



# Feather River College | Mental Health & Wellness – 2023

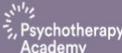
## Distress Tolerance

Although most mental health treatments emphasize change, this module pays tribute to the value which exists in accepting reality just as it is rather than attempting to make things different. The skills taught in this module will not solve the problem but will assist in not making the problem worse. These skills should be combined with problem solving and not overuse to the point that they become an avoidance of engaging in life and creating one’s life worth living. The distress tolerance skills help with surviving a crisis and in that vein help to determine what is an actual crisis versus what is something that’s just uncomfortable.

**When to Use Distress Tolerance Skills**

 Intense physical and/or emotional pain	 Strong urges to engage in unskillful behavior (Emotion mind)
 Emotional pain is too strong and it feels overwhelming	 Need to be productive but are emotionally overwhelmed

Linehan, M. M. (2015). DBT® skills training manual (2nd ed.). New York, NY, US: Guilford Press.



### Highlights

- Distress tolerance skills are used for crisis situations
- Distress tolerance skills assist in accepting reality when reality is difficult to accept and/or strong urges to engage in unskillful behavior are present
- Popular Distress Tolerance skills include the TIP Skill, STOP Skill, and Radical Acceptance



# Distress Tolerance TIP SKILL

So some of the skills that are taught in this module include several acronyms and for lack of time we're not going to go into every one of these but I'm going to pick a few to touch on.

So the TIP skill is one of the fastest and most popular of the distress tolerance skills, fastest in that it alleviates distress very quickly. And clients are encouraged to use this skill when they are very emotionally overwhelmed and strong urges to self-harm are present, for example.

The TIP acronym stands for tipping, this is the T, tipping the temperature of your face with very cold water. The idea is to bring on the dive reflex and bring the physiology down to slow it down.

The I stands for intense exercise of approximately 20 minutes. The P stands for paced breathing as well as paired muscle relaxation. So slowing down and bringing the body's physiology down to a more normative level.

## The TIP Skill

<b>T</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>P</b>
Tipping the temperature of your face with very cold water	Intense exercise of approximately 20 minutes	Paced breathing as well as paired muscle relaxation
		

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*"Emotions are not good, bad, right, or wrong. The first step to changing our relationship to feelings is to be curious about them and the messages they send to us."*

# Distress Tolerance STOP SKILL

Another acronym is the STOP skill. And STOP stands for – Literally, the S is stop. The T is take a step back and this is both a figurative and a literal take a step back. So in an interpersonal situation, taking a step back might mean literally taking a full step back away from the other person rather than stepping forward and further instigating a conflict.

The O is observe and the observe is the same as the mindfulness skill of observe which is to take in with all of the senses everything that is happening, not thoughts about what's happening although those can be observed but not conclusions about what's happening. So just observing the data that's present. And P is to proceed mindfully. So it involves a pause and then a forward motion into the decision of what to do.

## The STOP Skill

<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>P</b>
Stop	Take a step back	Observe	Proceed mindfully
			

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*"Change your behavior and you will change your emotions"*

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*"Sometimes we cannot change the environment significantly, but we can perhaps alter the way in which we perceive it"*

# Radical Acceptance is beyond just typical acceptance.

100% accepting reality as it is

In addition to these acronyms, one of the most popular DBT skills is encompassed in the distress tolerance section and this is radical acceptance. So radical acceptance is beyond just typical acceptance. The term radical meaning fully, wholly, absolutely, 100% accepting reality as it is. And acceptance again does not mean approval. It means looking at things in the face. So a radical acceptance of locking your keys in your car would not be to stare through the window wondering how it happened.

It would be to immediately move to a solution of calling a locksmith. So you cannot move to problem solving until the problem has been radically accepted. So we have to have acceptance in order to have change. In order to change the fact that I've dropped an egg on the floor and it's made a mess, I have to first accept that that has happened rather than staring at it and wishing that it wasn't true.

## Other Distress Tolerance Skills



- Radical acceptance: 100% accepting reality as it is.
  - Does not mean approval
  - You cannot move to problem solving until the problem has been radically accepted



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▶ Observe that you are questioning or fighting reality ("it shouldn't be this way")

▶ Remind yourself that the unpleasant reality is just as it is and cannot be changed ("this is what happened")

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