



DBT-MIND · FREE PRINTABLE

Distress Tolerance Skills

A crisis toolkit for getting through the worst minutes without making things worse. Fastest skills first. Page 2 is your own crisis plan.

CRISIS SURVIVAL · 2 PAGES



The crisis skills, from fastest to longest

1 STOP · seconds

Stop, **T**ake a step back, **O**bserve, **P**roceed mindfully. A pause between the urge and the action.

2 TIPP · minutes

Temperature (cold water on the face), **I**ntense exercise, **P**aced breathing, **P**aired muscle relaxation. Calms the body directly.

3 Grounding · minutes

5 things you see, 4 you feel, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, 1 you taste. Feet pressed into the floor. Helpful when you feel far away or your thoughts race.

4 Self-soothe · the long evening

Comfort each sense on purpose: something calm to look at, gentle sound, a scent you like, a warm drink, a soft blanket. Practice, not a reward.

5 ACCEPTS · the next hour (structured distraction)

Activities: clean, walk, cook, play

Pushing away: park the problem until later

Contributing: do something kind for someone

Thoughts: count, puzzle, name things

Comparisons: times you got through before

Sensations: ice, sour candy, hot shower

Emotions: funny video, upbeat music

Radical acceptance helps when the situation itself can't change.

Which skill when? (a rule of thumb)

8 to 10

Body first: STOP, then TIPP (cold water, paced breathing). Thinking skills come later.

5 to 7

Grounding and ACCEPTS to ride out the wave without acting on it.

Below 5

Self-soothe, then look at the problem itself (Check the Facts, DEAR MAN).

Remember: these skills are for getting through, not for fixing. They don't solve the problem that caused the crisis; they make sure it is no bigger when the wave has passed. Practice them on calm days so they are there when you need them.



Practice this on your phone with the free DBT-Mind app.

Scan to download for iPhone or Android. Full guide:

dbt-mind.com/guides/distress-tolerance-skills

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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My Crisis Plan

Write this while you are calm. In a crisis, memory narrows, so the plan does the remembering. Keep a copy where hard moments happen, for example a photo on your phone.

My warning signs (thoughts, feelings, body signals or situations that tell me a crisis is building)

1 My fastest skill

2 My 30-minute distraction

3 People and places that help

Name or place	Phone

4 Professional help

My therapist or doctor and number

Crisis line: call or text **988** (US). Emergency: **911** (US), **112** (EU), or

Making my surroundings safer (what I can put away, lock up or give to someone I trust)

Reasons to get through this, and people I'm doing it for

After a crisis: note what helped and what didn't, and update this plan. A plan that changes with you works better than a perfect one.



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