



[Tools For DBT](#)

**Crisis Survival Skills** are exercises designed to help you manage overwhelming emotions and get through difficult moments without making things worse. By learning and practicing these skills, you can find calm, regain control, and make choices that support your well-being, even in the toughest situations.

The STOP Skill

The **STOP skill** helps you pause before reacting, giving you time to choose a thoughtful response. This can be especially helpful when you feel overwhelmed, angry, or tempted to act impulsively.

- S

Stop: Freeze and don't react immediately.
- T

Take a step back: Physically or mentally step away from the situation.
- O

Observe: Notice what's happening inside (feelings, thoughts, sensations) and outside (your environment).
- P

Proceed mindfully: Choose an action that aligns with your values and long-term goals.

Self-Soothing

**Self-Soothing** involves using your senses to comfort and calm yourself. This skill is useful when you feel anxious, lonely, or upset, and need a gentle way to care for yourself.

Sense	Examples
Sight	Look at calming images (nature, art, loved ones).
Sound	Listen to soothing music or nature sounds.
Smell	Light scented candle or incense.
Taste	Sip herbal tea, cocoa, or a warm drink.
Touch	Wrap up in a soft blanket.

## ACCEPTS Skill

Distracting with the **ACCEPTS skill** means engaging in activities or thoughts that shift your attention away from distress. Use this skill when emotions feel too intense, and you need a break to prevent impulsive or harmful actions.

**A**

**Activities:** Engage in absorbing or enjoyable activities (e.g., watching a movie, taking a walk).

**C**

**Contributing:** Do something kind or helpful for others.

**C**

**Comparisons:** Compare your situation to a time when things were worse or to others' hardships.

**E**

**Emotions:** Do something that evokes a different emotion (e.g., watch a funny video).

**P**

**Pushing Away:** Mentally set aside distressing thoughts for now.

**T**

**Thoughts:** Focus your mind on something neutral or positive.

**S**

**Sensations:** Use strong sensations (e.g., holding ice, eating something spicy) to shift your focus.

## The TIPP Skill

The **TIPP Skill** uses physical strategies to quickly change your body's response to stress. Use this skill when you feel overwhelmed by intense emotions or physical sensations, and need to calm down fast.

**T**

**Temperature:** Use cold water or ice to change your body temperature.

**I**

**Intense exercise:** Engage in brief, vigorous physical activity.

**P**

**Paced breathing:** Practice slow, controlled breathing.

**P**

**Progressive muscle relaxation:** Tense and relax muscle groups to reduce tension.

## IMPROVE The Moment

**IMPROVE The Moment** helps you find ways to make the present more bearable and meaningful. Try this skill when you feel stuck in pain or distress and need to create a sense of hope, calm, or connection.

**I**

**Imagery:** Visualize a peaceful scene.

**M**

**Meaning:** Find purpose or meaning in the distress.

**P**

**Prayer/Spirituality:** Draw on faith or spiritual practices.

**R**

**Relaxation:** Practice deep breathing or muscle relaxation.

**O**

**One thing at a time:** Focus on the present moment or task.

**V**

**Vacation (mental):** Picture yourself in a safe, relaxing place.

**E**

**Encouragement:** Give yourself kind, supportive messages.