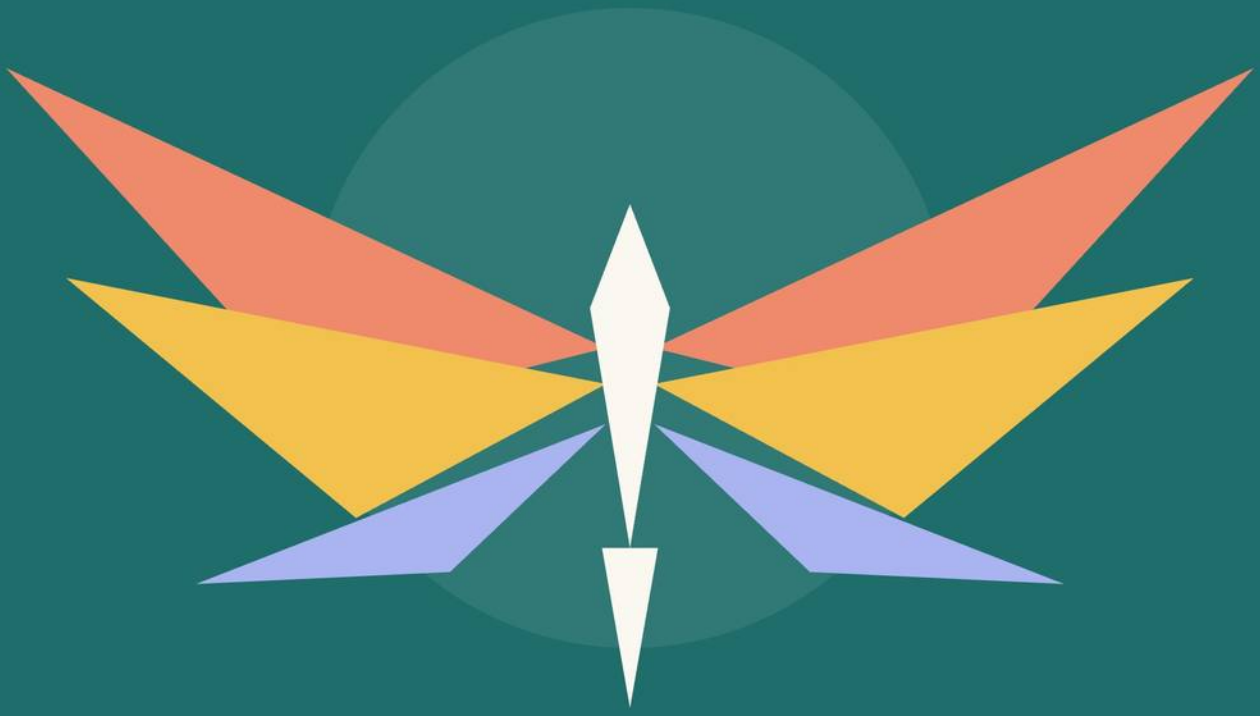


DBT Skills Activity Workbook

A hands-on, illustrated guide to mindfulness, emotion regulation, distress tolerance & interpersonal effectiveness.

Feelings not included. Okay, they're the whole point.

Mindfulness | Emotion Regulation | Distress Tolerance | Interpersonal Effectiveness

This workbook belongs to _____

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START HERE

Welcome. Let's build your skills.

DBT (Dialectical Behavior Therapy) is a skills-based approach. You don't need to feel calm or ready to begin. You practice a little at a time, like training for a sport or rehearsing for a show.

MOOD BOOST No one has ever mastered a skill by reading about it. (Believe us, we checked. The skill was parallel parking.)



1 Mindfulness

Notice what is happening right now without judging it. Pages 3 to 5.



2 Emotion Regulation

Understand your feelings and change the ones that aren't helping. Pages 6 to 8.



3 Distress Tolerance

Get through intense moments without making them worse. Pages 9 to 12.



4 Interpersonal Effectiveness

Ask for what you need and keep relationships strong. Pages 13 and 14.

How this workbook is organized

COLOR TELLS YOU THE MODULE

Teal, coral, indigo, gold. Pages in the same color go together.

TYPE TELLS YOU WHAT TO DO

Big bold = the page topic

Colored heading = a skill

Small text = how it works. Lines = your turn.

My goals for this workbook

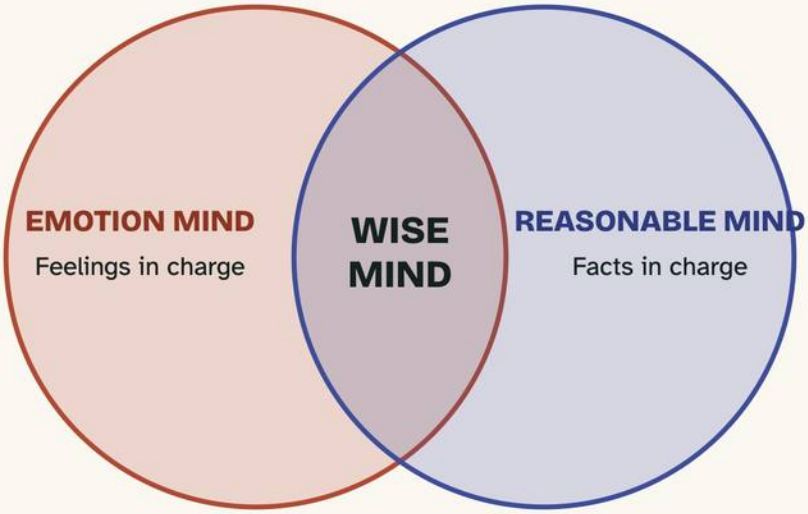
I'd like to get better at...

DBT was developed by Marsha M. Linehan, PhD. These pages are original practice sheets inspired by widely taught DBT skills, and they work best alongside a therapist. If you ever feel unsafe, call or text 988 or turn to page 15.

Find your Wise Mind

Everyone has three ways of thinking. Wise Mind is the calm place where feelings and facts meet, the part of you that often already knows what is right for you.

MOOD BOOST Emotion Mind has never once said, "Maybe we should wait a day before sending that text."



My Emotion Mind says...

The loud, feelings-first voice

_____

_____

_____

My Reasonable Mind says...

The facts-and-logic voice

_____

_____

_____

My Wise Mind knows...

The calm, both-and voice

_____

_____

_____

The Wise Mind pause

Hand on your belly. Breathe in and think "wise." Breathe out and think "mind." Then ask: what would my calmest, kindest self do next?

A time I felt Wise Mind before (even a tiny one):

_____

_____

Six ways to be here, now

Mindfulness has two kinds of skills: WHAT you do (observe, describe, participate) and HOW you do it (one thing at a time, without judging, with a focus on what works).

MOOD BOOST Mindfulness is not emptying your mind. Minds are basically browsers with 40 tabs and one autoplaying video.

WHAT SKILLS



Observe

Notice what is there with your senses, like a camera. No reacting yet.

I notice:



Describe

Put words to it, facts only: "My heart is racing," not "I'm losing it."

In words:



Participate

Throw yourself in: the game, the song, the conversation, the dishes.

I'll fully join:

HOW SKILLS



One-mindfully

One thing at a time. When your mind wanders, gently bring it back.

One thing, alone:



Non-judgmentally

Swap "good/bad" for what is there. "That was hard" beats "I'm hopeless."

Reword a judgment:



Effectively

Do what works in this situation, not what proves a point.

What would work:

Try a mindful minute

Pick an everyday moment: brushing teeth, a sip of water, tying your shoes, warming up your voice.

My moment: _____

I saw, heard, felt: _____

A judgment popped up. I came back by: _____

Ground yourself with your senses

When your mind is spinning, your senses can pull you back to right now. Work from 5 down to 1 and jot down what you find.

MOOD BOOST Your brain at 2 a.m.: "Remember that awkward thing from 2014?" Your senses: "There's a very soft blanket right here."

5 things I see

4 things I touch

3 things I hear

2 things I smell

1 thing I taste

Thoughts are clouds

Write one worry thought inside each cloud. Then draw a breeze carrying it away. The sky stays; the clouds move on.



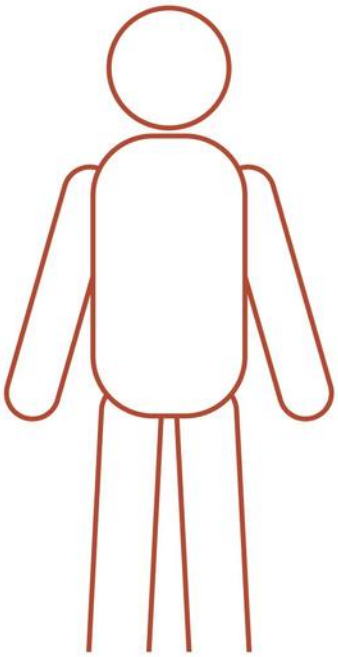
Name it to tame it

A precise word for a feeling helps your brain settle. Start by noticing where the feeling lives in your body, then pick the word that fits best.

MOOD BOOST If your only feeling word is "fine," consider an upgrade. "Fine" is the plain toast of emotions.

Body map

Color or scribble where you feel the emotion.



Feeling word bank

ANGER FAMILY

annoyed · irritated · frustrated · furious · resentful

SADNESS FAMILY

disappointed · lonely · hurt · hopeless · grieving

FEAR FAMILY

nervous · worried · panicked · overwhelmed · insecure

SHAME FAMILY

embarrassed · guilty · inadequate · awkward

JOY FAMILY

calm · proud · hopeful · excited · grateful

My own word: _____

Emotion snapshot

What happened: _____

The feeling: _____

Where I felt it: _____

What I wanted to do (the urge): _____

How strong? Circle one: 0 · 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5 · 6 · 7 · 8 · 9 · 10

Check the facts

Strong feelings can make a guess feel like a fact. Slow down and separate what a camera would record from the story your mind adds.

MOOD BOOST Your mind is a dramatic movie-trailer editor. The camera just films the actual movie, which is usually less intense.



The camera test

If a video camera recorded this moment, what would it show? Cameras capture words and actions. They can't capture motives, mind-reading, or "always" and "never."

FACT (CAMERA SEES)

"My coach didn't say hello today."

STORY (MIND ADDS)

"Coach is disappointed in me and I'm about to get cut."

1 What happened? Facts only.

2 The story I'm telling myself

3 Evidence for the story, and evidence against it

4 Two other ways to see it

5 Does my feeling fit the facts?

◯ A lot ◯ A little ◯ Not really **Intensity before ___ / after ___**

Change the feeling by changing what you do

When an emotion doesn't fit the facts, or acting on it would make things worse, try the opposite of what it urges you to do. Your body can lead and your mood often follows.

MOOD BOOST When your mood says "cancel everything," your feet say "put on shoes anyway." Feet are surprisingly good at this.

EMOTION	THE URGE	OPPOSITE ACTION + MY EXAMPLE
Fear	Avoid, run away, cancel	Approach in small steps. Do the thing, a little at a time.
Sadness	Withdraw, stay in bed, isolate	Get active. Do something that gives you a small win.
Anger	Attack, blame, snap	Take space, then use a kind voice and gentle words.
Shame	Hide, shrink, stay quiet	Share with someone safe, when your shame doesn't fit the facts.

PLEASE: care for your body to care for your mind

- **P** Treat illness and injuries. See a doctor.
- **L** Balanced eating. Regular meals.
- **E** Easy on alcohol and drugs that shake your mood.
- **A** A steady sleep schedule.
- **S** Stay active. Move your body daily.

My week of PLEASE

	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Hours of sleep							
Minutes of movement							
Regular meals	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

When it's too much, press STOP

Intense emotions push us to act fast. STOP buys you a few seconds so you can choose your next move instead of just reacting.

MOOD BOOST STOP is not a suggestion for your thumbs, especially when the group chat is open.

S — Stop

Freeze. Don't react yet. Hands off the phone, the keyboard, the door handle.

T — Take a step back

Breathe. Step away if you can. You're allowed to pause.

O — Observe

What's happening inside me and around me? Facts only.

P — Proceed mindfully

Ask what helps my goals. Then choose, and act.

My STOP reminder (a word, a phrase, or a doodle): _____

My distress thermometer

Fill in what each level looks like for you, and what helps. Knowing your levels early makes skills easier to reach for.

Level	What it looks and feels like for me	What helps me
9–10 Crisis		
7–8 Very high		
5–6 Hard		
3–4 Noticeable		
1–2 Mostly okay		

TIPP: calm your body fast

When distress is very high (a 7 or above), thinking your way out is hard. TIPP shifts your body first so your brain can catch up.

MOOD BOOST Breathing is the one skill you already have and will use about 20,000 times today. You're basically an expert.

Safety first. Check with your doctor or therapist before trying the exercise or temperature steps if you have a heart, breathing, or other medical condition, or a history with eating or exercise. Your therapist can adapt TIPP to fit you.

T Temperature

Cool your body down. Press a cool, wet cloth to your face and neck, or step outside into cooler air, while you breathe slowly for about a minute.

Before ___ After ___

I Intense exercise

Move hard for 10 to 20 minutes: jog, jump rope, sprint, do jumping jacks. It burns off stress chemicals.

Before ___ After ___

P Paced breathing

Breathe in for 4 counts and out for 6. The longer out-breath tells your body it's safe. Keep going 2 to 5 minutes.

Before ___ Before ___

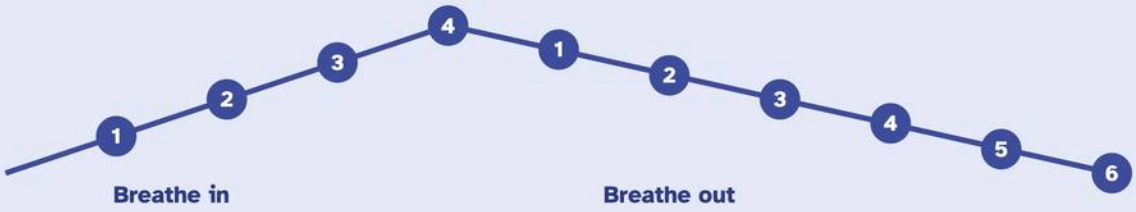
P Paired muscle relaxation

Tense one muscle group for 5 seconds as you breathe in. Let go as you breathe out and think "relax." Move up your body.

Before ___ After ___

Trace the breath

Follow the path with your finger. Up for 4 counts in, down for 6 counts out.



Soothe and shift

Distress tolerance isn't about feeling better right away. It's about getting through a hard moment safely, by caring for yourself and by giving your mind a planned break.

MOOD BOOST Distraction on purpose, with a plan to come back, is a skill. Scrolling for six hours is just scrolling.

SELF-SOOTHE WITH YOUR FIVE SENSES



See
Photos, a view, a candle



Hear
A playlist, rain sounds



Smell
Lavender, fresh bread



Taste
Warm tea, mint gum



Touch
A soft blanket, a warm shower

ACCEPTS: WAYS TO TAKE A HEALTHY BREAK

A — Activities
Sports, art, music, cleaning, a walk

C — Contributing
Help someone: a kind text, a small favor

C — Comparisons
Remember a harder time you got through

E — Emotions (different ones)
A funny video, an uplifting song

P — Pushing away
Set the problem on a mental shelf, for later

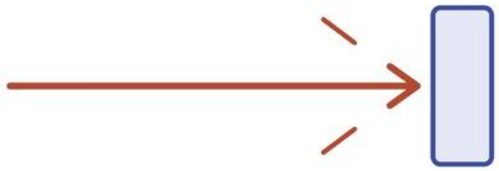
T — Thoughts
Puzzles, counting, trivia, a book

S — Sensations
A warm shower, a stress ball, minty gum

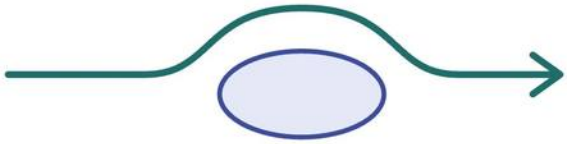
Accept what is, then choose what's next

Radical acceptance means acknowledging reality as it is right now. It does not mean you approve of it. It means you stop spending energy fighting what you can't change at this moment.

MOOD BOOST The traffic is still there. Yelling at the windshield remains scientifically ineffective.



Fighting reality
Same wall, more bruises.



Accepting reality
Flow around the rock. Save energy for what you can change.

Something I'm fighting right now: _____

What fighting it costs me: _____

What I CAN influence instead: _____

My acceptance phrase (circle one or write your own): "It is what it is, for now." "I can feel this and still handle it." "This moment will pass."

Pros and cons: before I act on an urge

Pros of acting on the urge

_____

_____

Cons of acting on the urge

_____

_____

Pros of resisting the urge

_____

_____

Cons of resisting the urge

_____

_____

Ask for what you need

Every conversation has up to three goals. DEAR MAN is a script for getting your objective met while protecting the relationship and your self-respect.

MOOD BOOST "Fine, whatever" is rarely a complete request. DEAR MAN is the extended edition.

Objective	Relationship	Self-respect
Get what I need	Keep it healthy	Stay true to my values

The situation (who, and what I want to ask or say): _____

Which goal matters most here? _____

D — Describe
Stick to the facts of the situation.
_____
_____

E — Express
Say how you feel: "I feel..." not "You always..."
_____
_____

A — Assert
Ask clearly, or say no clearly.
_____
_____

R — Reinforce
Share how this helps them, and you.
_____
_____

M — Mindful
Stay on topic. Calmly repeat your point.
_____
_____

A — Appear confident
Steady voice, eye contact, upright posture.
_____
_____

N — Negotiate
Offer a trade. Ask, "What would work for you?"
_____
_____

Keep the relationship strong

GIVE skills care for the relationship. FAST skills protect your self-respect. Use them alongside DEAR MAN.

MOOD BOOST Validation doesn't mean "you're right." It means "I get why you feel that way." This distinction saves dinners.

GIVE: FOR THE RELATIONSHIP

G Gentle
No attacks, threats, or eye-rolls. Kind tone.

I Interested
Listen. Phone down. Ask a question.

V Validate
Show you understand, even if you disagree.

E Easy manner
A smile, a little humor, a relaxed tone.

FAST: FOR SELF-RESPECT

F Fair
Be fair to them and to yourself.

A (No) apologies
Skip over-apologizing for having a need or an opinion.

S Stick to values
Don't drop what matters to you just to be liked.

T Truthful
No lying, exaggerating, or acting helpless.

Validate first

Write a reply that shows you understand, before any advice or disagreement.

"I'm so tired of practice. It's too much."

"You never listen to me!"

"I'm scared to audition."

My boundary script

I understand... _____

I can't... _____

What I can do is... _____

MY PLAN

My coping toolkit

Fill this out when you're calm, ideally with your therapist. Take a photo of it so it's on your phone when you need it.

MOOD BOOST Future-you, in a hard moment, will not remember the plan. That's why it's on paper.

My early warning signs

What I notice first, in my body, thoughts, or actions

_____

_____

_____

Things that set me off

Places, people, times, situations

_____

_____

_____

First tries (distress 1 to 4)

- ◯ Mindful minute (p. 4)
- ◯ 5-4-3-2-1 grounding (p. 5)
- ◯ Wise Mind pause (p. 3)
- ◯ Self-soothe with senses (p. 11)
- ◯ _____

When it's high (distress 7 to 10)

- ◯ STOP (p. 9)
- ◯ TIPP and paced breathing (p. 10)
- ◯ ACCEPTS distraction (p. 11)
- ◯ Reach out to a person below
- ◯ _____

People I can reach out to

Name _____ **Phone** _____

Name _____ **Phone** _____

Name _____ **Phone** _____

Places and things that help me feel safe

_____

_____

_____

_____

What matters most to me (my reasons to keep going)

_____

_____

If you are in danger or thinking about hurting yourself

Call or text **988** (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, 24/7). Text **HOME** to **741741** for the Crisis Text Line. Call **911** in an emergency. SOAR office: 201-458-0850.

MY PLAN

Weekly skills diary card

Take two minutes at the end of each day. Missing a day isn't failure, it's data. Bring this page to your next session.

MOOD BOOST Perfect attendance not required. Even astronauts miss a day of flossing.

Week of: _____ **Skill I'm focusing on:** _____

Daily check-in	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Highest distress (0 to 10)							
Strongest feeling (a word)							
Urge I noticed							
Mindfulness skill used	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Emotion regulation skill used	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Distress tolerance skill used	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Interpersonal skill used	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hours of sleep							
Minutes of movement							
One thing that went okay							

End-of-week reflection

The skill that helped most: _____

What I'd do differently: _____

My goal for next week: _____