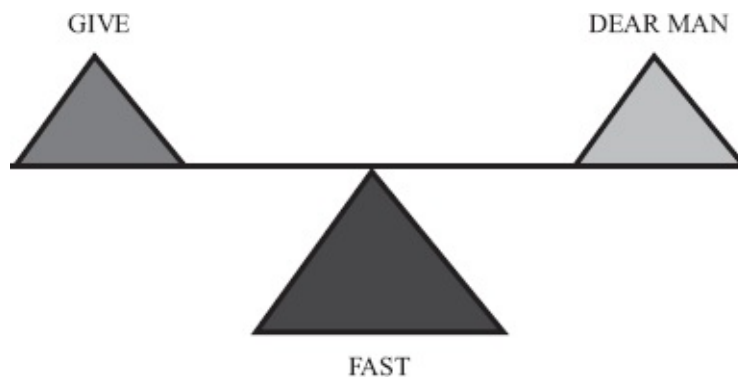
We use all three sets of skills to be effective in our relationships. Remember to role-play and practice these skills consistently.

Interpersonal Effectiveness Dialectics

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Relationships require balance and working the middle ground.

Dialectics are central to healthy relationships. Being too other-focused or too self-focused leads to unmet wants and needs and conflict. Instead, we attempt to find balance in relationships, and that balance differs based on the nature of the relationship along with the context of the situation.

Think of GIVE and DEAR MAN existing on a dialectic:



At times we need to focus on others and at other times we need to focus on ourselves. In practice, we are most effective when we blend both sets of skills. The blend between thinking about others versus ourselves is grounded in FAST. We use our values to guide us in relationships to enhance our self-respect and others' respect for us.

To find interpersonal balance, ask yourself three questions when working the dialectic in relationships: **1.** What does the other person need in this interaction (GIVE)?

2. What do I need in this interaction (DEAR MAN)?

3. What is needed in this interaction to maintain or build my self-respect (FAST)?

The answers to these questions will be a reliable guide. Remember that all healthy relationships are based on reciprocity. Be willing to balance give and take and to be there for others if you want them to be there for you.

take and to be there for others if you want them to be there for you.

FAST (F)

■ **CORE CONCEPT:** Self-respect and healthy relationships start with you.

FAST skills are focused on our priorities, goals, and values so we can make choices that build our self-respect. Self-respect is the foundation to liking ourselves, and it creates a solid base for us to build and maintain relationships with others.

Use the acronym FAST to remember the building blocks (**F**air, **A**pologies not needed, **S**tick to values, **T**ruth and accountability) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Fair

Be just and take a Nonjudgmental Stance with yourself and others. Avoid extremes and ground yourself in Wise Mind in interactions with others. Think of fair weather as being neither too hot nor too cold and without storms. Keep a moderate climate with others without whipping up bad weather. Use respectful words and actions with yourself and others. Others do *not* need to earn your respect. We treat others with respect because it builds our own self-worth. Respond rather than react in relationships.

Apologies not needed

Do not engage in unneeded apologetic behavior. Do not apologize for having an opinion or for your own viewpoints. You are allowed to disagree. Do not apologize for being you. Avoid apologies for things over which you have no control. Chronic, unnecessary apologies erode self-respect and devalue apologies that are genuinely needed. Note that “no apologies” does not apply to situations that require an apology (e.g., hurting someone).

Stick to values

Use your priorities, goals, and values as guides and ground yourself in them. Choose behaviors and have interactions with others that build your self-respect. Identify what is important to you and stick to it. Know what values are non-negotiable and, when values conflict, work to resolve the conflict through Wise

Mind. Live your life grounded in values.

Truth and accountability

Be honest and accountable with yourself and others. Sometimes we avoid the truth because we are afraid of the consequences, but trying to deceive others destroys self-respect and often causes greater problems. Even if you have a great memory and can keep from getting tangled in a web of lies, *you* will still know the truth. Being accountable is more effective in most cases.

In addition, act in a manner that respects your true abilities and avoid feigned helplessness, exaggerations, and an excuse orientation to life. Take responsibility for yourself.

Interpersonal Effectiveness 1: Values Application 1

CORE CONCEPT: Identify values and how to express them through behavior.

This is a partial list of values. You might have a value that is not on the list or notice some overlap between values. Review the list and circle your top 10 values. Use your selected values in the exercise that follows.

Acceptance

Achievement

Activity

Adaptability

Adventurousness

Affectionateness

Altruism

Ambition

Assertiveness

Attentiveness

Availability

Awareness

Balance

Belongingness

Bravery

Calm

Capability

Caring

Challenge

Charity

Cleanliness

Closeness

Comfort

Commitment

Compassion

Confidence

Connection

Consistency

Contentment

Contribution

Cooperation

Courage

Courteousness

Creativity

Credibility

Decisiveness

Dependability

Determination

Devotion

Dignity

Discipline

Discretion

Diversity

Drive

Duty

Education

Effectiveness

Empathy

Encouragement

Endurance

Energy

Enjoyment

Enthusiasm

Excellence

Exploration

Expressiveness

Fairness

Faith

Family

Fidelity

Financial independence

Firmness

Fitness

Freedom

Friendship

Fun

Generosity

Giving

Grace

Gratitude

Happiness

Harmony

Health

Honesty

Honor

Hopefulness

Humility

Humor

Hygiene

Imagination

Independence

Integrity

Intelligence

Intensity

Intimacy

Joy

Kindness

Knowledge

Leadership

Learning

Love

Loyalty

Mindfulness

Modesty

Motivation

Neatness

Openness

Optimism

Order

Passion

Peace

Persistence

Playfulness

Pleasantness

Pleasure

Popularity

Practicality

Pragmatism

Privacy

Professionalism

Prosperity

Relaxation

Reliability

Religion

Resilience

Resoluteness

Respect

Restraint

Sacrifice

Security

Self-control

Self-reliance

Sensitivity

Service

Sharing

Simplicity

Sincerity

Spirituality

Spontaneity

Stability

Strength

Structure

Success

Support

Teamwork

Thankfulness

Thoughtfulness

Trust

Truth

Usefulness

Warmth

Willingness

Wisdom

Once your values are identified, you can describe specific behaviors that you can practice to live your values with intention. The following are examples of how you can complete this exercise: I value: **Truth**

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

1. Fill out my diary card more accurately
2. Tell important others when I make a mistake
3. Stop hiding liquor bottles in the garage

I value: **Friendship**

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

1. Return phone calls from my friends
2. Respect Tammy's boundaries
3. Practice GIVE skills in group

I value: **Peace**

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

1. Not yell at my wife and kids when I am angry
2. Practice MINDFULNESS exercises in the morning and at bedtime
3. Use RADICAL ACCEPTANCE to stop beating myself up for mistakes

I value: **Giving**

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

1. Give my group feedback on what they are doing well
2. Donate possessions that I have not used for a year
3. Be present in my relationships

Now it's your turn.

I value: _____

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

I value: _____

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

I value: _____

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

I value: _____

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

I value: _____

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

I value: _____

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

I value: _____

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:

I value: _____

Describe three specific ways you can live this value:



Interpersonal Effectiveness 2: Values Application 2

CORE CONCEPT: Identify values and decide which ones you want to express more through your behavior.

This exercise illustrates how values get expressed in your life through behaviors you choose. Each value on the list has two corresponding statements, one that endorses that you already “live” the value and one that endorses a desire to express the value to a greater degree.

For each value your options are to:

- not check either of the statements under the value, meaning that the value is not important in your life
- check only the first statement under the value, meaning that you already express the value in your life
- check only the second statement under the value, meaning that you do not express the value in your life but would like to, or,
- check both statements under the value, meaning that you already express the value in your life *and* would like to express the value even more.

For each statement you check, consider (and perhaps write down) what behaviors you engage in that demonstrate to yourself and others that the value is important in your life. Try to increase behaviors in your life that reflect your core values. Values plus behaviors that reflect them equate to self-respect.

Acceptance

- I practice acceptance in my life.
- I would like to practice more acceptance in my life.

Achievement

- I work toward achieving my goals.
- I would like to achieve more of my goals.

Activity

- I involve myself in activities.
- I would like to be more involved in activities.

Adventurousness

- I am adventurous and take safe chances.
- I would like to be more adventurous and take more safe chances.

Affectionateness

- I show affection toward other people.
- I would like to be more affectionate with other people.

Assertiveness

- I can be appropriately assertive with other people.
- I would like to be more appropriately assertive with other people.

Belonging

- I feel like I belong in my family, at work, and/or with people important to me.
- I would like to feel more like I belong in my family, at work, and/or with people important to me.

Calm

- I am calm with other people and in stressful situations.
- I would like to be more calm with other people and in stressful situations.

Capability

- I have the skills and abilities to accomplish tasks.
- I would like to develop my skills and abilities to accomplish tasks.

Caring

- I show caring toward myself and others.
- I would like to be more caring with myself and/or other people.

Commitment

- I show commitment to my goals and to other people.
- I would like to be more committed to my goals and/or other people.

Confidence

- I am confident in my abilities and show confidence to other people.
- I would like to develop confidence in my abilities and to show it to other people.

Consistency

- I follow through with expectations and tasks consistently.
- I would like to follow through with expectations and tasks more consistently.

Contribution

I contribute to those around me and my community.

I would like to contribute more to other people and my community.

Cooperation

I am cooperative and work with other people.

I would like to be more cooperative and work with other people.

Creativity

I have creative pursuits and/or can solve problems in creative ways.

I would like to have more creative pursuits and/or show more creative problem-solving.

Decisiveness

I am able to make decisions with relative ease.

I would like to make decisions more easily.

Dependability

I am dependable and people can count on me.

I would like to be more dependable to other people.

Determination

I am determined in reaching my goals.

I would like to show more determination toward reaching my goals

Diversity

I appreciate diversity in culture and/or ideas.

I would like to be more appreciative of diversity in culture and/or ideas.

Education

I engage in learning new ideas and skills.

I would like to engage more in learning new ideas and skills.

Empathy

I understand and share in the feelings of other people.

I would like to better understand and share in the feelings of other people.

Fairness

I act without bias and in an evenhanded way with other people.

I would like to act with less bias and in a more evenhanded way with other people.

Family

I place a high priority on family.

I would like to prioritize my family more.

Financial independence

I adequately support myself (and my dependents) financially.

I would like to better support myself (and my dependents) financially.

Fitness

- I maintain good physical health.
- I would like to achieve better physical health.

Friendship

- I am a true friend to other people.
- I would like to be a better friend to other people.

Fun

- I regularly have a good time in life.
- I would like to have more good times in life.

Generosity

- I am unselfish and give toward other people.
- I would like to be more unselfish and give more to other people.

Grace

- I approach people and situations with grace.
- I would like to be more graceful in how I approach people and situations.

Gratitude

- I am thankful for other people and what I have.
- I would like to be more thankful for other people and what I have.

Happiness

- I experience a sense of well-being and contentment in life.

- I would like to experience a greater sense of well-being and contentment in life.

Health

- I take care of my health.
- I would like to take better care of my health.

Honesty

- I am an honest person.
- I would like to be more honest.

Humility

- I am humble about my accomplishments.
- I would like to show more humility about my accomplishments.

Independence

- I am able to do things on my own and take care of myself.
- I would like to be more able to do things on my own and take care of myself.

Kindness

- I treat others in a nice and concerned way.
- I would like to treat others more nicely and with more concern.

Knowledge

I have information and facts in regard to a number of different areas.

I would like to have more information and facts in regard to a greater number of areas.

Leadership

I am able to guide other people through my positive example.

I would like to better guide other people through my positive example.

Love

I share mutual attraction and affection with other people.

I would like to have more mutual attraction and affection with other people.

Loyalty

I show faith and devotion to people around me.

I would like to show more faith and devotion to people around me.

Mindfulness

I practice being in the moment, on purpose, nonjudgmentally.

I would like to practice being in the moment, on purpose, nonjudgmentally, more often.

Peace

I have calm, tranquility, and quiet in my life.

I would like to have more calm, tranquility, and quiet in my life.

Persistence

- I work toward goals without giving up until I accomplish them.
- I would like to work toward goals until I accomplish them without giving up.

Relaxation

- I take time to unwind and relax.
- I would like to take more time to unwind and relax.

Reliability

- I am dependable and follow through consistently with other people.
- I would like to be more dependable and follow through with more consistency with other people.

Resilience

- I am able to cope with the ups and downs of life.
- I would like to be better able to cope with the ups and downs of life.

Respect

- I show respect to myself and other people.
- I would like to show more respect to myself and other people.

Self-control

- I am in control of my words and behavior.

I would like to have more control of my words and behavior.

Service

I place importance on doing things for other people and/or important causes.

I would like to place more importance on doing things for other people and/or important causes.

Simplicity

I keep my life uncomplicated.

I would like to make my life less complicated.

Spirituality

I involve myself in a spiritual practice.

I would like to be involved or more involved in a spiritual practice.

Stability

I keep myself mentally, emotionally, and behaviorally healthy.

I would like to be more mentally, emotionally, and behaviorally healthy.

Trust

I am seen as reliable, good, and honest by other people.

I would like to be seen as more reliable, good, and honest by other people.

Willingness

I am flexible and do what is needed with other people and in situations.

I would like to be more flexible and to better do what is needed with other people and in situations.

Wisdom

I am seen as knowledgeable and experienced, with sound judgment, by other people.

I would like to be seen as more knowledgeable and experienced, with sound judgment, by other people.

Interpersonal Effectiveness 3: Values Conflict Application

CORE CONCEPT: Use this worksheet to resolve value conflicts.

Most of us know the phrase “that person has their priorities mixed up.” It implies that a person’s values are in conflict and that an ineffective course of action has been taken. In other words, the person is making choices without considering important priorities, goals, and values.

We frequently have these conflicts. When they happen, we try to decide what will best meet the demands of the situation while still maintaining our self-respect. Use the following exercise to help you resolve value conflicts.

Describe the situation nonjudgmentally:

Describe the priorities, goals, and values that are in conflict:

Rank these priorities, goals, and values from most to least important:

Describe options that either follow your top-ranked value(s) or that show adequate respect across values:

Evaluate the options (see Pros and Cons and SOLVED). Describe a course of action from Wise Mind that maintains or builds self-respect:

Note: Occasionally we must make choices that sacrifice important values. Make these decisions from Wise Mind and only when the outcome is essential.

GIVE (G)

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Focus on others to build and maintain relationships.

GIVE skills focus on others. We build and maintain relationships by balancing our own wants, needs, and desires with those of the people around us. Everyone benefits from healthier relationships grounded in genuine interest and validation. GIVE is also key to resolving conflicts.

Use the acronym GIVE to remember the building blocks (Genuine, Interested, Validate, Easy manner) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Genuine

Be honest, sincere, and real with others. Speak and act from your heart with caring and use mindfulness to be with others in the moment. Let others know that you value them and treat them with respect.

Interested

Interest comes from efforts to connect with a person. Let others have the focus. Listen intently to others and pause to make space before responding. Ask questions and listen to the answers.

Be mindful of your nonverbal communication. Our nonverbals communicate a great deal of information to others, both intentionally and unintentionally. Send the nonverbal messages that you want to send to others. Nonverbally, interest is communicated by looking at the person, making appropriate eye contact, and keeping your mannerisms and posture open and relaxed.

Validate

Validation is the nonjudgmental acknowledgment of others' feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and experience. To validate you "walk a mile in someone else's shoes" and see life from his or her perspective. We validate when we find others' truth and how their experiences make sense given their life circumstances and the

situation. Remember to validate *yourself*, too.

Easy manner

Remember the idiom “you catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.” Having an easy manner means treating others with kindness and a relaxed attitude. It also means not being heavy handed with our judgments, opinions, and viewpoints. Allow space for others.

Remember that we can always raise our interpersonal intensity if necessary but that it is often more effective to start out in a relatively relaxed and laid-back manner.

Last, learn and use polite manners. Being easy-going and polite is kind to others, and actually opens a lot of doors for you too!

Listening (L)

■ **CORE CONCEPT:** Listen in order to demonstrate that you care.

Listening is a skill that requires mindfulness and practice. To listen well, we must let go of distractions, especially our own thoughts, and focus our attention on what is being said in the moment. We also need to practice Nonjudgmental Stance to listen accurately. When we Observe ourselves being defensive or planning what to say in response, we have probably lost some of the accuracy of our listening. Go back to listening using One-Mindfulness and attend to what others are saying.

Many of us have an unconscious resistance to listening. When others say, “listen to me,” there is often an implied “agree with me” or “follow my directions.” These unconscious assumptions can get in the way. Remember that listening does not have to mean agreement or compliance.

Reflective listening is an effective way to practice listening and to validate. With reflective listening, we mirror (or reflect) back what the other person said, either exactly or by paraphrasing the central themes. Our reflective responses can be brief. The goal is to stay attentive in the conversation and make sure we hear others, sometimes listening to what is “behind” the words.

Reflective listening is a skill that can feel awkward at first. Practice reflective listening in role-plays and in conversations. When using this skill, resist the urge to respond with your own material and instead keep the focus on others through reflection. With time and practice, you will notice that effective listening creates positive changes in relationships and maybe a decrease in conflicts.

VALIDATION (V)

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Use validation to connect to others.

Validation is a complicated skill. Use this expanded teaching to learn a more advanced approach to the validation component of GIVE.

Use the acronym VALIDATE to remember the building blocks (Value others, Ask questions, Listen and reflect, Identify with others, Discuss emotions, Attend to nonverbals, Turn the mind, Encourage participation) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Value others

Seeking the inherent value in others is essential to validation. Adopt an attitude of acceptance toward others. Demonstrate your caring and concern, and let others know they are important to you.

Ask questions

We ask questions to help clarify others' experience. Ask specific questions about what others are feeling. Ask about thoughts and beliefs. Be genuinely curious about what is behind behaviors. Use questions to draw out others' experience.

Listen and reflect

Listen to others' answers to your questions and reflect back the major themes. Invite others to confirm your understanding (or lack of understanding). Continue to question, listen, and reflect for clarity.

Identify with others

Work to see the world through the eyes of others. How do relationships and the world make sense to *them*? Seek to understand others, identifying when you can and accepting differences when you cannot.

Discuss emotions

Talk about others' feelings and how they affect them from *their* perspective (not how their feelings affect you). Acknowledging the impact of others' experience on them demonstrates understanding.

Attend to nonverbals

Notice others' nonverbal communication to give you information about their experience. Do they look open or closed? Are they making eye contact? Read facial expressions and body language to identify feelings, and then check out your observations with others for accuracy.

Turn the mind

Validation does not mean that we agree with others. Validation means that we nonjudgmentally accept what they feel, think, and experience and how behaviors make sense given their context. Turn the mind toward validation, especially when it is difficult to relate. Turning the mind is especially important in conflicts.

Encourage participation

Validation can be a difficult process at times, so we need to encourage ourselves and others to be engaged with each other. Do not give up, even when understanding is hard, when you feel disconnected, or when you are in conflict with others.

What Validation Is Not

- **CORE CONCEPT:** These interactions can be confused with validation.

Validation is complex and takes practice. Another way to improve this skill is to understand interactions that are not experienced as validation. The following ways of relating with others often get confused with validation. Some of these ways of relating can work, but we want to minimize their use or use them in balance with accurate validation.

Personalizing others' experience

Keep the focus on the other person. One or maybe two self-statements that communicate your similar experience can be validating, but, when we start to tell our own story, the focus leaves the other person.

Getting too absorbed

Validation is about connection with others' experience *but not getting absorbed into it*. We can validate without taking on others' distress. *Be with* others in distress without *being* their distress. Also avoid taking on someone as a "project." We can show concern and connection without being responsible for the feelings of others.

"Fixing," offering solutions, or giving advice

These strategies are effective in some situations, but they are on the opposite end of the dialectic from validation. Most of us do not need our situations to be fixed, or we already know how to do it ourselves. Instead, we are looking for acknowledgment and understanding.

Cheerleading and encouragement

These approaches can be effective in balance with validation, but they can feel dismissive or condescending if a person has not been validated first.

It is also useful to avoid looking on the bright side - stating that the situation

It is also useful to avoid looking on the bright side, stating that the situation could have been worse, or one-upping others to try to put their issues into perspective (or accomplish something else). These approaches do not usually work well. Even if what the other person is saying does not seem like a big deal to you, remember that it may be a big deal to him or her.

Agreeing or giving in

You can validate others' experience even if you disagree, are in conflict, or want a change to happen. Validation can be a starting point for change.

DEAR MAN (DM)

- **CORE CONCEPT:** DEAR MAN is used to get wants and needs met.

The DEAR MAN skill focuses on us. We use DEAR MAN to get our wants and needs met, to say no, and to set boundaries. This skill is the DBT version of assertiveness. Before describing the components of DEAR MAN, it is important to establish some assumptions and guidelines to increase the effectiveness of this skill:

- **Others cannot read your mind:** This includes your closest friends and family. Assume that others are oblivious to you and that they cannot tell how you are feeling or know what you want or need. It often feels personal when others have no clue what we want or need, and we may get frustrated and blame others. However, we need to proactively and clearly *ask* for our wants and needs, say *no* when appropriate, and *maintain* our own boundaries.

- **Effective communication of your wants and needs requires words:** Do not sigh, sulk, cop an attitude, get destructive, withdraw, or otherwise communicate without thoughtful words *and* expect it to work effectively. It is true that our behaviors communicate volumes, just not clearly.
- **DEAR MAN does not always work, even when done effectively:** DEAR MAN increases the probability that you will get your wants and needs met, but it does not guarantee it.
- **You must be mindful of your DEAR MAN goals before you begin:** Decide what is important and what is negotiable before you use DEAR MAN.
- **Remember to balance DEAR MAN with GIVE grounded in FAST:** Attending to others (GIVE) makes them more willing to assist, accept it when you say no, and respect your boundaries. Keep track of priorities, goals, and values in relationships (FAST).

Use the acronym DEAR MAN to remember the building blocks (**D**escribe, **E**xpress, **A**ssert, **R**eward, **M**indful, **A**ppear Confident, **N**egotiate) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Describe

Use Observe and Describe to outline the situation in nonjudgmental, descriptive language. Identify the facts that will support your request, your reason for saying no, or your need for a boundary. Stick to facts when you describe the situation.

Express

Share your opinions and feelings if they are relevant and will help others to understand the situation. Sometimes you may choose not to include this step.

Assert

Ask clearly for what you want or need, say no, or set your boundary. Establish your DEAR MAN goals up front so you know what you want out of the situation and work to be straightforward and matter of fact. The Assert step is essential. Otherwise, no one will know what you want or need.

Reward

Let others know what is in it for them. How will meeting your wants and needs, accepting your refusal, or respecting your boundaries benefit the relationship? Try to focus on rewards rather than threats. Create opportunities for others to feel positive about their help or respect for you. However, sometimes we need to discuss consequences instead of rewards. Again, be matter of fact, but avoid ultimatums that will box everyone in, and especially ultimatums you cannot or will not follow through with.

Mindful

Stay focused on your DEAR MAN goal(s). Others will often try to change the subject or throw in comments to derail you. When this happens, one strategy to consider is a “broken record” approach, which means repeating your request or limits over and over again. (Notice how children do this effectively with their parents.) Also be aware of when the broken record technique is not working or is inappropriate to the situation, and switch strategies accordingly.

Appear Confident

Act as if you feel confident even if you do not. Pretend you have the confidence you have seen someone else model. Use an assertive tone of voice, make eye contact, and use confident body language. Be mindful of your facial expression (keeping it relatively neutral) as well as your posture and overall personal

(keeping it relatively neutral) as well as your posture and overall personal appearance. Use nonverbal communication to your advantage. Write down and practice your DEAR MAN skills before using them so you feel more confident in the actual situation.

Negotiate

Negotiation means that we strike compromises and are willing to give to get. Decide what compromises make sense if you cannot meet your desired DEAR MAN goal(s). If you get stuck, turn the issue over to the other person for options to solve it; for example, say, “What do you think will work?” Turning the tables shifts the dialectical balance and can get the process moving again.

Negotiation is a dialectical strategy to get wants and needs met by meeting someplace in the middle. In some cases, you may decide in Wise Mind that negotiation is not an option.

Note that, while the building blocks of DEAR MAN work together, some of the components can also be used independently in certain situations. For example, you can Assert without using any other DEAR MAN building blocks. Use as much or as little of DEAR MAN as is required by the situation.

DEAR MAN Alternative: ASSERT

- **CORE CONCEPT:** ASSERT provides an alternate model for assertiveness.

In addition to DEAR MAN, assertiveness can be taught through a variety of models. The following model may be more straightforward for some clients to learn or may provide a supplement to the DEAR MAN skill.

Use the acronym ASSERT (**A**sk or **S**et boundaries, **S**ay what is needed, **E**ye contact, **R**espectful, **T**iming) to remember the building blocks of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Ask

You cannot be assertive without speaking up. You need to ask clearly for what you want and/or need. Do not hint or beat around the bush. Be direct and confident in your request. Or. . .

Set boundaries

Say “no” and set other interpersonal boundaries when necessary. Do not expect others to know or recognize your boundaries. Again, be direct and confident.

Say what is needed

No more or less. Some situations may be benefited by you sharing your feelings, opinions, or detailed explanations. Other situations do not require elaboration. Tailor the amount you share to the context at hand, based on what will be most effective.

Eye contact

Look others in the eye when you speak without staring or having too intense a gaze. Eye contact communicates interest, confidence, and respect in Western cultures. However, be sensitive to other cultures and religions that view eye contact differently. Adjust the amount of eye contact you use accordingly.

Respectful

Choose respectful words, have a respectful tone, and be polite. Disrespectful words and tone will sabotage your efforts to be assertive and reach your goal(s).

Timing

Be thoughtful about timing. Some assertive statements need to happen in the moment, and others will be more effective when you choose timing that benefits your assertiveness goal(s). Generally, address issues that require assertiveness when you and others are in a Wise Mind place.

DEAR MAN: Factors to Consider

- **CORE CONCEPT:** These factors can increase your effectiveness with using DEAR MAN.

The effectiveness of DEAR MAN relies on many different factors. The factors below will assist you in fine-tuning your DEAR MAN skills.

Be in Wise Mind

Wise Mind is essential for the effective use of DEAR MAN. If you are not in Wise Mind, consider soothing your emotions before using DEAR MAN in most cases. (Sometimes using DEAR MAN when in Emotion Mind is needed—for example, if safety is an immediate issue.)

Use GIVE first

Start an interaction with GIVE to increase your effectiveness. Others are more receptive when you consider their feelings, point of view, and situation. GIVE can open doors to use DEAR MAN.

Think about timing

It's been said that "timing is everything." They also say, "there's no time like the present." Dialectically, both of these sayings have truth. Consider whether the timing seems to favor the use of DEAR MAN, but do not use timing as an excuse to put off using DEAR MAN when you need to, especially if the situation is time sensitive.

Direct DEAR MAN appropriately

Make sure you speak to someone who can actually respond to your use of DEAR MAN. Sometimes it is difficult to predict whether someone will respond well to your use of DEAR MAN. Start where you can and be respectful at all times, then move on to a different person if your use of DEAR MAN is not working.

Remember that, even if one person may not be able to grant your DEAR MAN request, he or she might have influence with the next person you address.

Do not give up

DEAR MAN is a difficult skill that varies in its effectiveness. Practice it in everyday situations and you will improve your overall assertiveness.

Your DEAR MAN Bill of Rights

- **CORE CONCEPT:** We have DEAR MAN rights that we can exercise with responsibility.

Review the bill of rights below. Refer to it to encourage yourself to use DEAR MAN. Also, remember that rights require responsibility, so use DEAR MAN mindfully and effectively. Choose your DEAR MAN moments wisely.

- I have the right to be treated with respect.
- I have the right to my own opinions.
- I have the right to express my feelings.
- I have the right to stand up for my values.
- I have the right to disagree with others.
- I have the right to understand a request before agreeing.
- I have the right to ask for information.
- I have the right to take time to think about a request.
- I have the right to say no without guilt.
- I have the right to ask for my wants and needs.
- I have the right to set healthy boundaries with others.
- I have the right to be in Wise Mind before I get into a discussion.
- I have the right to disengage from a conflict.
- I have other rights related to my needs and wants.

List other DEAR MAN rights:

Conflict Resolution

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Conflict resolution takes a balance of interpersonal effectiveness skills.

We all have conflicts with others, but often we struggle to resolve them effectively or we may even avoid them altogether. Use the following steps to guide you through conflicts.

1. Address issues proactively with DEAR MAN to keep the potential for and intensity of conflicts lower.
2. When in conflict, step back and see whether you and others are in Wise Mind. If you want to win or be “right” more than you want to seek understanding and resolution, you are probably not in Wise Mind. When in Emotion Mind, conflicts are rarely effective. If you or the other person are not in Wise Mind, disengage and discuss the issue later. Use distress tolerance skills before getting back into the issue(s).
3. Consider the relevant issues. Use Wise Mind to consider whether this is a conflict worth having right now with this person. Consider your priorities, goals, and values and the nature of the conflict. Pick your conflicts wisely.
4. Use FAST throughout any interpersonal situation and especially with conflict. Lowering yourself to another’s “level” will decrease your self-respect and will rarely result in an effective outcome.
5. Start with listening and GIVE. Think about companies with great customer service. They avoid arguing and listen instead, and then let you know they understand your problem. This approach frequently defuses conflicts.
6. Use Nonjudgmental Stance and you might find that you agree with at least some of what the other person has to say. Breathe and give some space before you respond. Many conflicts escalate because of a mutual lack of listening coupled with rapid-fire responses.
7. Use DEAR MAN effectively. Be clear about your wants and needs, saying no, or setting boundaries. Do so in a matter-of-fact way without name-calling, labeling, judging, or getting into extremes.

8. Use Radical Acceptance when conflicts are not resolved or when others are upset and angry. Not all conflicts have an immediate resolution. Sometimes we need to step away and let it be. When resolution seems unlikely or when the conflict is escalating, gently disengage yourself and agree to revisit it later.

Remember that negotiation and making Wise Mind concessions are useful. Stay away from all-or-nothing approaches and work the dialectic.

Interpersonal Intensity

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Begin your use of DEAR MAN skills at an effective intensity level.

Effective use of DEAR MAN sometimes depends on our level of intensity. Assertiveness is a dialectical concept, with passivity on one end and aggressiveness on the other:

Levels of Intensity



There are times to be more passive or more aggressive, but the most effective level of assertiveness is usually someplace in the middle. When we are too passive, it is easy for others to dismiss us. However, when we are too aggressive, others get defensive and resist our demands. Use Observe and Describe to make a Wise Mind assessment in regard to the intensity needed in each unique situation.

It works well to start at the low-middle end of the dialectic in most situations. From the low-middle end, you can dial up the intensity if needed; it is typically less effective to start out too intense and then try to dial it down.

Consider your baseline interpersonal style when applying interpersonal intensity. If you are normally passive, an effective DEAR MAN level will probably feel uncomfortably aggressive. If you are normally aggressive, an effective DEAR MAN level will probably feel uncomfortably passive. Closely Observe others' reactions and responsiveness and adjust your interpersonal intensity accordingly.

Interpersonal Effectiveness 4: DEAR MAN Application

CORE CONCEPT: Use this worksheet to develop your DEAR MAN skills.

Describe what you want or need, what you need to say no to, or the boundary you need to set:

Describe (stick to facts):

Express (your opinions and feelings if needed):

Assert (be direct and specific):

Reward (what is in it for the other person?):

Describe how you can appear confident:

Describe negotiations you are willing to make:

Making Friends

■ **CORE CONCEPT:** Making friends takes positivity, time, and consistency.

Most of us want to have at least a couple of good friends, and a lot of people struggle with how to create lasting and meaningful friendships. Here are some suggestions for creating friendships to get you started.

Meet people who share similar values and interests to yours

People tend to make friends with other people who are similar, although sometimes quite different people become fabulous friends, so do not limit yourself either. If you have a particular hobby or interest (e.g., music, woodworking, scrapbooking, ham radio, politics), maybe there is a club, group, message board, or another meeting place for people into the same thing. If you have children, seek out other parents with children of a similar age group, or, if you have dogs, visit a dog park or area where people commonly walk their dogs (or take an obedience class; your dog might need it and you will get to learn more about behaviorism).

Get active in your community or involved in particular causes (e.g., social justice, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, issues in your own community). We have to get involved to meet other people.

Meet people around you

People commonly become friends based on proximity. Getting to know the people who live close to you, who you work with, or whose paths you frequently cross is an effective way to develop friendships. These people do not have to be a lot like you as the familiarity that comes with getting to know people over time often bridges differences. However, as mentioned above, you have to get involved with those around you to make friendships.

Be curious, show interest in others, ask questions, and really listen

Most people enjoy it when others take an interest in them. Learning about others is a great way to get to know them and they may reciprocate interest. When

taking an interest in others, be mindful of their nonverbal communication and whether they are taking part in the interaction. Also be mindful of boundaries and do not overreach in asking questions. Stay clear of potentially controversial topics such as politics and religion at least at first, unless the context of the conversation or situation naturally leads to these topics.

Practice give and take in relationships

Healthy relationships are based on give and take. Those who take without giving burn out friends. Those who give without getting in return feel hurt and resentful. Strive to have balance in relationships. Be the kind of friend to others that you want them to be to you.

Be a rewarding person to be around

Consistent with behaviorism, your presence around others needs to be sufficiently rewarding or others will disconnect and avoid you. Work on being pleasant and enjoyable to be around, and others will respond. That does not mean that every interaction needs to be positive, or that you cannot rely on others for support from time to time, but if others do not feel at least intermittent rewards, it will be hard to maintain friendships. That is behaviorism.

Do not share too much or too little

People who immediately share their story or intimate, private details of life often scare off others. On the other end of the dialectic, people who are too private can take too much effort to get to know for other people, or others may interpret a private disposition as disinterest (accurately or not). Aim for the middle ground with what you share in relationships.

Realize that people have different social wants and needs

People are a lot like plants. Some need a lot of light and others thrive in shade. Some need only a bit of water, and others need a lot. Some plants have deep roots, and others do not. Plants are diverse, as are people. Think about yourself and people you know. Some are “people persons” and others have fewer people needs. Some people like to get to know others intimately, and others like to keep relationships more superficial. Match yourself to others in ways that work, finding people with similar people needs and accepting differences when they exist.

Take your time

While some people become friends quickly, most friendships develop over time. Be patient. Focus on being a consistent friend to others, and in time friendships with others will materialize.

Build respect over “liking”

If you behave in a respectful manner that leads others to respect you, others will also like you most of the time. However, if you place “liking” above respect, others might like you but there is no guarantee that they will respect you. Strive to earn others’ respect in order to build friendships.

TRUST (T) and Relationships

■ **CORE CONCEPT:** Learn how to develop trust in relationships.

People who have been hurt or betrayed and/or who have experienced inconsistent relationships commonly struggle with trust. It is difficult to have rewarding friendships and other relationships if trust does not develop. The information below will help you decide whether people are trustworthy and will assist you in becoming more trustworthy yourself.

Use the acronym TRUST to remember the building blocks (**T**ruthful, **R**espectful, **U**nderstanding, **S**table, and **T**ime) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Truthful

Trustworthy people tell the truth, even when it is inconvenient, difficult, or will result in consequences. Do not give your trust to other people whom you know to be dishonest, and do not erode others' trust in you by being dishonest.

Respectful

Being respectful means that others (and oneself) are treated fairly and with dignity. People who shout, intimidate, bully, are aggressive, or are otherwise disrespectful are not trustworthy.

Understanding

People who care enough to understand others and take their perspectives, wants, and needs into account tend to be more trustworthy. It is difficult to trust those who cannot look outside themselves to care for others too.

Stable

Trustworthy people are stable and consistent, and others can rely on their predictability. By contrast, erratic, unstable, and inconsistent people can be too hard to predict and have poor follow-through, both of which erode trust.

Time

Time is one of the best ways to gauge trustworthiness. Trust should not be automatic; it should be developed over time. For people who have destroyed trust, working the other components of the TRUST acronym over time will help in repairing it.

Boundaries

■ **CORE CONCEPT:** Boundaries keep relationships healthy and safe.

Boundaries exist to define how we are separate from others. A goal in relationships is to be in healthy contact with others without getting too enmeshed or being too disconnected.

It is important to be connected with others while also maintaining our own emotional, psychological, and physical space. Boundaries are dialectical in nature, as we strive to balance our interpersonal needs and comfort zones with those of others. Healthy boundaries allow us to have meaningful relationships without taking on others' distress and problems and without being isolated and alone. Boundaries define who we are as individuals in relation to others and the world.

Like types of fences (e.g., invisible versus picket versus razor wire), boundaries vary based factors such as personality, family, culture, locale, situation, and setting, among other factors, as well as how defined we need to be in relation to others. Our experience, what we Observe and Describe, and our priorities, goals, and values inform us about what types of fences to put up.

Boundaries are complex, and it is difficult to recognize and practice healthy boundaries if we have not seen them modeled by others. We will therefore begin with basic definitions of boundaries as a step toward developing healthy ones.

Definitions and Types of Boundaries

■ *CORE CONCEPT*: Define boundaries in order to practice them.

Physical

Physical boundaries include your body and the space that surrounds it (i.e., your personal space). Physical boundaries can be defined in terms of who is allowed to touch us and in what areas. These boundaries include all levels of physical intimacy and all sexual practices. Additionally, physical boundaries include what goes into us, such as food and drink, and anything else that affects our physical being.

Psychological

Psychological boundaries include information about yourself, your thoughts and beliefs, and your values. These boundaries might include topics of conversation and anything that occupies your “mental” space. Who knows about your inner life and how it is shared (if at all) constitute psychological boundary issues.

Emotional

Emotional boundaries include your feelings and their ability to be leveraged or manipulated (e.g., emotional “hostage-taking” or guilt-tripping). Emotional boundaries also include not taking on others’ distress or expecting them to take on yours. Like psychological boundaries, who knows about your feelings and how they are shared (if at all) constitute emotional boundary issues.

Spiritual

Spiritual boundaries include your ability to choose your own religion, higher power, or spiritual life or lack thereof. Who knows about your spiritual life and how it is shared (if at all) constitute spiritual boundary issues.

Biographical

Biographical boundaries have to do with your history and life story. What to tell others about your life depends on many factors. Of course, psychological, emotional, and other boundaries intersect with biographical boundaries.

General

Anything that defines and differentiates you as separate from others (and others from you) is a boundary, and anything needed to keep you healthy and safe interpersonally and in the world constitutes a boundary issue. General boundaries might be where you live, where you work, who your friends and family members are, and other general information about you.

BOUNDARY (BO)

■ **CORE CONCEPT:** This skill guides healthy boundaries.

Healthy boundaries are the foundation of safe and respectful relationships with others, but many people do not know where to start in terms of developing boundaries. The BOUNDARY skill establishes a system to develop effective boundaries.

Use the acronym BOUNDARY to remember the building blocks (**B**e aware of self, **O**bserve others and the situation, **U**nderstand your and others' limits, **N**egotiate sometimes, **D**ifferences exist, **A**lways **R**emember your values, **Y**our safety comes first) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Be aware of self

Use Observe and Describe to notice what you are sharing and what you are doing. Does your behavior fit the situation and your relationships with others? Does your behavior feel comfortable? Notice whether your boundaries are at either extreme, being too closed or too open for the situation and the relationships.

Observe others and the situation

What is happening in the situation and with others? Notice the level of interest, the information shared, and the behavior of others. Do the sharing and the behavior of others seem healthy and respectful? Note that observing others does not mean *copying* others. Keep your self-respect in mind and act accordingly. Observe and Describe what you are sharing and doing in the context of others, and understand that your boundaries exist in relation to those of others.

Understand your and others' limits

We all have important boundaries or limits. Be aware of your boundaries and maintain them from Wise Mind based on the needs of the situation and the relationships between you and others. Also be aware of others' boundaries and respect them.

Negotiate sometimes

In important relationships, we sometimes negotiate our boundaries. Negotiations happen from Wise Mind and rarely involve extreme changes. Avoid negotiating boundaries in unimportant relationships, in new relationships, or to be liked. Put your self-respect above being liked by others.

You may also negotiate your boundaries if there is a benefit in adjusting them. If your boundaries can be too undefined, work on developing tighter limits. If your boundaries can be too rigid, work on developing more flexible limits. Again, make adjustments from Wise Mind.

Differences exist

Negotiating boundaries is effective at times, but we need to balance negotiations with a healthy respect for individual differences, too. Differences in boundaries happen due to personality, personal history, culture, religion, situations, settings, and other reasons. Sometimes it is not about negotiating boundaries but maintaining your boundaries while being respectful of others' boundaries. Use Radical Acceptance or Everyday Acceptance with individual differences and learn not to take those differences personally (this is a boundary, too).

Always Remember your values

The decision to negotiate and adjust your boundaries or to maintain them needs to be grounded in your priorities, goals, and values. Use your values as a compass to guide your boundaries and do not compromise boundaries at the expense of self-respect.

Your safety comes first

People sometimes compromise boundaries to be liked or to fit in with others. Avoid situations that can harm you emotionally, psychologically, physically, spiritually, or in other ways.

Interpersonal Effectiveness 5: BOUNDARY Application

CORE CONCEPT: Use this worksheet to define boundaries.

Describe your **physical** boundaries:

Describe your **psychological** boundaries:

Describe your **emotional** boundaries:

Describe your **spiritual** boundaries:

Describe **general** boundary issues important to you:

Describe what boundaries may be negotiable in some situations:

Describe what boundaries are non-negotiable to you:

Describe how establishing and maintaining boundaries can build and maintain your self-respect:

Describe how your life will be different when you establish and maintain effective boundaries:

Cognitive Modification

Introduction to Cognitive Modification

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Learning to be flexible with thoughts and beliefs helps us be more effective.

Many of us have been told that it is “all in our heads” or that there is something wrong or inaccurate with our thoughts and beliefs. These viewpoints invalidate our experience. The effect is that we learn not to trust ourselves, and we become defensive and guarded about our thoughts and beliefs. We then feel vulnerable when asked to evaluate them. That sense of vulnerability and defensive stance serve to protect us from further invalidation.

Dialectically, our thoughts and beliefs come from somewhere, and they make sense given the context of that place. Most of the time, our thoughts and beliefs have or have had adaptive functions, and there is at least some kernel of truth to them.

It is not about our thoughts and beliefs being right or wrong, accurate or inaccurate, but about whether they “work” or are functional in a given situation. For example, someone who grew up with critical parents may think that all other people will be critical, too. That thought or belief has worked in the past because it protected the person in a world that could be mean and punishing. However, when thoughts and beliefs become too generalized or extreme, they lose their function at times. In this example, the thought or belief will be less effective when applied to other people in situations other than the original home environment.

As an alternative to globally applying the belief, it may be useful for that person to see whether the general thought or belief about critical people works in specific situations. A dialectical shift in the thought or belief could be more effective in many ways for that person. Dialectical shifts lead to more flexible thoughts and beliefs about ourselves, others, situations, and the world and are at

the center of how cognitive modification is done in DBT.

The key to dialectical thinking is being in Wise Mind, where emotions can be validated and reason can be accessed. This module focuses on a cognitive method for shifting thoughts and beliefs and also looks at common “stuck” thoughts and their dialectical remedies.

REASON (RE)

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Check out your thinking while still validating your emotions.

The goal with our thinking is to have it be flexible in order to be functional. The skill below can be used to check thinking and beliefs while still validating emotions. In time, we can learn to trust our thoughts and beliefs knowing that we can do self-checks and shifts when needed.

Use the acronym REASON to remember the building blocks (**R**ational, **E**motions matter, **A**lternative views, **S**elf-trust, **O**ld beliefs, **N**ew thoughts and beliefs) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Rational

Is the thought or belief coming from reason or Wise Mind? Does it work in the present situation? Remember that we all get stuck in thoughts and beliefs that do not work in certain situations, so be nonjudgmental with yourself. Remember that our thoughts and beliefs make sense given the context from which they originated, even if they do not work in the present situation. Thus, you can both validate why you have the thought or belief and shift it if needed. Check thoughts and beliefs with a trusted friend, family member, therapist, or other person. Be open to shifting a thought or belief to better fit the facts.

Emotions matter (validate)

Remember that emotions are important, as is the information they provide. Sometimes emotions give us the most accurate information while at other times they distort facts and situations. Validate your emotions and learn to notice the difference between when they help and when they hinder effective thinking.

Alternative views (dialectic)

Develop alternative views to consider alongside the original thoughts or beliefs. Take time to evaluate how each alternative view may work in the present situation. Will a different “place” on the dialectic be more effective in the

present situation? There are many ways to think about the same situation. Be open to other perspectives and interpretations.

Self-trust (develop)

People who have been chronically invalidated do not trust their own thoughts and beliefs. Begin to notice times when your thoughts and beliefs work well in situations, and give yourself credit. When you learn to trust your thoughts and beliefs during these effective times, you will develop the foundation needed to recognize when shifting thoughts is needed in other situations.

Old beliefs (balanced with)

Respect old thoughts and belief systems. Remember that they have served purposes in past situations. The goal is not to negate old thoughts and beliefs. In time, thoughts and beliefs that are no longer useful will diminish on their own.

New thoughts and beliefs

New thoughts and beliefs will bring new options to how you think about yourself, others, situations, and the world. The ability to think dialectically will become part of your behavioral repertoire, and new thoughts and beliefs will contribute to a more satisfying life.

Cognitive Modification 1: Dialectical Shifts

CORE CONCEPT: Practice dialectical shifts with common thinking styles.

Certain common styles of thinking sometimes benefit from dialectical shifts. For each one, make the concept relevant by identifying when you notice being stuck in a style and how you can shift the thought to be more effective.

Black-and-white thoughts (either/or; dichotomous; or all-or-nothing thinking): Words that signal this type of style are “always,” “never,” “every,” and “all the time,” among others. Black-and-white thoughts feed emotional extremes and rarely work well. This approach to thinking leads to rigidity and inflexibility in situations and relationships.

Dialectical shift: If your thoughts seem extreme, think of opposite thoughts or beliefs, and then start to identify middle-ground ways of thinking. You may not believe the opposite thoughts or beliefs, but the intention is to practice flexibility in your thinking.

Describe when you do this and how you can shift:

Regret orientation (woulda, coulda, shoulda thinking; or hindsight bias): It is easy to look back with the information you have now and regret what you did or did not do. As they say, “hindsight is 20/20.” Regret orientation keeps us stuck in the past rather than focusing on what we can do effectively right now.

Dialectical shift: Rather than dwelling on past mistakes, focus on what you can do to be effective in the present moment (see Radical Acceptance and Everyday Acceptance).

Describe when you do this and how you can shift:

Mind-reading: Many of us believe we know others’ thoughts, and that belief

causes us to feel or act in a certain manner. Most of us are not very good mind-readers in reality, so our feelings and actions are not based on very accurate information.

Dialectical shift: When you catch yourself mind-reading, check out your assumptions with other people, especially the person whose mind you are trying to read. Remember to use your DEAR MAN skills.

Describe when you do this and how you can shift:

Minimization: Minimization happens when we take something large or significant and reduce it to something that is very small. We do this to reduce the emotional impact of a situation, but the result is that we end up invalidating our emotions. We also do this when we do not want to face difficult realities.

Dialectical shift: Observe and Describe the situation accurately without adding or subtracting. Remember to validate your feelings.

Describe when you do this and how you can shift:

Magnification: Magnification is the opposite of minimization. It happens when we take something that is small or insignificant and exaggerate it to something that is very large. It is like looking at a kitten through a magnifying glass and seeing a tiger. The result of magnification is amplifying our feelings.

Dialectical shift: Like with minimization, Observe and Describe the situation accurately without adding or subtracting.

Describe when you do this and how you can shift:

Catastrophizing: Catastrophizing is an extreme form of magnification. It involves taking a situation and continuing to build it and build it and build it in our minds into a calamity with dire consequences.

Dialectical shift: Focus on the *one* situation or problem at hand without

exaggerating it. Remember that most situations do not end up with extreme and dire consequences. Take one thing at a time. Alternatively, purposefully catastrophize to the point of absurdity to help yourself see that your fears are not realistic.

Describe when you do this and how you can shift:

Fortune-telling (crystal-ball-gazing): Fortune-telling is the attempt to predict the future, usually in negative ways. It assumes that we already know what is going to happen, and it often causes emotions of anxiety and dread. In reality, most of us are not very accurate at predicting the future.

Dialectical shift: Rather than let a negative prediction of the future paralyze you, focus on what you can do effectively right now to cope with your situation or problem. Stay in the present moment.

Describe when you do this and how you can shift:

Overgeneralization: Overgeneralization involves taking a small bit of information and applying it broadly across all kinds of people and situations.

Dialectical shift: Do not assume that your knowledge fits all people and all situations. Acknowledge when your information does fit, and actively look for times when it does not. Be open to not knowing all of the facts.

Describe when you do this and how you can shift:

Selective information-gathering (selective abstraction; mental filter; or confirmation bias): Sometimes we only gather information that fits with our current thought or belief. This approach tends to validate our thought or belief, but it can lead to ineffective choices due to a poverty of information and viewpoints.

Dialectical shift: Actively gather information and viewpoints that are different from your own. Remember that you do not need to agree with these different perspectives but that they may lead you to greater flexibility and more effective choices.

Describe when you do this and how you can shift:

Labeling (judging): Labeling is an approach that takes a person or situation and reduces it to only a name. Labels fail to look at people and situations in a holistic manner and miss important subtleties or nuances.

Dialectical shift: Gently let go of the need to label a person or situation. Instead, Observe and Describe nonjudgmentally. Understand that the world is more complex than labels and judging.

Describe when you do this and how you can shift:

Personalization: Personalization makes it all about you. Even when situations feel personal, they often are not. We feel the weight of the world when we take so many situations and others' issues and problems personally.

Dialectical shift: Use Teflon Mind. Remember that most of the time it is not about you. Take responsibility for what is yours (if it fits Wise Mind) and gently let go of the rest.

Describe when you do this and how you can shift:

Emotion Mind “reasoning”: Emotion Mind reasoning means having your thoughts and beliefs come from an Emotion Mind place without factoring in Reason Mind or Wise Mind.

Dialectical shift: Use What and How skills to access Wise Mind. Alternatively, use distress tolerance skills to soothe your emotions before shifting thoughts and beliefs.

Describe when you do this and how you can shift:

Should statements: These statements get us stuck because they focus on judgments rather than the realities of a particular situation or interaction. Reality unfolds in ways that do not fit our preferences (i.e., what “should” happen).

Dialectical shift: Focus on “what is,” not what “should be.” Stop “shoulding” on yourself and others.

Describe when you do this and how you can shift:

Discounting positives: Often we focus on the negatives or the downside of situations and are blind to positives. Sometimes we minimize or negate positives about ourselves, others, situations, or the world. Discounting positives is undialectical.

Dialectical shift: Seek out positives, upsides, and silver linings for balance. Own the positives about yourself and give yourself credit. Find the positives in people and situations that seem negative.

Describe when you do this and how you can shift:

Blaming: Blaming makes everyone but us responsible for our problems and difficulties. When we blame, we give up our power and control and are utterly dependent on others to fix a situation (or our lives).

Dialectical shift: Someone or something else may be responsible for a problem, but your power and control come from focusing on how you can influence situations and your life, if only through choosing how you respond.

Describe when you do this and how you can shift:

Defusing: A Mindful Way to Separate Yourself From Thoughts and Beliefs

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Defusing can lessen the impact of negative thoughts and beliefs.

A technique called defusing, which is a part of acceptance and commitment therapy (Hayes et al., 1999), can help us Observe and Describe thoughts and beliefs more mindfully with less of a negative impact. With defusing, you remove the personalization from your thinking by making small changes in the language of your thoughts and beliefs, effectively separating yourself from them.

To use defusing, you work on describing thoughts and beliefs in ways that are not about you. To illustrate, “nobody likes me” becomes “I am having a thought that nobody likes me”; “I can’t do this” becomes “I am thinking that I can’t do this again”; “this is stupid” becomes “I am using a judgment word in this moment”; and “I’m so ugly” becomes “I’m thinking that I’m ugly again.”

Thoughts are just thoughts and only have the power we give them, and defusing decreases the power thoughts hold. As you practice defusing, you accept rather than judge or fight thoughts and beliefs. By doing so, you remove much of their emotional power and stay unstuck.

Readers who find this approach to thoughts helpful can find additional explanations and applications in books on acceptance and commitment therapy.

Cognitive Modification 2: REASON and Shifting Thoughts

CORE CONCEPT: Use this worksheet to practice shifting thoughts.

Observe and Describe the thought or belief:

Is the thought or belief rational from Reason Mind or Wise Mind? Is it functional or working right now? Is it an example of a stuck thought?

Describe: _____

Validate your current emotion (it matters too):

Describe at least two alternative viewpoints on the dialectic:

Balance these alternative viewpoints with your original thought or belief. Describe any differences in your thoughts, beliefs, emotions, or behavior:

Problem-Solving

Introduction to Problem-Solving

- **CORE CONCEPT:** A systematic approach promotes effective problem-solving.

Problems of various types and levels of difficulty frequent our lives. If we do not actively work to solve our problems, they grow in number and size, and we end up chronically overwhelmed or even paralyzed by them.

Unfortunately, many of us do not have a method for solving problems. We try to solve them by trial and error or in a haphazard manner. These approaches sometimes work but tend to be ineffective overall.

Another difficulty many of us have is Emotion Mind “problem-solving.” We place disproportionate importance on our feelings and the information that comes from them. In turn, we neglect information and facts that would give us a more balanced approach to problem-solving based on more complete information. Therefore, it is beneficial to balance our emotions with our reason to reach a Wise Mind place to work through problems and difficulties. In Wise Mind, we can validate our feelings *and* connect with our priorities, goals, and values to engage in an effective approach to problem-solving.

Problem-solving starts with being aware of problems as they come up and developing a willingness to address them effectively.

Basic Principles of Problem-Solving

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Use these principles when you approach solving a problem.

Take one problem at a time

Most people have more than one active problem at any given time. It is overwhelming to have many problems, but the reality is that you can only solve one at a time. Start somewhere. You might start with your easiest problem to solve or your most important problem to solve, or you might need to address problems sequentially (i.e., you might need to solve a certain problem first in order to solve a related problem).

Understand and define the problem

Once you pick a problem, specifically define the problem with nonjudgmental, descriptive language. If you do not understand the problem and cannot define it, then it may be difficult to figure out a solution. Be as precise as possible in your definition of the problem.

Research the facts

To better understand and define your problem, you need to do your homework. What information do you need or are you missing? Information is power and is the difference between being uncertain or paralyzed in the face of a problem and seeing a clear pathway to a solution.

What is the cause of the problem?

Identifying and addressing the cause of the problem is sometimes necessary to solving it. Stay nonjudgmental and be sure that identifying the cause of the problem does not lead you to blaming. Getting stuck in “blaming mind” is seldom productive and can often make the problem worse. However, if you are able to be skillful to decrease or eliminate the cause(s) of your problem, do so.

What works (or has worked)?

Have you solved this problem (or one like it) before? If so, what did you do that worked? Do more of the solution behavior(s). In a similar vein, what is different about your behavior, others' behavior, or the environment when the problem is not happening? Do more of what is working when the problem is not happening. From Wise Mind, do what you think is needed to solve the problem with a focus on Willingness and Effectiveness.

What does not work (or has not worked)?

Have you done anything that has contributed to the problem or has not worked in bringing about a solution? What are you doing, or not doing, when the problem is happening? Do less of or eliminate behaviors that have contributed to the problem or have not worked toward finding a solution.

Can you take it one step at a time?

Some problems, especially large or complicated ones, need to be solved sequentially or in steps. Break your problem down into steps that will enable you to reach a solution, and take the first one.

Use Willingness, cooperation, commitment, and follow-through!

Often what is needed to solve a problem does not fit with our preferences. Be willing to put aside your preconceived notions of how you think things should happen in order to do exactly what is needed. Be willing to cooperate and be part of solutions and not part of problems. Work with and not against others in seeking a solution; offer and seek help as needed. Once your action steps toward a commitment are identified, commit yourself to following through.

Using SOLVED (SO)

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Use this systematic approach to solve problems.

Use the acronym SOLVED to remember the building blocks (**S**tep back and be objective, **O**bserve available options, **L**imit barriers, **V**alues driven, **E**ffectiveness first, **D**ialectical thought and action) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Step back and be objective Observe and Describe from Reason Mind or Wise Mind. What is the problem in nonjudgmental terms? Stick to the facts: who, what, where, when, how, and why. Write it down.

Observe available options Brainstorm and list as many options as you can, and then determine what options are available. Remember to accept the realities of both the problem and the possible solutions. Also list the resources you can use at this step. Use DEAR MAN to ask for ideas, help, and guidance if needed.

Limit barriers (emotional and environmental) Remove barriers that stand between you and a potential solution. Do not get in your own way. Use Radical or Everyday Acceptance, Willingness, and Nonjudgmental Stance. Do not amplify or minimize your problems. Gauge the level of your problem and address it in a manner-of-fact way. Identify whether barriers exist in your environment and address them as needed. Again, use DEAR MAN to ask for ideas, help, and guidance if needed.

Values driven (what are your priorities and goals?) Use your priorities, goals, and values as your compass. Values will not lead you astray in the long term. They will be the foundation of solutions that work. From your available options, pick the solution that best solves the problem while building or at least maintaining your self-respect.

Effectiveness first

What will work? The most effective solutions will not always be your preferred solutions. Accept that life has problems and solve this one so you can get on to the next one.

Dialectical thought and action Solutions often involve compromise. Be dialectical with thoughts and actions and remember that effective, values-driven solutions often come from the middle ground.

After following this process, make a decision and take action. Evaluate the outcomes and use the SOLVED process to readjust your approach and the solution to your problem if needed.

Problem-Solving 1: SOLVED

CORE CONCEPT: Use this worksheet to solve problems.

Step back and describe your problem from Wise Mind:

Brainstorm and then describe the options and resources available to you:

Describe your barriers and the skills that you will use to address them:

Describe your priorities, goals, and values and how they can guide your solution: _____

Use the above information to describe what will work:

Describe your solution and action plan:

Describe how your life will be different when you solve this problem:

Module 8

Addictions

Introduction to Addictions

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Understanding addiction is the first step to overcoming it.

Addiction happens when a person compulsively engages in a behavior despite its harmful consequences. Signs of addiction include a preoccupation with the behavior along with a lack of control over it, despite significant negative consequences. Addictive behaviors are typically characterized by immediate gratification or reward followed by delayed costs and harm. Common addictions include:

- Alcohol and/or drug use
- Excessive eating or addiction to certain foods (e.g., sugar, fast food)
- Spending money/shopping
- Gambling
- Harmful relationships
- Exercise
- Internet use
- Sex and/or pornography

People with addictive behaviors often experience tolerance and dependence. Tolerance means that more and more of the addictive substance or behavior is needed to feel the “fix,” and dependence means that reducing and/or stopping an addictive behavior causes withdrawal symptoms. Some withdrawal symptoms are physical—such as fatigue, vomiting, and loss of energy—while others are psychological and emotional. All withdrawal is uncomfortable or painful, making the person vulnerable to falling back into the behavior.

Stopping an addictive behavior is difficult, and it often requires the help of a professional and/or a strong and positive support system. Giving up the immediate rewards, facing up to withdrawal and other consequences, and

reaching out to others is hard. In the early stages of change you may not even know or want to accept that you have a problem. See the Addiction Checklist worksheet to evaluate your situation. If you question whether your behavior is an addiction, it is also helpful to:

- Complete a Pros and Cons assessment (see Distress Tolerance module) to determine the pros and cons of engaging in the behavior.

- Educate yourself about the risks and costs (physical, psychological, emotional, relational, financial, etc.) of the substance or behavior.
- Try an abstinence holiday from the addictive behavior.
- Be open to an assessment and assistance from professionals.

Recovery from an addiction is possible, even for the most “hopeless” addicts. By making a choice to recover, developing a plan, seeking and accepting support from others, and taking recovery one day (or moment) at a time, you can do it. Start by being honest with yourself and others, practicing your skills to build a new life, and recognizing that for most people (probably including you!) recovery is an everyday commitment for life.

Addictions 1: Addictions Checklist

CORE CONCEPT: Use this checklist to determine whether you struggle with addictive behavior.

People with an addiction show many different signs and symptoms. Review this list and take an inventory of each behavior and/or concern as it relates to your life. Check each item that applies to your addictive behavior. Remember that an honest self-assessment is essential to committing to change an addictive behavior.

- Difficulty stopping the behavior:** Your attempts to stop the behavior have been unsuccessful.
- Withdrawal symptoms:** You experience physical, psychological, and emotional symptoms when coming off the behavior. These symptoms might include cravings, disturbances with appetite and sleep, moodiness, anger, and attention and concentration problems, among others. At an extreme you may experience trembling, sweats, seizures, hallucinations, or even a medical emergency with certain addictive behaviors.
- Health problems:** You continue to engage in the behavior even when it puts you at risk of or causes health problems.
- Legal trouble:** You have been arrested or have had other legal consequences as a result of your behavior.
- Large doses and excessive engagement in the behavior:** You take a large dose of a substance to “get started” or you engage in a behavior in an extreme manner.
- Keeping a supply and/or hidden “stash”:** You maintain a supply and/or hide away substances, pornography, food, or other items in various parts of your home, office, or car.
- Needing the addictive behavior to cope:** You feel unable to deal with the ups and downs of life without substances or your addictive behavior.

- Preoccupation:** You find yourself constantly thinking about and planning to engage in the addictive behavior.
- Hobbies and activities decrease:** You decrease or stop engaging in hobbies and activities you used to enjoy. The addictive behavior has crowded out healthy and fun activities you used to prioritize.
- Missing out:** You choose not to participate in activities in which you cannot also engage in your addictive behavior.
- Risk-taking:** You put yourself in dangerous situations as a result of the addictive behavior.
- Secrecy and isolation:** You hide your behavior and participate in it alone.
- Minimizing and denial:** You downplay the effects of your addictive behavior on yourself and/or others or even outright deny the possibility that your behavior is a problem.
- Financial difficulties:** Paying for your addictive behavior causes strain on your or someone else's finances.
- Relationship problems:** You have conflicts with other people about your addictive behavior.

Abstinence Holiday (AH)

- **CORE CONCEPT:** An Abstinence Holiday provides a glimpse of life without your addictive behavior.

An abstinence holiday means that you set aside a period of time in which you do not use a substance of abuse or engage in an addictive behavior. To practice this skill you select an amount of time to remain free from your selected behavior in order to Observe and Describe the outcomes. This skill is a form of harm reduction, and it works especially well for people who are unsure about the effect of addictive behaviors in their lives and/or for people who are not ready to give up their addiction “forever.” An abstinence holiday can serve as a personal experiment to gauge your level of addiction and the benefits of abstinence.

Abstinence holidays work best when you have established a skills plan for how to deal with urges, how to occupy open time in your schedule, and how to address barriers or problems you anticipate may upset your holiday plans. Just like a literal holiday, you have to put thought into your plans.

Abstinence holidays can be short (e.g., an hour or evening), intermediate (e.g., a week), or a longer period of time (e.g., a month or more). To feel the benefits of moving away from your addictive behavior, it is best to choose a reasonable amount of time to see what happens, knowing that within this time period you can still take on the challenge one moment at a time. The goal is to recognize that your life can be *better* without your addiction than with it.

The following are examples of an abstinence holiday:

- Going 30 days without drinking alcohol
- Turning off all your electronic devices after 5pm for a week
- Avoiding added sugar for 2 weeks
- Going without cutting for the weekend
- Not seeing a harmful friend for a month
- Attending a concert without consuming drugs or alcohol
- Not smoking marijuana for 6 months.

Ready to try life without your addictive behavior for a while? Use the following Abstinence Holiday worksheet to get started.

Addictions 2: Abstinence Holiday

CORE CONCEPT: Use this worksheet to monitor your abstinence holiday.

An abstinence holiday is an opportunity to try life without one (or more) of your addictive behaviors. This worksheet is set up for 1 week, but your holiday can be for any length of time. A good rule of thumb is to plan to go long enough for the average difficulty of abstaining from the behavior (rated from 10, extreme difficulty, to 0, no difficulty) to drop while the average observed benefits increase (rated from 10, great benefits, to 0, no benefits). You want to see that life can be better without the behavior!

If at any time you revert to the behavior, try dialectical abstinence and get back to your plan as soon as possible.

Monday

Average level of difficulty: _____ Observed benefits: _____

Tuesday

Average level of difficulty: _____ Observed benefits: _____

Wednesday

Average level of difficulty: _____ Observed benefits: _____

Thursday

Average level of difficulty: _____ Observed benefits: _____

Friday

Average level of difficulty: _____ Observed benefits: _____

Saturday

Average level of difficulty: _____ Observed benefits: _____

Sunday

Average level of difficulty: _____ Observed benefits: _____

Dialectical Abstinence

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Some behaviors are so harmful there is no middle ground with them.

In DBT, dialectical abstinence means that you take the undialectical stance that your addictive behavior is so destructive to your life that you commit to only one side of the dialectic: working on abstinence from the behavior. This 100 percent commitment means that your sole focus is on learning and using skills to establish and maintain abstinence.

It is reality that many people who work on abstinence from an addictive behavior have setbacks. If you make a mistake or have a slip, the goal is to remember dialectical abstinence and your 100 percent commitment to avoid a full-blown relapse. You do this by quickly repairing your mistake and completely throwing yourself back into your goal(s). What you want to avoid is giving up and working against yourself by making one mistake a bigger one, or, worse yet, a series of bigger ones. If you were climbing a mountain and lost your footing, you would quickly restabilize, check your anchors, make necessary adjustments, and get back to climbing; you would not just throw yourself off the mountain!

Another helpful analogy is that successful people in any pursuit (e.g., parenting, business, sports) make mistakes, but the key difference between them and less successful people is that they actively learn from mistakes, sometimes mining their greatest opportunities from them. If a parent yelled at his child, the goal would be to learn and practice more skillful parenting, not to yell more or escalate into extremely ineffective parenting. If a businessperson lost an account, she would learn and correct the mistake in the future, not keep making the same error with her other accounts too. And, if a pitcher gave up a home run, he would regroup and continue to try his best to get strikeouts, not just give up and start throwing slow, easily hittable pitches!

Complete commitment to doing better flows from the skills of self-acceptance and being nonjudgmental. Beating yourself up and getting into judgments is counterproductive to your goals and will not help you to do better. Remember the basic assumption that you are doing your best and need to do better, and

resolve to learn from mistakes. Use behavior and solution analysis with your therapist(s) and the philosophies promoted in this book to learn from relapses. This approach will improve your progress toward abstinence and a better life.

Note that the concept of dialectical abstinence can be used with many different problems, such as making a 100% commitment not to act on harmful thoughts such as suicide, self-injury, or substance use, and/or not to fall into behaviors that feed into symptoms of mental illness.

Dialectical Abstinence Versus Harm Reduction

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Harm reduction can be a dialectical choice when someone is not ready for dialectical abstinence.

Some people are unsure whether they want to use dialectical abstinence to completely give up an addictive behavior, but they still want to decrease the harm that the behavior causes them and/or others. Actively choosing to decrease harm without fully giving up an addictive behavior is called “harm reduction.” Examples of harm reduction include:

- Use of condoms to lower the risk of disease or an unwanted pregnancy
- Avoiding the use of “hard” drugs while continuing the use of less harmful substances
- Holding on to an ice cube instead of cutting
- Using a clean needle every time intravenous drugs are used
- Participating in opioid replacement therapy
- Using a designated driver, taxi, car service, or public transportation when drinking or using drugs in public
- Switching to electronic cigarettes
- Gambling only a predesignated amount of money.

Ultimately, harm reduction is a compromise that attempts to mitigate damage while not fully protecting yourself from or delaying the deleterious effects of an addictive behavior.

Is harm reduction rather than abstinence right for you? To decide, you need to take an honest inventory and seek advice and guidance from others.

Frequent Dialectical Tensions With Addictions

- **CORE CONCEPT:** People with addictions commonly experience certain dialectical conflicts. *Occum tam vestess olicavenat, corum perfenaribut publiceres sunimo movidit, dum addum ine int, publi perrace contem P. Habus.*

There are certain dialectical conflicts that are common to addictions. See whether any of these conflicts relate to you and brainstorm what approaches or skills could be useful to resolve them effectively. Also think about and discuss other dialectical tensions that frequent your life and how to navigate them effectively.

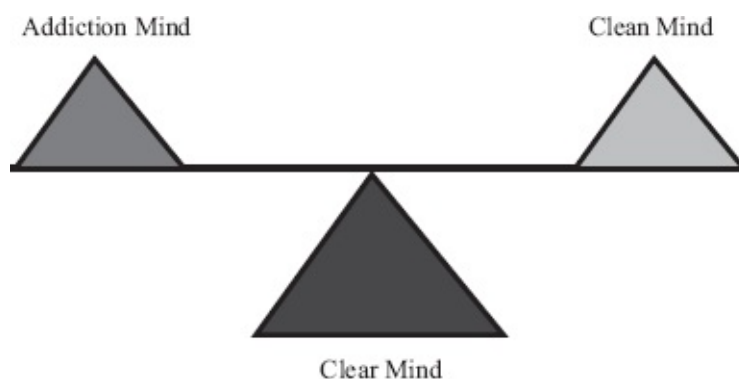
- Wanting to give up the behavior yet resisting change
- Having ambivalence about giving up an addictive behavior
- Enjoying an addictive behavior while it also causes you suffering
- Being pulled into versus stepping out of unskillful behaviors (related to substance use and/or mental illness) • Wanting to use yet knowing it will be harmful
- Seeing only one side to a situation
- Being independent yet still needing help
- Taking things personally when it isn't about you
- Having a mismatch between your values and behaviors
- Deciding a relapse means total failure
- Wanting to be like others who don't struggle with addictive behaviors
- Feeling good in the moment but knowing your behavior will lead to feeling lousy later
- Deciding between a lie and the truth
- Wanting respect but not practicing respect
- Telling too much versus too little to others

- Balancing your wants and needs with those of others
- Separating feelings and facts
- Staying nonjudgmental in difficult situations
- Leaving open options to act unskillfully
- Taking an “all-or-nothing” approach to anything
- Indulgence versus restriction
- Balancing emotion with reason
- Having your goals conflict with your current behaviors.

Clear Mind

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Clear Mind comes from sustained recovery balanced with recognizing the risks of relapse.

For people who struggle with addictive behaviors, three states of mind that supplement Emotion Mind, Reason Mind, and Wise Mind can help guide recovery. These states of mind are Addiction Mind, Clean Mind, and Clear Mind.



When people are still using or are in the early stages of change, they are frequently stuck in what can be called Addiction Mind. This state of mind is focused on urges and cravings to engage in addictive behavior. Addiction Mind keeps the doors to use open, and people in this state of mind are preoccupied with planning and acting on the behavior. Addiction Mind is distorted and keeps people from seeing the consequences of the behavior, making them ready to deceive both themselves and others in the pursuit of it. According to traditional treatment approaches, being in Addiction Mind is similar to being caught in denial or ambivalence about giving up addictions.

Once people have obtained abstinence through treatment or other means, they can then be stuck in what is called Clean Mind. One example of this state of mind is a “treatment high” in which the person quickly moves forward but neglects underlying issues, making a relapse more likely. Clean Mind is characterized by being naive to warning signs, triggers, and environmental cues to the addictive behavior; not being sufficiently proactive; and not making sufficient plans to avoid relapse. In Clean Mind, people may also fall into the trap of believing that they have enough behavioral control to hang out with

friends and in environments where addictions are active, or even go back to “moderate” engagement in their addictive behavior.

As with Wise Mind, ultimately we want to move into Clear Mind. From traditional treatment approaches, Clear Mind is similar to being in the responsive state of sustained recovery. In Clear Mind, strong emotions and urges are nonjudgmentally acknowledged and respected, and people are proactive and make adequate plans about how to handle them. Clear Mind has no illusions about how falling into old behaviors and relapsing can occur subtly and outside awareness without sufficient practice of mindfulness, self-care, and use of resources.

It is key to remember that the path to Clear Mind comes from decreasing engagement in the addictive behavior, achieving abstinence, managing physical and psychological discomfort, dealing effectively with urges, and keeping doors to relapse closed while working on skills to build a satisfying life.

In Clear Mind, the continued practice of effective behaviors happens moment by moment, one day at a time, even after many years of abstinence.

Two Steps to Wise Mind/Clear Mind

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Follow these two steps to access Wise Mind/Clear Mind.

The following two steps give us the ability to get into Wise Mind and Clear Mind. Note the overlap between this teaching and the Wise Mind and core mindfulness lessons in the Mindfulness module. Use all of these teachings together to increase your mastery of mindfulness and states of mind.

Step One: Observe and describe, nonjudgmentally and one-mindfully

Observing and describing is a process of waking up, being aware of experience, and allowing it to flow. We begin by collecting and unifying our attention and then focusing our concentration. Think about having various mental windows: windows to emotions, windows to urges, windows to physical sensations, windows to behaviors, windows to others and our surroundings, and windows to our senses. Of course, there are other windows too, such as windows to the past (e.g., memories) and windows to the future (e.g., planning). As we become aware and notice experience, whatever it may be, we decide which windows to open and which to close, based on what is explained in Step Two below. As we look through our chosen mental window, we watch without clinging to or pushing away due to either attraction or aversion. In other words, the experience is the experience, no more, no less.

The process of Observing and Describing is intended to be nonjudgmental. While judgments can be useful on occasion (e.g., when we simply need to categorize information and move on, in a dispassionate manner), most of the time they cloud experience, either amplifying or diminishing “what is.” The truth about judgments is that they are all relative and what is “good” or “bad” depends on the context of the moment in relation to other moments. For example, problems are opportunities and opportunities have problems. Judgments usually reduce perspective, like looking at the world through a drinking straw. Think about times in which you attached labels to what was being experienced. Chances are something important was missed, and the negative labels probably added suffering to experience and stopped the flow of observation, leading to being stuck. When we are stuck, it is difficult to

participate effectively in experience.

Our goal is to describe what we observe in nonjudgmental language, again not adding to or subtracting from the experience. This neutral way of describing uses factual language that is objective, without coloring the experience. In other words, this process of Observing and Describing involves taking in information and reporting it in a matter-of-fact manner.

Observe and Describe is meant to be a One-Mindful process, again, in relation to what is described in Step Two. Metaphorically, be a gatekeeper about what you observe. Gatekeepers decide what to let in and what to let out, and they maintain a watchful focus. Similarly, we direct the focus of our attention and concentration with One-Mindfulness, gently noticing and letting go of distractions, gently closing those windows that blow open.

Step Two: Participate effectively

Observing and Describing creates awareness. When we are not awake to the moments of our lives, we live reactively. Reactive living leads to exacerbation of symptoms and addictive behavior through escape and avoidance and/or mood-congruent behaviors. Once we are aware we have behavioral choice, we can choose to participate in symptoms and/or an addictive behavior, or we can choose to participate in skills and behaviors that are representative of Wise Mind and Clear Mind.

We decide how to participate based on what would be effective, or what “works.” Effective participation means removing barriers, from yourself and/or your environment, in order to meet your goals and live your life based on your true intentions and values. All things being equal, how do you best play your cards, meeting the demands of the present situation? How do you move from point A to point B being responsive instead of reactive? *What are you willing to do to have a better life?*

Making skillful choices that work is one part of effective participation. The other part is experiential, connecting and being with experience. Being with experience means getting off the sidelines and into the game, going from reading the lines to playing the part, and moving from sleepwalking through life to living it, moment by moment, starting with this one.

The more you practice the skills and behaviors that are important to creating the

Life you want, the more you will find those skills and behaviors springing intuitively from Wise Mind and Clear Mind, because they will become a part of you.

Nonjudgmental Stance (NJS), Self-Acceptance, and Change

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Be both nonjudgmental and accountable with yourself to achieve change.

No one has ever overcome the symptoms of mental illness and/or addictive behaviors through judging oneself or others. In fact, harsh judgments serve to amplify problems and guarantee that people stay stuck in ineffective cycles and patterns. Judgments get in the way of change.

While judgments occasionally have functions, most of the time they skew the way we perceive reality, shutting us down from continued evaluation of the facts and keeping us in a state of elevated emotions and stress. In judgment mind, we default into our reactive and ineffective ways of dealing with life without a real connection of our greater goals and values.

Staying nonjudgmental does not mean evading accountability for choices. It is important to take responsibility for mistakes and for falling into old patterns. Staying nonjudgmental means that, as soon as you have a SLIP (**S**kills **L**earning **I**mproves **P**rogress) into an addictive behavior and/or into symptoms of mental illness, you quickly try to learn from it and make the necessary changes in a matter-of-fact manner, avoiding self-criticism, which can become a vulnerability to engaging in ineffective behavior. A nonjudgmental approach allows you to dialectically create a positive out of a negative.

A Nonjudgmental Stance is a prerequisite to learning self-acceptance. Self-acceptance means acknowledging, without judgment, who you are in this very moment, with all of your faults and shortcomings. When you accept yourself, you free yourself of struggling with your real self. Self-acceptance is not resignation but a process that releases your psychological resources toward the possibility of change.

Acceptance is both the catalyst of change and change itself, allowing you to realize a better life.

One Moment at a Time

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Taking one moment at a time gets you through the long haul.

An old adage in treatment programs is that someone may not know how to be abstinent from a behavior for a year (or longer), but that person does know how to stay abstinent for a day (or shorter). Whether working on abstinence or simply trying to tolerate something painful, time and progress are more manageable when they are considered in small chunks, one moment at a time.

Take whatever you are trying to commit to and put it into a manageable timeframe. When that timeframe expires, commit to the next manageable timeframe. Over time, you will link these smaller successes into sustained success. For example:

- On a difficult day, commit to not drinking or using drugs for 1 hour (or less) at a time.

- Table the option to attempt suicide or act on self-injurious urges between professional appointments.
- Commit to practicing skills in 10-minute increments.
- Decide to wait on confronting someone (if you cannot be skillful) until the next day.
- Make a commitment to go to treatment one week at a time.

As you look to manage symptoms, urges, and behaviors within smaller timeframes, keep practicing other skills and throwing yourself into the behaviors that will create the life you want. And remember: One moment at a time works best when you are not watching the clock!

Bridge-Burning (BB)

- **CORE CONCEPT:** You cannot act on a harmful behavior if you proactively remove the means.

Bridge-Burning refers to proactively removing the means of acting on your urges to engage in addictive behaviors. The concept of Bridge-Burning recognizes that relapse into harmful behaviors happens more easily when there is the immediate opportunity to act on impulses. Eliminating the opportunities and/or inserting barriers between urge and action will result in more opportunities to practice skills.

Bridge-Burning with substance use

- Remove all alcohol and drugs from your home.
- Remove all alcohol-and drug-related objects and paraphernalia from your home (e.g., cocktail glasses, corkscrew, pipes, papers, lighters, and/or anything associated with use).
- Erase the numbers of using friends, associates, and dealers from your phone.
- Block the phone numbers of using friends, associates, and dealers from your phone or get a new number.
- Stay away from bars, liquor stores, and locations associated with use, changing your routines and routes to actively avoid them.
- Do not carry cash.
- Tell anyone and everyone that you have given up substances.
- Actively tell others when you experience urges to use.

List other ways of Bridge-Burning to substance use:

Bridge-Burning with self-injury and/or suicidal urges

- Remove razors, lighters, and other self-injury tools.

- Mix up and change rituals associated with self-injury.
- Remove the specific method of acting on suicide.
- Tell others when you are unsafe and need help.
- Spend time with others and in locations in which you would not harm yourself.
- Go to the hospital *before* acting on suicidal urges.

List other ways of Bridge-Burning with self-injury and/or suicidal urges:

Bridge-Burning with spending

- Cut up credit cards (if you need to keep one, freeze it in water so it will take longer to access it or have someone trustworthy hold it for you).
- Have someone trustworthy keep your excess money when urges are high.
- Establish a “waiting period” that you must adhere to before making a decision to buy any nonessential item.
- Stay away from stores, the mall, online shopping, and/or TV shopping.

List other ways of Bridge-Burning with spending:

Bridge-Burning with unhealthy and/or hopeless relationships

- Erase the other person’s number from your phone.
- Block the other person’s number or get a new number.
- Route emails from the other person to your junk mail folder or block them altogether.
- Tell anyone and everyone that you have moved on from the relationship.
- Fill your free time with activities and healthy people.

List other ways of Bridge-Burning with hopeless relationships:

Bridge-Burning with overeating

- Keep binge and “comfort” foods out of your home.
- Dish out your portions and put the rest away before eating.
- Avoid “all-you-can-eat” restaurants and buffets.
- Eat multiple times a day, mindfully, including healthy snacks.

List other ways of Bridge-Burning with overeating:

Bridge-Burning with gambling

- Avoid places where gambling occurs.
- Limit your access to cash and credit that can be used for gambling.
- Have someone trustworthy hold on to your money when urges are high.
- Block internet access to gambling websites.

List other ways of Bridge-Burning with gambling:

Bridge-burning works best in conjunction with other skills. When we remove the ability to act on harmful behaviors, we need to replace them with something new and skillful. *Be careful not to trade one unhealthy behavior for another.*

Building New Bridges

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Build bridges to new ways to meet your wants and needs.

Burning bridges removes the means of acting on your addictive behavior. As a rule, anytime you subtract a behavior from your life, you should look to add new behaviors to replace what was lost. This is where bridge-building comes in.

If your addiction made you feel good (in the short term)

- Increase opportunities to laugh (e.g., listen to comedy, watch a favorite sitcom, read a joke book and tell others your favorites).
- Practice Build Positive Experience.
- Boost your endorphins through movement, physical touch, or getting outdoors.
- Practice affirmations.

List other ways of feeling good:

If your addiction relaxed you

- Practice Self-Soothe skills.
- Practice deep breathing every hour.
- Schedule down time in which you can turn off your electronics and not be responsible for anything.
- Learn to let go of the “small stuff.”

List other ways of practicing relaxation:

If your addiction involved a ritual

- Start a meditation practice.

- Develop a prayer routine.
- Create morning and bedtime rituals.
- Take morning or afternoon tea time.

List other ways of getting into rituals:

If your addiction had social aspects

- Go to a 12-step meeting.
- Get involved in a cause or advocacy group.
- Develop friendships with people who do not involve themselves in your addictive behavior.
- Make time for small talk with people as you go through your day.

List other ways of being social:

If your addiction involved fun

- Identify new hobbies.
- Get a do-it-yourself guide on something you're interested in doing or creating.
- Join a sports league (softball, bowling, kickball, flag football, etc.).
- Play music and sing and/or dance.

List other ways of having fun:

If your addiction involved the excitement of risks or danger

- Take up an exciting hobby such as trail running, snow-boarding, or rock climbing.
- Join (or form) a band.
- Invest a small amount in penny stocks (but do your homework and avoid scams).

- Work up a comedy routine and show up on amateur night.

List other ways of creating excitement through safe risks:

If your addiction is a way to rebel and break rules

Practice alternative rebellion by:

- Questioning commonly held beliefs
- Speaking your mind or writing a letter to the editor of a newspaper or other publication
- Supporting a fringe cause or political candidate you believe in
- Learning to stand out from the crowd in positive ways.

List other ways to rebel that do not hurt you or other people:

Addictions 3: Bridge-Burning

CORE CONCEPT: Use this exercise to remove the means to act on your harmful behavior.

Describe how you can use the Bridge-Burning skill with a harmful behavior (e.g., self-injury, drinking or drug use, spending, promiscuous sex, overeating). Be specific about how the means to act will be removed:

Describe the new behaviors and skills you will use to replace the old behavior:

Describe how you and others will benefit from effective Bridge-Burning (e.g., how you and others will feel, how it will affect your self-respect, what other practical benefits will occur):

Describe how your life will be different when you burn bridges to your harmful behavior(s):

Urge-Surfing (US): Ride the Wave

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Go with the ebbs and flows of urges without acting on them.

Urge-surfing is the nonjudgmental acceptance of urges, allowing you to simply notice and ride their ebbs and flows without reaction.

The essence of Urge-Surfing is to understand that urges are a part of our experience and are not commands for action. Often, instead of just watching our urges, we unwittingly intensify them. Judging and catastrophizing are two ways in which we make it harder to tolerate urges. We also have a natural tendency to want to escape urges by fighting them or acting on them. All of these approaches to urges ultimately intensify them.

Trying to fight urges is not unlike struggling to escape quicksand: Frantic efforts lead to sinking. Like fighting urges, escaping discomfort by acting on urges will also cause you to go under in time. This happens because relieving tension with unhealthy behaviors is reinforcing and feeds the cycle of addiction.

The secret is to not panic and react but to float. Riding the ebbs and flows requires us to be willing to have a nonjudgmental relationship with our urges, even when they cause intense discomfort. It may seem counterintuitive, but an acceptance-based relationship with urges, emotions, or any other uncomfortable experience will decrease the intensity of many of these experiences over time. Remember that acceptance is not resignation; instead it is a state of mind in which we acknowledge “what is,” freeing up our resources to be responsive and effective.

Practice Urge-Surfing when your urges are at lower levels. Like real surfing, you learn to ride small waves before you can graduate to large swells, and you also learn when the waves are too intense to ride. Keep in mind that Urge-Surfing works well in combination with other skills, such as distraction. Be responsive and switch up skill strategies based on what works.

Emotions, Thoughts, and Situations That Trigger Addictive Behavior

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Understand what triggers your addictive behavior and plan solutions.

Read and discuss the following triggers for addictive behaviors and check the ones that apply to you. Implement the suggested solutions, and add the information you learn about yourself and what might be effective to your skill plans.

- You feel painful emotions:** Anxiety, depression, anger, hopelessness, guilt, and shame are just some of the emotions that can lead you to engage in an addictive behavior.

Solution: Accept the emotion without judging it, talk to someone supportive, or throw yourself into an activity or distraction. Remember that unhealthy coping of all types feeds painful emotions.

- You find yourself in “high-risk” situations:** You are surrounded by people, places, and things that you strongly associate with an addictive behavior and/or you are in a situation where people are engaging in addictive behaviors and maybe even pressuring you to engage too.

Solution: Would you stay in a burning building? Figure out how you are going to walk out in a calm and orderly manner, using your skills and/or plan(s).

- You have a bad day:** You use a difficult day as an excuse to escape or take a break through addictive behavior.

Solution: We all need to manage stress on bad days, so develop skills to replace your addictive behavior.

- You have a great day:** You use a great day as an excuse to prolong positive feelings through addictive behavior.

Solution: Brainstorm other ways to keep good times going without your

addictive behavior.

- You reminisce about the “good old days”:** You are nostalgic about your addictive behavior and do not remember any of the corresponding “bad old days” that came with it.

Solution: Gain some balance by recalling the “bad old days” and how your addictive behavior has negatively affected you.

- You minimize the effects of your addictive behavior:** You push away how your addictive behavior affects you and others negatively (e.g., thinking that your addiction is not nearly as bad as that of others).

Solution: Think about the long-term effects of your addictive behavior on your life (e.g., your health or finances). Remember that you probably have no special defenses against the long-term effects of your addiction.

- You experience strong physical sensations and cravings:** Some bodily sensations can strongly motivate addictive behavior.

Solution: Practice Urge-Surfing, Opposite to Emotion, relaxation, or distraction. Seek out healthy pleasures and use Build Positive Experience.

- You experience withdrawal symptoms:** When you have withdrawal symptoms and feel unwell, it can be tempting to use your addictive behavior to feel better again. Beware of this vicious cycle!

Solution: Use Radical Acceptance with withdrawal symptoms and consult a physician if needed. Immediately practice PLEASED and/or self-care skills, and try to get into healthy distractions. The discomfort will pass in time.

- You think that a little bit of your addictive behavior won’t hurt you:** In truth you know it definitely will not be just a little.

Solution: Count the times that you held to a little bit of your addictive behavior compared to the times it spiraled into more, or gather this data going forward.

- You “reason” that this is the last time you will do you addictive behavior or that you will change starting tomorrow:** However, your history has proven this to be an unlikely “commitment.”

Solution: Read and talk about stages of change and consider where you are and what you need.

- You think that it's unfair that other people can engage in your addictive behavior, so you should be able to too:** However, others may not engage in the behavior with the same frequency, intensity, or duration or suffer the same ill effects as you do.

Solution: Use Radical Acceptance to understand that life is sometimes unfair, and mindfully refocus on skills to Build Mastery or use Build Positive Experience without your addictive behavior.

- You think your attempts to quit the addictive behavior are a “lost cause,” or you even think of yourself as a lost cause:** This thinking promotes addictive behavior to “validate” your sense of being worthless.

Solution: Practice Nonjudgmental Stance, use interpersonal effectiveness to ask for support, or throw yourself into a distraction.

- You believe you deserve a celebration:** You think you have earned your addictive behavior through hard work.

Solution: You do deserve a celebration! Think of healthy and positive ways to recognize yourself and your accomplishment.

- You believe you deserve an escape because life has gotten hard** *Solution:* You do deserve an escape! Look at your skills plan or brainstorm with others about healthy pleasures and escapes.

- You think that you have to escape this emotion, urge, or situation because it seems unbearable** *Solution:* Practice acceptance, use distress tolerance skills, or reach out to others for validation and problem-solving. Read this (or another) skills manual until the urge passes.

- You mix up your wants and needs:** Wanting to engage in an addictive behavior is not the same as needing to.

Solution: Who “needs” addictive behaviors other than those who are addicted to them? Get into mindful distractions, relaxation techniques, or other ways to have fun, and use Build Positive Experience.

You experience myopic thinking and see only a small part of the picture or only today *Solution:* Get into dialectical thinking, seeing both the forest and the trees.

You use a small slip to justify a full-blown relapse: You think, “in for a penny, in for a pound.”

Solution: Actively remember your commitments, use dialectical abstinence, take on a Nonjudgmental Stance, and “play the tape through,” considering the likely consequences of a full-blown relapse. Do not burn down a house you worked hard to build.

You think that no one cares for you anyway: Since you are not worthy of care and concern, you may as well do your addictive behavior.

Solution: Test that theory by talking to your therapist, another program member, a supportive family member or friend, or someone at a crisis intervention center or meeting. Be open to allowing someone to show concern, and do not punish their efforts by arguing or rejecting what is offered.

List your other triggers to your addictive behaviors and effective solutions:

Observing and Describing the Effects of Addictive Behavior

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Increase mindfulness of the negative effects of your addictive behavior to motivate change.

Addictive behaviors have both varying and similar effects on people's lives. The goal of this exercise is to build awareness about the negative effects that the behavior you engage in has on areas of your life. If you are not sure whether your addictive behavior causes problems for you (or think that it does not), then Observe and Describe the impacts your behavior has on other people who have expressed concern about you. Also "fast-forward" and Observe and Describe concerns you (or others) have about longer-term consequences of your addictive behavior.

Use information from your therapist(s), program members, books, the internet, discussions, and other sources to complete this exercise. If you are not sure whether the information you find is accurate, be sure to inquire further and/or ask someone who knows (e.g., a therapist, physician, or another expert).

Note that this exercise can be done with any addictive and/or problem behaviors, such as alcohol and drug use, chronic suicidal behaviors, self-injury, gambling, overeating, or any other behaviors that cause undesirable consequences.

Addictions 4: Describing the Consequences of Addictive Behaviors

CORE CONCEPT: Use this worksheet to assess how your addictive behavior impacts important areas of your life.

Describe how your addictive behavior affects the following areas of your life.

Mental health:

Physical health:

Spiritual health:

Family:

Friends:

Education and/or self-learning:

Work, volunteering, and/or productivity:

Leisure:

Other areas:



Cycle of Emotions and Ineffective/Addictive Behaviors

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Understand cycles of addictive behavior to break them.

Emotions and ineffective and addictive behaviors follow a cyclical pattern. Notice how vulnerabilities, triggers, emotions, and action urges pull us into ineffective and addictive behaviors in an attempt to cope. These behaviors usually fall into two categories: mood-congruent behaviors, which maintain emotional or mood states, and escape and avoidance behaviors, which we use to get away from emotional or mood states.

Ineffective and addictive behaviors often meet short-term needs, but their consequences can intensify the emotions that we struggle with in the first place. Further, these behaviors can cause other secondary painful emotions such as regret, guilt, and shame. These consequences then feed into the next vulnerabilities at the top of the cycle. Over time, you become psychologically and/or physically dependent on your addictive behavior to cope.

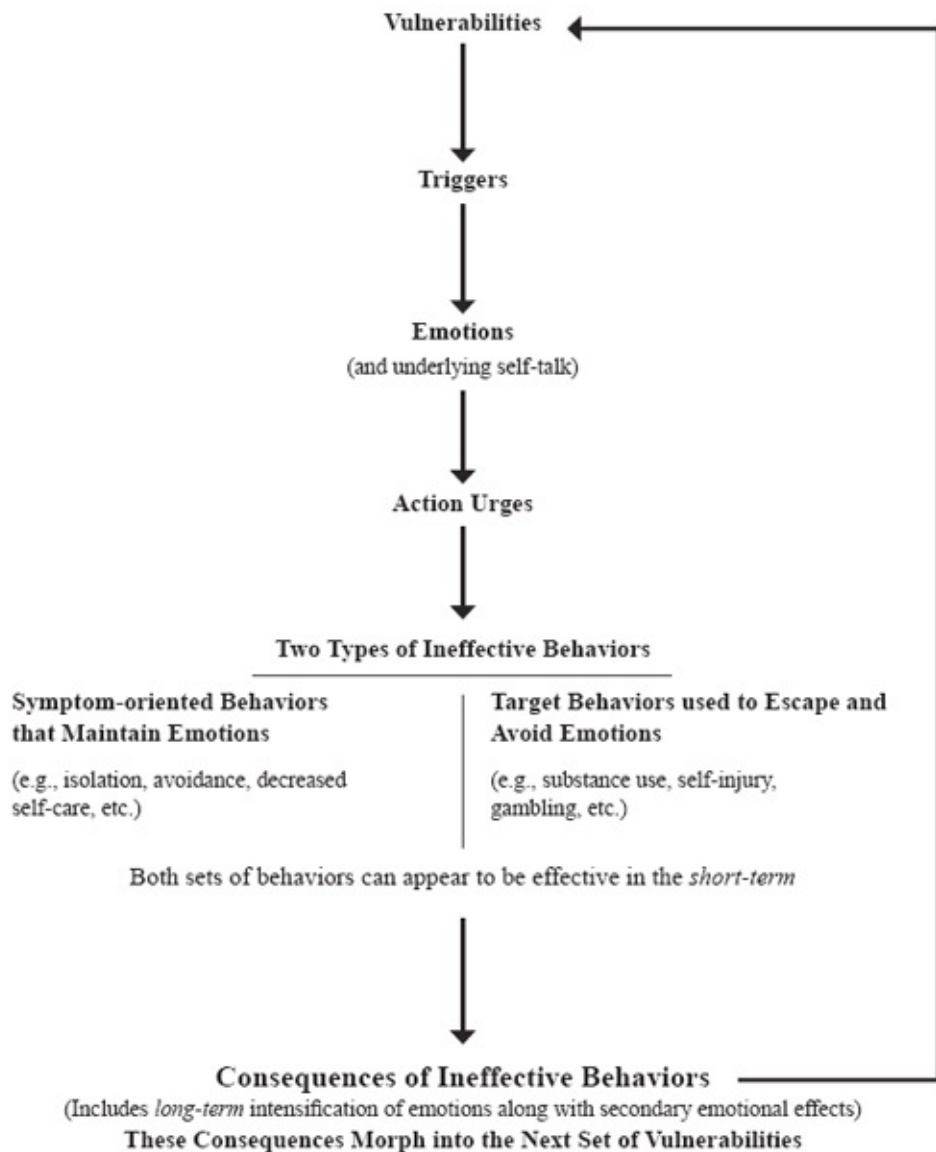
Study this cycle and use it to identify the specifics of your emotions and your ineffective and addictive behavior cycle. As you understand your cycle, start to think of ways to skillfully intervene at each point of the cycle; each potential problem is an opportunity for practice. Also consider that both ineffective and addictive behaviors and symptoms of mental illness need to be addressed at the same time for your efforts to be effective.

As you learn more about your cycle and its components, consider how you will use that information in your skills plan(s).

Mental Illness and the Ineffective/Addictive Behavior Cycle

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Symptoms of mental illness and addictive behavior follow recurring cycles that can be interrupted.

Mental Illness and Substance Use Cycle



Observing and Describing a Process of Relapse

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Similar to symptoms of mental illness and addictive behavior, relapse often follows a predictable cycle.

The following exercise discusses common elements that contribute to a relapse. It is important to know that a relapse is not simply an event but a process. Sometimes this process happens quickly, and at other times it may unfold over days, months, or even longer.

Gaining awareness of how this process unfolds can help you to be proactive in how you can minimize risk and maximize effective coping to stay on track toward your goals. Use your history of addictive behavior, your mental health symptoms, and other behavior patterns to discover your relapse process and transfer what you discover to your skills plans.

1. Vulnerabilities thrive

Vulnerabilities frequently begin with a lack of adequate self-care. When people are not getting enough sleep, exercise, or nutrition, it is difficult to be emotionally regulated. If you have cut down or eliminated your addictive behavior, the discomfort that comes with withdrawal symptoms is a set-up to relapse without careful attention to helping your body and mind recover (this occasionally happens after a long, sustained period of abstinence too).

Inadequate self-care paired with too much stress (e.g., work, school, financial, housing issues, isolation, and/or other relationship problems) can make it especially hard to resist addictive behavior.

Additionally, not actively working on creating a satisfying life without your addictive behavior leaves a lot of opportunities to fall into old behavioral patterns, as does unnecessarily exposing yourself to people, places, situations, and things that are high risk when vulnerabilities are strong.

Describe the vulnerabilities that apply to you, including additional vulnerabilities

not listed:

Describe the skills you need to practice to address these vulnerabilities:

2. Strong feelings, cravings, and urges build

Unchecked vulnerabilities feed strong emotions, especially when people are predisposed to anxiety, depression, anger, or another type of emotion dysregulation. Vulnerabilities also lead to strong cravings and urges, especially if your addictive behavior had short-term benefits in the past. In an emotional moment, urges can seem like they last forever.

Describe the feelings, cravings, and urges that can be difficult to manage:

Describe the skills you need to practice to address these feelings, cravings, and urges:

3. Thinking about the addictive behavior becomes a preoccupation

You become preoccupied with your addictive behavior, and you may minimize or rationalize engaging in it or get into another type of “stuck thinking” that will not work for you. You may convince yourself that the behavior will work and not be any big deal, “just this time.” Or you may tell yourself that it is hopeless and does not matter anyway.

Describe what you have told yourself in your mind (i.e., your self-talk) about substance use before a relapse happens. Also describe how your self-talk at those times appears to you in retrospect:

Describe the skills you need to practice to address this self-talk:

4. Planning a relapse in your mind

At some point thinking shifts into planning. What are you going to do, where will it happen, who will you be with, or how will you plan the time you need to

do it alone? How will you keep it secret or minimize it to others? At this point you are practicing in your mind what does not work in your life.

Describe how your planning at those times appears to you in retrospect:

Describe the skills you need to practice to address mental planning:

5. Putting your plans into motion

At this point you are taking active steps to engage in your addictive behavior, and you start to take the behavioral steps that put your plan into motion. While each of these steps is an opportunity to change course and make a u-turn, the further you go down this road, the more difficult it is to avoid a SLIP (see point six below).

At this stage you are in Emotion and Addiction Mind and need to work toward Wise and Clear Mind.

Describe how putting your plans into motion at those times appears to you in retrospect:

Describe the skills you need to practice to address behavioral steps toward use:

6. Having a SLIP

A SLIP (**S**kills **L**earning **I**mproves **P**rogress) is the final destination in this process: This is actual engagement in the addictive behavior. The task now is to revisit dialectical abstinence as soon as possible, to quickly repair the mistake, and to learn from it as you recommit to your goals. A step in a different, skillful direction is needed.

Describe what you have learned from your SLIPs and how it can improve your progress:

Describe the skills you need to practice to minimize and/or avoid SLIPs.

Describe the skills you need to practice to minimize and/or avoid OER's.

Opposite to Emotion With Urges for Addictive Behavior: U-Turn

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Any moment is an opportunity to turn around harmful behavior.

A u-turn consists of making a complete change of direction. Sometimes urges for addictive behaviors lead us to take steps to make those behaviors happen, leading to a relapse. Imagine a continuum where one direction leads to greater health and well-being and the other direction leads to diminished health and well-being. Sometimes we get moving in an ineffective direction, either accidentally or by choice, but, once we realize we are moving further away from our goals, we can make an abrupt change and head in the other direction.

Think about times when you have been driving or been a passenger in a car that has taken a wrong turn and is moving away from the destination. How does it feel to willfully stay on this route in spite of increasing indications that the direction is leading to a place you do not want to go? The reality is that it is possible to stop, reassess the situation, and make a u-turn if needed, and that many opportunities to turn around usually exist until we have actually acted on an urge. Even if you have a lapse, there is still an opportunity to turn it around by recognizing the mistake, quickly repairing it, and reversing course before a full-blown relapse happens.

When we understand the vulnerabilities and triggers that lead to substance use, we can identify many intersections at which to make a u-turn and avoid being in a place that we want to avoid. The next time you notice urges and behaviors that move you toward relapse, take the wheel and make a u-turn.

Addictions 5: Opposite to Emotion and the U-Turn

CORE CONCEPT: Use this worksheet to see the outcomes of your addictive behavior versus making a u-turn.

Event → Emotion → Natural Response

--	--	--

Followed Natural Response?

YES

NO

Action

Opposite Action

--

--

Outcomes

Outcomes

--

--

Using DEAR MAN to Refuse Addictive Behaviors

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Assertiveness is required to refuse engaging in addictive behavior.

When people give up an addictive behavior (or are working to do so), it is common to encounter pressures, both subtle and obvious, to take it up again. You may find yourself in situations where others are engaging in an addictive behavior and where it seems to be part of the norm. In these situations you may find that others encourage you to engage in the behavior, sometimes in seemingly friendly ways and sometimes in pushy ways. Sometimes the encouragement is subtle, being passive and implied.

In situations where you are invited to engage in your addictive behavior, or anything else that is unwanted, you can simply say “no” without any additional information or justifications. However, saying no is difficult for many people. For this reason, it is important to do behavior rehearsal, having your therapist, a fellow program member, or someone else “pressure” you to engage in the behavior while you practice setting a limit. Have your behavior rehearsal partner continue to challenge you in increasingly intense ways while you continue to use the broken record technique (see DEAR MAN in Module 5: Interpersonal Effectiveness). Note that you can also rehearse other ways of refusing if you find them to be useful.

As you rehearse this skill, remember to practice various scenarios (e.g., being at a social event, having someone bring substances to your home, having your partner or spouse encourage you to engage in a harmful behavior with him/her) with various people (e.g., strangers, a close friend, a family member), making the rehearsal as real as possible. It helps to have people share actual events with each other to increase the realism of the rehearsal. Having one or more observers give feedback and “jump into” the rehearsal to model skills when you get stuck increases the effectiveness of this exercise. Writing a script to follow can assist those who are in the process of learning how to speak more spontaneously.

Remember that you have worked hard for your successes, and people who would ridicule, criticize, or pressure someone who has worked to improve have their

harass, criticize, or pressure someone who has worked to improve have their own issues. Try not to personalize, and remember that you can simply leave the situation if necessary. Use your Wise and Clear Mind to guide you.

Using Interpersonal Effectiveness to Address Resentments

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Addressing resentments can be an important part of recovery.

Resentments contribute to painful emotions, addictive behaviors, and other ineffective behaviors. Start by Observing and Describing the role resentments have had in your life with your therapist and/or program members. We can be surprised how much resentment we have once we begin to talk about it. In these discussions, be straightforward in how you have played a role in and participated in resentments.

Resentments can then be divided into categories. One category is for resentments that you decide to accept and release without addressing them with other people, essentially beginning a process of unburdening yourself. It is helpful to share your desire to release these resentments with someone else, and you may find that you need to revisit this process of acceptance from time to time.

The other category is for resentments that need to be addressed with other people, directly or symbolically. Begin by talking about these resentments in greater detail with impartial others to better understand the nature of the resentments and what you need to say. Try to discuss resentments descriptively and nonjudgmentally, and allow yourself to feel the pain attached to them. Do not amplify your emotions, but also do not attempt to minimize their impacts on you. You may consider journaling as an alternative to or as an initial step toward talking with someone. If expressing the resentments will likely overwhelm you, make sure you are in a safe environment and in Wise and Clear Mind.

After journaling and/or discussing resentments, choose one that you may want to address. Take on resentments one at a time. Specifically decide what you want to say to the person or people relative to your chosen resentment. Remember your FAST skills, especially being fair and grounded in values, and how you can use GIVE along with what will essentially be a DEAR MAN. Write a script and rehearse it with someone. Anticipate how your DEAR MAN, even done skillfully with GIVE, will be received. *Remember to own your contributions to*

the situations that caused the resentment and include that aspect in the script.

After you finish this preparation, make a final decision about whether you want to address the resentment directly. Discussing resentments with the people involved works when you anticipate that they will be receptive. *In general, avoid directly discussing resentments with people who would likely react in a way that harms you and with people who would likely be harmed by the discussion.* In these situations, writing a letter that you will not mail, journaling, or talking to an open chair can be a healing outlet.

When you have clear interpersonal and distress tolerance plans along with sufficient behavioral rehearsal, reach out to set up a time to talk. Consider the timing and other factors to set the discussion up for success. Keep in mind the qualities of being assertive: Your goal is to skillfully discuss the resentment.

The ultimate goal of addressing resentments in one way or another is acceptance and forgiveness, so you can be free to move forward. The preparation and conversation can be stressful, but the reward will likely be worth it.

Addictions 6: Resentments

CORE CONCEPT: Use this worksheet to work through resentments that hinder recovery.

Use this exercise to learn more about your resentments and to begin the process of addressing them.

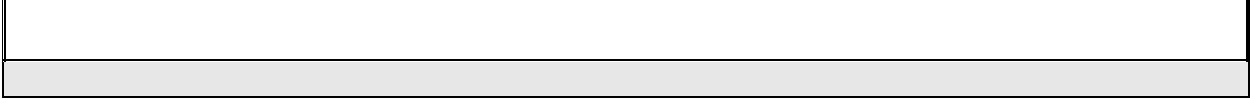
Describe a resentment related to another person in detail and in nonjudgmental language:

Describe your behaviors that contributed to the resentment:

Describe your goal(s) for addressing the resentment (if you choose to do so):

Describe what you would like to say to the other person using GIVE and DEAR MAN (use another sheet of paper if necessary):

Describe in more detail your plan for addressing this resentment (if you choose to do so), including the skills you will need to practice:



Using Interpersonal Effectiveness to Make Amends

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Similar to addressing resentments, making amends can be an important part of recovery.

Addictive behaviors and other ineffective behaviors can result in harm to other people in both direct and indirect ways. The pain and suffering you may have caused others through your actions (and inactions) may create pain and suffering for you as well. The guilt and shame that result from harming others can directly keep people in the cycle of addiction or make them vulnerable to relapse by allowing for escape and avoidance of these emotions.

Not addressing the harm caused to others also interferes with recovery. For example, you may think you need to continue to avoid those you have hurt, closing your world rather than opening it. Additionally, ignoring the need to make amends allows you to ignore the negative effects of the addictive behavior (or other behavior), creating another barrier to your recovery.

Making amends begins with openly acknowledging the behaviors that harmed other people. What did you do, and who did it affect? With this acknowledgment comes emotion, and you need to experience it without amplifying it or minimizing it. The emotion honors the relative seriousness of what was done. Balance experiencing any intense emotion with distress tolerance skills, and consider whether you need to do this work in a safe environment.

One part of making amends is apologizing for the specific actions that affected others, clearly recognizing the impacts of those actions. If a direct apology cannot be made (i.e., if it would cause further harm), writing a letter that you will not mail, journaling, or talking to an open chair can be helpful.

However, amends go far beyond an apology. An important part of making amends is repairing the situation to the best of your ability. For example, if you stole money or property, you would pay it back or return it. Justice is restored through restitution that honors the pain and loss that resulted from your actions. If you cannot make amends for a practical reason (e.g., you cannot or should not contact the affected person or you literally do not have the means to restore the

...
situation), then you may have to make symbolic amends, often through committing to touch the lives of others in positive ways. Dialectically, this makes meaning out of something that was terrible.

Truly making amends is about changing your life so that you no longer fall into making the mistakes that previously caused others harm; it is about pursuing health, wellness, and recovery. It is about using skills to live a life grounded in values and your true intentions.

Although the process of making amends is focused on and for others, you can enjoy the freedom that ultimately comes from sincere efforts.

Addictions 7: Making Amends

CORE CONCEPT: Use this worksheet to make amends for situations that hinder recovery.

Use this exercise to begin the process of making amends with people who have been harmed by your addictive behavior.

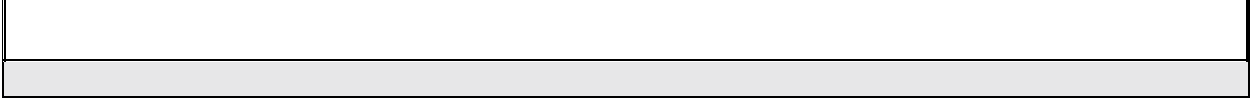
Describe in detail and in nonjudgmental language the behavior that harmed someone else and who that person is:

Describe in detail and in nonjudgmental language how you believe that person was affected by your behavior, including the emotional impact:

Describe the apology you would like to make, taking responsibility for your behavior and making no excuses:

Describe how you plan to repair the situation, in real and symbolic ways:

Describe your commitment to implementing changes in your life to avoid making the same mistake again:



Module 9

Building a Satisfying Life

Introduction to Building a Satisfying Life

■ **CORE CONCEPT:** Routines and structure lead to a satisfying life.

Every life is worth living, but many of us find our lives unsatisfying, unenjoyable, or even miserable at times. Life is more satisfying when we develop routines that include predictable and enjoyable relaxation and fun balanced with responsibilities.

Routines do not need to be complicated. In fact, most of us benefit from mindful simplicity in life. Mindful simplicity means connecting to and experiencing the routines that define and structure our days.

Consider that the Dalai Lama (2009) describes a daily routine that includes meals, meditation, studying scripture, mending watches, gardening, working, and watching a little TV before bed. Our routines do not have to be spectacular. Peace and enjoyment can come with predictability.

Also consider that what works for children generally works for adults. Many of us make the mistake of believing that we no longer need the structure and predictability that children do. In some cases, we never had structure or predictability as children, so we never had the opportunity to continue having it in adolescence or adulthood.

One of the first tasks of building a satisfying life is establishing a routine. Before beginning, consider the following dialectic: *want to* versus *have to*. Our routines need balance between what we want to do and what we have to do, and we need to have a middle ground between enjoyable activities and responsibilities. Dialectically speaking, going too far in either direction creates the need for balance with the opposite. We need to rework our routine when we are stuck on one side or the other.

Two other dialectics to consider are *structure* versus *flexibility* and *predictability* versus *novelty*. Remember that structured routines benefit us, but, if they become too rigid, we may feel trapped by them. Obviously, the other extreme of excessive flexibility may result in too much unpredictability or chaos, which stands in the way of developing a satisfying life.

Too much flexibility leaves us unsure about what we need to be doing, and that causes distress. The middle ground is creating a routine that is solid but includes opportunity for change and flexibility based on the demands of the day.

A predictable routine allows us to feel settled and safe and to have a “home base” from which to operate. At the same time, too much predictability leads to feeling stifled. We also need to experience novelty and change in our routines. Every day does not need to be the same. Planning open times and free days can be part of establishing the balance.

Remember that building a routine will take time but will reap great rewards.

Using ROUTINE (RO)

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Develop a schedule to get your life on track.

Use the acronym ROUTINE to remember the building blocks (**R**esponsibilities, **O**ngoing structure, **U**se of skills, **T**raditions, **I**nterests included, **N**ovelty, **E**nvision a satisfying life) of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Responsibilities We get overwhelmed when our responsibilities are not taken care of daily. Break bigger responsibilities down into daily steps. Make a list of both major and minor responsibilities and fill them into the My Routines and Schedule worksheet (below).

Ongoing structure Routines are about structure that is ongoing, predictable, and repeating. Structure keeps us from getting stuck in symptoms and is the foundation for building a satisfying life. Use the My Routines and Schedule worksheet (below) to structure your days, and be sure to follow it.

Use of skills Remember that you need to learn and practice all of your skills as a part of your routine, just like someone in school or college does daily homework. Include reminders for the skills you specifically want to practice on a given day. Also remember that other skills might be needed to follow your routine, such as Opposite to Emotion.

Traditions Traditions give meaning to our lives and those of others. Part of a satisfying life is developing traditions that you and the people around you enjoy.

Many of us think of traditions as being tied to seasons and holidays, and those can be fun to establish, but traditions can also be as simple as a family bowling night, a specific dinner on a certain night, or celebrating accomplishments (yours or others') with something special. You can get back into traditions you have valued or use your imagination to create new traditions for yourself and your loved ones.

Interests included Routines that do not include our personal interests are difficult to maintain. Be sure to build in what you like to do. If you are unsure

what you are interested in, pick some options from the Activities List (see below) and plug them into your schedule. Remember to approach a new interest or activity with a Nonjudgmental Stance.

Novelty Be careful not to build too much structure into your routine. Routines also need space for flexibility and novelty. Make sure you explicitly leave space to try new activities or be spontaneous. Consider scheduling a free morning, afternoon, evening, or day into your routine.

Envision a satisfying life Routines, schedules, and structure take time to get established. Remember not to give up on building habits toward living a more satisfying life. Stay mindful of how your routine will help you with your priorities, goals, and values. Do not give up!

Everyday Care

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Basic physical and mental self-care need to be part of a daily routine.

Basic physical and mental self-care are needed every day to establish a foundation on which to build. As we learn more skills, we might develop (or you may already have developed) more elaborate and effective self-care. For most of us, we need to revisit the basics at least occasionally, and all of us need to have these basics be part of our daily routine.

Refer to the lists that follow and then describe the other tasks you would like to attend to each day.

Routine physical self-care

Brush teeth

Wash face and/or bathe or shower

Put on clean clothes

Take medications, vitamins, *etc.*

Eat a balanced meal at least three times a day plus healthy snacks Move around, stretch, and exercise

Have a bedtime routine

Describe other routine **physical** self-care tasks you need daily:

Routine mental self-care

Mindfulness (breathing or relaxation) Identify positives and gratefulness
Encourage yourself

Plan positive activities

Connect with family, friends, and support Nurture your spirit

Describe other routine **mental** self-care tasks you need daily:

Describe how your life will be different when you effectively practice physical and mental self-care: _____

Building a Satisfying Life 1: Activities List

CORE CONCEPT: Use this list to plan activities in your schedule.

We need to have pleasant activities scheduled every day. Below is a list of pleasant activities, many of which are free. Add pleasant activities that you enjoy to the list. Make sure to schedule at least three pleasant activities each day. Also, remember to use mindfulness skills with each experience.

1. Dress up or down.
2. Play board games.
3. Have a snack mindfully.
4. Appreciate a favorite actor or act yourself.
5. Read a text of your religion.
6. Advocate for the National Alliance on Mental Illness, a political cause, or the environment.
7. Stargaze, find constellations, or wonder about the universe.
8. Read about animals or visit the zoo.
9. Appreciate the arts or create your own artworks.
10. Play badminton.
11. Redecorate or rearrange your house.
12. Join a group.
13. Have a conversation with a friend or a stranger.
14. Watch or play baseball or softball.
15. Make crafts.
16. Watch, read about, or fly an airplane or build a model.

17. Watch or play basketball or play HORSE.
18. Bathe or shower mindfully.
19. Relax at (or imagine being at) the beach; look for shells or clean the beach up.
20. Do beadwork.
21. Beatbox, rap, or sing.
22. Ring a bell.
23. Breathe mindfully.
24. Write a short story.
25. Bike.
26. Feed or watch birds.
27. Blog or visit blogs.
28. Boat.
29. Bowl.
30. Bet a small amount of money.
31. Start a fantasy football league (or join one).
32. Play checkers.
33. Help the disabled.
34. Contribute at a food pantry.
35. Bake a cake and decorate it.
36. Go geocaching.
37. Do calligraphv.

38. Camp.
39. Make candles or ice candles.
40. Canoe.
41. Have a picnic in your home.
42. Read about cars or go for a drive.
43. Do some cheerleading.
44. Take a nap.
45. Watch one TV show mindfully.
46. Window-shop (without spending).
47. Play chess.
48. Go to a place of worship or engage in associated activities.
49. Watch clouds.
50. Make a sand castle.
51. Collect coins.
52. Go to an antique shop to browse.
53. Collect artwork.
54. Collect vinyl or CDs or look at and listen to old ones.
55. Compose music or lyrics.
56. Look at architecture in magazines or around town.
57. Enjoy perfume or cologne.
58. Do computer activities.

58. Do computer activities.

59. Cook.

60. Crochet.

61. Cross-stitch.

62. Do a crossword puzzle.

63. Dance anywhere.

64. Play darts (not lawn darts).

65. Look at your collectibles.

66. Bowl with friends or in a league.

67. Daydream.

68. Juggle.

69. Play dominoes or set them up to let them fall.

70. Draw.

71. Eat out or fix a special meal at home.

72. Take a community education course or educate yourself on a new topic.

73. Tinker with electronics.

74. Do embroidery.

75. Entertain others.

76. Exercise: aerobics, weights, yoga.

77. Go fishing.

78. Watch or play football.

79. Take a hot or cool shower.

79. Take a hot or cool shower.

80. Tell jokes and laugh.

81. Go four-wheeling.

82. Paint a wall.

83. Enjoy or maintain an aquarium.

84. Play Frisbee or disc golf.

85. Mend clothes.

86. Have a spirited debate (without needing to be right).

87. Join a club.

88. Play games.

89. Garden.

90. Swim.

91. Keep a dream journal.

92. Hug a friend or family member.

93. Visit garage sales.

94. Be intimate with a loved one.

95. Be a mentor.

96. Build a bird house.

97. Do genealogy.

98. Walk your (or a neighbor's) dog.

99. Visit an art museum.

100. Go to the movies or watch a favorite movie.
101. Golf.
102. Practice putting.
103. Give yourself a facial.
104. Paint a picture or finger-paint.
105. Watch funny YouTube videos (or post one).
106. Find an activity listed more than once on this list.
107. Go go-kart racing.
108. Play Texas Hold'em.
109. Volunteer at an animal protection organization.
110. Write a letter to an editor.
111. Light a candle and enjoy the smell or the flame.
112. Play video games.
113. Scrapbook.
114. Become a pen pal.
115. Support any cause.
116. Play guitar.
117. Write a handwritten letter.
118. Hike.
119. Do home repair.
120. Breathe in fresh air.

121. Build a home theater system.
122. Record your favorite shows and watch them back to back.
123. Air drum or air guitar to a cool song.
124. Ride a horse.
125. Write a thank-you letter.
126. Hunt.
127. Surf the internet.
128. Fix a bike.
129. Make jewelry.
130. Browse your favorite store.
131. Put together a jigsaw puzzle.
132. Build a fort with your kids.
133. Journal.
134. Juggle.
135. Kayak.
136. See life like a young child.
137. Say a prayer.
138. Build or fly kites.
139. Knit.
140. Tie knots.
141. Sing a silly song.

142. Pick flowers.
143. Learn anything new.
144. Learn a foreign language.
145. Practice telling a joke.
146. Learn an instrument.
147. Listen to music.
148. Macramé.
149. Color with kids (or without).
150. Smile at someone.
151. Be affectionate.
152. Do a magic trick.
153. Meditate.
154. Use a metal detector.
155. Teach a child something.
156. Build models.
157. Ride or look at motorcycles.
158. Play with children.
159. Go mountain biking.
160. Work with a team.
161. Plant an herb garden.
162. Go to a community center.

163. Grow a Chia pet.
164. Climb a mountain.
165. Make a root beer float.
166. Lie in the grass.
167. Scrapbook.
168. Practice a musical instrument.
169. Make an item of clothing.
170. Read reviews on a topic of interest.
- 171 Do origami.
172. Play Trivial Pursuit or any trivia game.
173. Clean out a closet and donate unneeded items.
174. Plan a movie marathon.
175. Look at StumbleUpon.com.
176. Join a chat room.
177. Play paintball.
178. Go to a water park.
179. Pass on something thoughtful found on the internet.
180. Go to a video arcade.
181. Indulge in a guilty pleasure.
182. Email friends and family.
183. Join a drum circle.

184. Rollerblade.
185. Swing at a playground.
186. Go to the mall to walk or browse (without spending).
187. Water your plants.
188. Make a collage.
189. Hang with a friend.
190. Listen to music and read the lyrics.
191. Try a new recipe.
192. Paint your nails.
193. Sit by any body of water.
194. Go to the library.
195. Organize a neighborhood garden.
196. Groom a pet.
197. Watch a sunrise or sunset.
198. Take a walk.
199. Go to a health club or YMCA.
200. Go to a coffee shop.

List the activities you like (or have liked) to do:

Circle at least 10 new activities from the list that you are willing to try.

Describe how your life will be different when you schedule and involve yourself in activities:



Building a Satisfying Life 3: Small Routines

CORE CONCEPT: Develop small routines that reap big benefits.

Start to develop small routines in life and be consistent with what works. Note the examples, but be sure to individualize your routines. Be sure you make time for these small routines in your daily schedule above. Also remember to practice mindfulness with your routines.

Describe your morning routine (e.g., get up, take medications, use bathroom, make tea, eat breakfast, shower/bathe, journal, meditate/relax, prepare to leave or transition to next routine):

Describe your work (or school, volunteering, etc.) routine (e.g., arrive, get organized, listen to voicemail and check emails, check in with coworkers, set goals for the day, get started):

Describe your evening routine (e.g., check mail and complete tasks, make dinner and eat, clean up kitchen, socialize, read, watch TV, relax):

Describe your bedtime routine (e.g., brush teeth, wash face, put on pajamas, lay out clothes for tomorrow, write down positives and gratefulness and goals for tomorrow, practice mindfulness and relaxation):

Describe other small routines (e.g., leisure, relaxation) that are important to you: _____

Describe how your life will be different when you effectively and mindfully follow routines and schedules:

Social Media

Introduction to Social Media

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Be mindful and effective when using technology-based communication and social media.

Technology-based communication and social media have become an inevitable and almost unavoidable part of interpersonal communication and relationships. Emails, texting, Facebook, Twitter, and the myriad other formats in which people communicate are here to stay and will likely only grow in popularity. Like any tool, these forms of communication are neither good nor bad in and of themselves, but their use (or misuse) has the ability to either add to or detract from relationships.

Communication is much more complicated than words spoken or typed. Researchers note that up to 70% of communication is nonverbal, including facial expressions, gestures, and other body language. Further, spoken words communicate differently based on verbal variations in rate, tone, pitch, volume, and speaking styles. Because so much of what is communicated goes beyond mere words, users of technology-based communication and social media need to consider what might be lost in those formats as opposed to if the same communication happened in person. The takeaways are to proceed with and to interpret others' communications with caution.

This module sets forth guidelines to promote responsible behaviors for using communication technology and social media so they can be an asset and not a liability to having satisfying relationships.

MEDIA (ME)

- **CORE CONCEPT:** Communicate responsibly and with care when using technology.

General concepts and guidelines will go a long way toward the effective use of tech communication and social media.

Use the acronym MEDIA (**M**oments can live on, **E**veryone could possibly see the communication, **D**o not send or post in Emotion Mind, **I**mage possible outcomes, **A**dd to communications and the social network) to remember the building blocks of this skill. These building blocks are described in further detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Moments can live on

With face-to-face communication, thoughtless words decay into silence and are gone. Although verbal words can be remembered and have lasting effects, they cannot be passed on and on to an increasingly larger audience. Further, once a communication is sent, it is likely to be saved somewhere, so it may be found again. Think about the lasting effects before sending or posting comments or pictures.

Everyone could possibly see the communication

Tech-based communications should never be assumed to be private, and some are designed to be public. Do you want your all your friends, neighbors, and/or coworkers to receive the communication? How about your parents, teachers, employer, or religious leader? Consider that people whom you would not want to receive your communication very well might.

Don't send or post in Emotion Mind (or under the influence of substances)

Intense emotions and substances distort communication, and what seems like a good idea now may not be when you are in Wise Mind. If you feel intense, disinhibited, or impulsive, the communication needs to wait.

Imagine possible outcomes

Thoughts and opinions do not need to be broadcast, especially on impulse. Could someone be hurt? Might you be embarrassed later or suffer a consequence? Think through your communications and actions.

Add to communications and the social network

Tech-based communications and social media can be fun, informative, thought-provoking, and supportive and can build community. Be a steward for the best possibilities for these evolving ways to connect and communicate. Ask yourself:

- Is my communication respectful and thoughtful, and does it add to a dialogue?
- Does it represent my values?
- Does it stick to facts and what I know and can prove?
- Am I building relationships and community?

Other Suggestions

In addition to following the MEDIA acronym, consider the following suggestions:

- Do not share others' personal information or pictures (especially if they are unflattering or too personal or intimate) without consent. We all have different boundaries, and other people may not want their information to be public. When in doubt, err on the safe side or obtain permission from the other person(s).
- Similarly, be aware of confidentiality concerns related to connecting online with people you know through treatment services.
- Share major announcements face to face or by telephone first. Life events such as engagements, pregnancies or the birth of a child, job promotions, and the such should be shared with the most important people in your life before being put in a public forum.
- Be careful not to overshare, vent, or communicate in other ways that might be regretted later. Consider how your communications might be (mis)interpreted. Read what you have written out loud (and maybe wait) before sending.

- Many social media outlets such as Facebook have guidelines for respectful use, and specific communities of users have established their own social norms for engaging in those communities. Spend some time on the internet and read up on the responsible use of these platforms.

Unfortunately, some people will not adhere to respectful behavior and will use tech-based communication and social media as an opportunity to hurt people from a distance. If you are or have been the target of hurtful or untrue statements from others or otherwise bullied over social media, the embarrassment, humiliation, anger, and other painful emotions that you feel are real, and the bullying can have serious impacts on your emotional health and functioning at home, with other people, at school or work, and in other areas. You may also feel extremely exposed and all alone.

Fortunately, you are not alone. Seek the support and guidance of friends, family, and/or your therapist or another professional if you are the target of harassment or bullying. Further, some of these issues may warrant the involvement of your school, employer, and even the police. Do not respond to or forward the statements, but instead keep a record and seek the advice of others. More information can be found at www.stopbullying.gov. Although this site is especially oriented toward young people, the information this and similar sites have on bullying and cyber-bullying applies to all ages.

One final, important note. When you are with other people or doing any other behavior (e.g., eating, walking, attending an event), consider putting down your mobile device to be One-Mindful and present with people and/or activities. Do not let tech-based communication, social media, or other online use of your mobile device or computer detract from opportunities to engage, become a substitute for face-to-face communication, or become a means of avoiding relationships or otherwise being in the moment.

Appendix 1

Master Skills List

Life Vision (LV): To focus on the life you are working toward

Wise Mind (WM): To dialectically balance emotion and reason so you can respond rather than react

Observe (OB): To just notice experience

Describe (DE): To put words on experience

Participate (P): To get into your experience

Nonjudgmental Stance (NJS): To not attach strong opinions or labels to experience

One-mindfulness (OM): To focus your attention on one thing

Effectiveness (EF): To focus on what works

Teflon Mind (TM): To not let things “stick to” you

ACCEPTS

Activities (AC): To keep busy and involved

Contributing (CON): To do something for others

Comparisons (COM): To see that others struggle too

Emotions (EM): To do something that creates other emotions

Push Away (PA): To shelve your problem for later

Thoughts (T): To think about something other than your distress

Sensations (S): To do something physically engaging

Self-Soothe (SS): To relax yourself through the senses

Urge-Surfing (US): To ride the ebbs and flows of emotions and urges without reacting

Bridge-Burning (BB): To remove the means to act on harmful urges

IMPROVE the Moment

Imagery (IM): To relax or practice skills visually in your mind

Meaning (ME): To find the “why” to tolerate a difficult time

Prayer (PR): To seek connection and guidance from a higher power

Relaxation (RE): To calm the mind and body

One Thing or Step at a Time (OT): To focus on one thing or one step when life is overwhelming

Vacation (V): To take a brief break

Encouragement (EN): To coach yourself with positive self-talk

Pros and Cons (P&C): To weigh the benefits and costs of a choice

Grounding Yourself (GY): To use OB and DE to come back to the here and now

Radical Acceptance (RA): To acknowledge “what is” to free yourself from suffering

Everyday Acceptance (EA): To accept daily inconveniences that occur in life

Willingness (WI): To remove barriers and do what works in a situation

SOLVED (SO): To apply a values-based system to solving a problem

PLEASED (PL): To use a system of self-care skills

Build Mastery (BM): To do things to help you feel competent and in control

Build Positive Experience (BPE): To seek out events that create positive feelings

Attend to Relationships (A2R): To connect with meaningful people in your life

Mood Momentum (MM): To perform balanced behaviors to maintain positive moods

Opposite to Emotion (O2E): To do the opposite of the action a negative

emotion pulls you to perform

ROUTINE (RO): To use a system for developing routines and schedules that help build a satisfying life

TRUST (T): To use a system to learn how to develop trust in relationships

BOUNDARY (BO): To use a system for observing limits and boundaries in your relationships

FAST (F): To use a system for acting in a way that builds your self-respect

GIVE (G): To use a system for acting in a way that builds and maintains relationships

VALIDATION (V): To nonjudgmentally acknowledge someone's experience

DEAR MAN (DM): To use a system for asserting yourself, saying no, or setting a boundary

REASON (RE): To apply a system for shifting thoughts when needed

Appendix 2

Source Citations for Modules and Skills Life Vision: Pederson, 2012

Dialectics module: Pederson, 2012

Mindfulness module: Linehan, 1993b **Wise Mind:** Linehan, 1993b

What Skills: Linehan, 1993b

How Skills: Linehan, 1993b

Teflon Mind: Teflon is a registered trademark of DuPont **Distress Tolerance module:** Linehan, 1993b **ACCEPTS:** Linehan, 1993b

Self-Soothe: Linehan, 1993b; expanded by Pederson, 2012

Urge-Surfing: Similar to Ride the Wave, Moonshine, 2008b **Bridge-Burning:** Linehan, unpublished **IMPROVE the Moment:** Linehan, 1993b **Pros and Cons:** Linehan, 1993b

Grounding Yourself: Pederson, 2012

Radical Acceptance: Linehan, 1993b **Everyday Acceptance:** Pederson, 2012

Willingness: Linehan, 1993b

Problem-Solving module: Pederson, 2012

SOLVED: Pederson, 2012

Emotion Regulation module: Linehan, 1993b **PLEASE/PLEASED:** Linehan, 1993b; adapted by Pederson, 2012

Build Positive Experience: Linehan, 1993b **Attend to Relationships:** Eboni

Webb, unpublished **Mood Momentum**: Pederson, 2012

Opposite to Emotion: Linehan, 1993b **Building a Satisfying Life module**:
Pederson, 2012

ROUTINE: Pederson, 2012

Everyday Care: Pederson, 2012

BOUNDARY: Pederson, 2012

Interpersonal Effectiveness module: Linehan, 1993b **FAST**: Linehan, 1993b

GIVE: Linehan, 1993b; adapted by Pederson, 2012

VALIDATION: Pederson, 2012

DEAR MAN: Linehan, 1993b

Cognitive Modification module: Pederson, 2012

REASON: Pederson, 2012

Addictions module: Pederson, developed for this book **Social Media module**:
Pederson, developed for this book

Appendix 3

Other Resources

Dialectical Behavior Therapy National Certification and Accreditation Association (DBTNCAA)

This nonprofit organization certifies DBT providers and accredits DBT programs that demonstrate the evidence-based practice of DBT. For more information visit www.dbtncaa.com.

Lane Pederson and Associates, LLC

Lane Pederson and Associates provides customized DBT training and consultation for all types of treatment settings. For more information visit www.DrLanePederson.com.

For your convenience, purchasers can download and print the worksheets, handouts, forms Go to: [go pesi com/dbt2](http://go.pesi.com/dbt2)

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