DBT-MIND · FREE PRINTABLE

DBT Skills Cards

Twelve pocket cards, one DBT skill on each. Cut them out and keep the ones you need where you need them: in your wallet, by your bed, on your desk.

ALL FOUR MODULES · PRINT, CUT, CARRY

Print on card stock if you can, at 100% size. **Cut** along the dashed lines. **Pick** 2 or 3 cards to carry first.

1
DISTRESS TOLERANCE

STOP

Use when an urge hits and you are about to react fast.

- **S**top. Freeze. Do nothing for a moment.
- **T**ake a step back. One slow breath, a little distance.
- **O**bserve. What do I feel? What actually happened?
- **P**roceed mindfully. Which next move helps my goals?

2
DISTRESS TOLERANCE

TIPP

Use when the emotion is so high you cannot think (8 of 10 or more).

- **T**emperature: cold water or an ice pack on your face, 15 to 30 seconds.
- **I**ntense exercise: move hard for a few minutes.
- **P**aced breathing: breathe out longer than you breathe in.
- **P**aired muscle relaxation: tense, then let go as you breathe out.

Heart condition, eating disorder or beta-blockers? Ask your doctor before the cold-water step.

3
DISTRESS TOLERANCE

Self-soothe

Use when you are hurting and need comfort, not a solution.

- **See:** a photo you love, the sky, a candle.
- **Hear:** a calm song, rain sounds, a kind voice.
- **Smell:** tea, soap, fresh air.
- **Taste:** something warm, eaten slowly.
- **Touch:** a blanket, a pet, a warm shower.

4
DISTRESS TOLERANCE

ACCEPTS

Use when you need to ride out a wave without acting on it.

- **A**ctivities: clean, walk, cook, play.
- **C**ontributing: do something for someone.
- **C**omparisons: remember a time you got through worse.
- **E**motions: watch or read something that brings a different feeling.
- **P**ushing away: put it on a shelf for now.
- **T**houghts: count, do a puzzle. **S**ensations: a strong taste, cold.

5
MINDFULNESS

Wise mind

Use when you have to decide something and feelings are loud.

- **Emotion mind:** the feeling decides.
- **Reasonable mind:** only facts and logic count.
- **Wise mind:** both together, with a sense of quiet knowing.
- Breathe out slowly and ask: "What does my wise mind say?" Then wait for the answer.

6
MINDFULNESS

What and how skills

Use when you want to be here, not lost in your thoughts.

- **What:** Observe (notice without words), Describe (put the facts into words), Participate (throw yourself into it).
- **How:** Non-judgmentally (facts, not good or bad), One-mindfully (one thing at a time), Effectively (do what works).

Practice this on your phone with the free DBT-Mind app.
Scan to download for iPhone or Android. Full guide: dbt-mind.com/guides/dbt-skills-cards

This sheet supports skills practice. It is not therapy or emergency care. **In danger right now?** Call or text 988 (US), call 112 (EU) or your local emergency number.

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Cards 7 to 12 (emotion regulation, interpersonal effectiveness, acceptance)

7
DISTRESS TOLERANCE

Radical acceptance

Use when something painful is real and you cannot change it.

- Notice when you are fighting reality ("this should not be").
- Remind yourself: this is what is happening right now.
- Soften your body: open hands, slow breath.
- Accept it with your whole self, then ask what you can do next. Again and again.

8
EMOTION REGULATION

Check the Facts

Use when a feeling seems bigger than the moment.

- What do I feel, and how strong is it from 0 to 10?
- What happened, as a camera would have seen it?
- What am I assuming? What else could explain it?
- Is there a real threat? How likely is it?
- Does my emotion fit? Yes: solve the problem. No: opposite action.

9
EMOTION REGULATION

Opposite action

Use when an emotion does not fit the facts, or acting on it would make things worse.

- **Fear** says avoid, so approach.
- **Anger** says attack, so step away gently or be kind.
- **Sadness** says withdraw, so get active.
- **Shame** says hide, so stay visible.

Do it all the way: body, face, voice. Repeat until the feeling eases.

10
EMOTION REGULATION

PLEASE

Use when your emotions have felt raw for days. Check the basics.

- **PL**: treat PhysicaL illness.
- **E**: balanced Eating.
- **A**: avoid mood-Altering substances.
- **S**: balanced Sleep.
- **E**: Exercise, even a short walk.

11
INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

DEAR MAN

Use when you need to ask for something or say no.

- **D**escribe the facts. **E**xpress how you feel.
- **A**ssert what you want, clearly.
- **R**einforce: say why it helps them too.
- Stay **M**indful of your goal. **A**ppear confident.
- **N**egotiate: what could you both accept?

12
INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

GIVE and FAST

Use GIVE to keep the relationship, FAST to keep your self-respect.

- **GIVE:** be Gentle, act Interested, Validate their side, use an Easy manner.
- **FAST:** be Fair, no needless Apologies, Stick to your values, be Truthful.

These cards are reminders, not the full skills. Learn each skill first (with a therapist, a skills group or the guides at dbt-mind.com), then let the card remind you when it gets hard. Skills based on Linehan, DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd edition (2015). Wording ours.



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