



[Tools For DBT](#)

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) is an evidence-based approach that helps people understand and manage their emotions more effectively. The emotional regulation skills in DBT are practical tools designed to help you reduce emotional suffering, increase resilience, and support a more balanced, fulfilling life.

ABC

ABC skills help you build a strong emotional foundation by intentionally creating positive experiences, developing a sense of mastery, and preparing for stressful situations before they happen.

A: Accumulate Positive Emotions

A

Intentionally schedule and engage in activities that bring you joy, satisfaction, or a sense of accomplishment. This helps build a foundation of positive feelings and makes it easier to cope with difficult emotions.

B: Build Mastery

B

Do things that make you feel competent and capable, even small tasks. Regularly accomplishing goals, no matter how minor, boosts your confidence and emotional strength.

C: Cope Ahead

C

Anticipate situations that might be emotionally challenging and plan how you will use your skills to handle them. Visualize yourself coping successfully, which can reduce anxiety and increase your sense of control.

Check the Facts

Check the Facts encourages you to pause and examine whether your emotional reactions fit the actual situation, helping you respond more accurately and effectively.

Sometimes our emotions are based on assumptions or misunderstandings. When you're feeling an emotion, pause and ask yourself:

- What actually happened?
- Are my thoughts and feelings based on facts, or interpretations?
- Is my emotional response appropriate to the situation?

By checking the facts, you can adjust your emotional reactions to better fit reality, which often leads to feeling calmer and more in control.

Opposite Actions

Opposite Action teaches you to do the opposite of what your unhelpful emotions urge you to do, so you can break negative patterns and change how you feel.

When your emotions urge you to act in ways that aren't helpful (for example, withdrawing when you feel sad, or avoiding something you fear), try doing the opposite of what the emotion wants you to do.

Emotion	Urge	Opposite Action
Sadness	Stay in bed, isolate, or withdraw from others.	Get up, shower, get dressed, go for a walk, reach out to a friend.
Fear/Anxiety	Avoid a situation, person, or event that feels intimidating.	Attend the event, participate in the activity, or approach the feared situation gradually and mindfully.
Anger	Yell, argue, or act aggressively.	Speak calmly, take deep breaths, walk away to cool down, or practice active listening and try to resolve the conflict peacefully.

PLEASE Skills

PLEASE Skills focus on taking care of your physical health, recognizing that a healthy body reduces your vulnerability to overwhelming emotions.

PL

Treat Physical Illness - Take care of your health and follow medical advice.

E

Eat Balanced Meals - Nourish your body with regular, healthy food.

A

Avoid Mood-Altering Drugs - Stay away from substances that can disrupt your mood.

S

Sleep - Aim for enough restful sleep each night.

E

Exercise - Move your body regularly in ways that feel good to you.

Pay Attention to Positive Events

This DBT skill focused on intentionally noticing, creating, and fully experiencing moments of joy, pleasure, or accomplishment in daily life. This skill helps balance out negative emotions, strengthens emotional resilience, and supports building a life that feels more fulfilling and worth living.

Create Positive Experiences:

Seek out activities that bring you pleasure or satisfaction—such as enjoying a favorite meal, spending time with a friend, listening to music, or taking a walk in nature.

Be Mindful of Positive Moments:

When a positive event happens, focus your attention on it. Notice how it feels in your body and mind. Try to be present and let yourself fully experience the moment.

Reflect and Express Gratitude:

After a pleasant event, take a moment to reflect on how it made you feel. Practice gratitude by acknowledging what was enjoyable or meaningful about the experience.

Build Relationships:

Strengthen existing relationships or reach out to new people. Social connections are a rich source of positive experiences, but it's important to diversify and not rely on just one person or group for all your happiness.

Avoid Worrying About Positives:

If you notice thoughts like “I don’t deserve this” or worries about when the good feeling will end, gently redirect your attention back to the positive experience. Allow yourself to enjoy it without self-criticism or fear.