

DISTRESS TOLERANCE SKILLS

These are skills that help people going through a loss or traumatic event. Just like learning anything new, it takes practice to feel comfortable with using new skills. So, Practice! Practice! Practice! Not all of these skills work for all people, so if you find one not useful, go on to the next. These may help relieve the stress one faces when going through a traumatic event, therefore preventing other problems down the road. It is important to nurture and care for yourself during this time.

Distract:

- 1. Activities** – Hobbies, cleaning, call or visit a friend, games, drink warm fluids.
- 2. Contributing** – Do something for someone else.
- 3. Comparisons** – Compare your own problems with those of others, read the paper, watch soaps, think of disasters of others and your own better situation.
- 4. Opposite Emotions** – Read emotional books (novel) or watch emotional movie (making sure either is OPPOSITE to current emotion), watch cartoons, seek religious material and music, listen to peppy music.
- 5. Pushing Away** – Leave situation mentally, build an imaginary wall between self and situation, censor ruminating, put situation on the shelf, box it up.
- 6. Other Thoughts** – Count to 10, count colors in surroundings, do puzzles, watch TV.
- 7. Other Intense Sensations** - Hold ice, squeeze ball, take hot shower, listen to loud music, snap elastic band on wrist.

Self Soothe:

- 1. Vision** – Look at flower, light a candle and watch flame, go out and watch stars, look at beautiful pictures, be mindful of all sights- not lingering on any.
- 2. Hearing** – Listen to beautiful, soothing, or exciting music, listen to sounds of nature, sing, hum, play instrument, call 800 numbers to hear human voice – be mindful of sounds, letting them go in one ear and out the other.
- 3. Smell** – Perfume, lotion, scented candles, oil furniture, potpourri, boil cinnamon, bake cookies, chew gum, suck on a peppermint, smell flowers, walk in wooded area and breathe mindfully.
- 4. Taste** – Have a good meal, favorite soothing drink (no caffeine or alcohol), dessert, whipped cream, candy, get a special good treat, eat mindfully.
- 5. Touch** – Take a bubble bath, clean sheets, pet dog or cat, get a massage, soak feet, lotion entire body, put cold compress on head, feel silky clothing/furry clothing, brush hair for a long time, hug someone, experience whatever you are touching, notice touch that is soothing.

Improve the Moment:

- 1. Imagery** – Imagine relaxing scenes, imagine secret room inside yourself and see how it is decorated – go in and close the door, imagine everything going well, imagine coping well, make up a fantasy world that is calming and beautiful and let your mind go with it, imagine hurtful emotions draining out like water out of a pipe.