

# ABC Please

Reducing Vulnerability to Emotion Mind



## DBT Skills Group

- Goal: Learn DBT skills to help manage strong emotions, unhelpful behavior urges, improving relationships, and navigate stressful situations in your life, and to achieve readiness for trauma exposures
- Daily Format:
  - Brief mindfulness exercise
  - Review of previous day's skills practice
  - Learn and try out new skills
  - Assign outside practice

# Mindfulness

# Skills Practice Review: Mindfulness of Current Emotion

- Body scan meditation to practice observing physical sensations
- Repeat practice of mindfully observing emotions while listening to music (of your choice)
- Advanced practice: practice observing & accepting emotion during a moment of difficult emotion

# DBT Skills Categories

- Mindfulness
- Distress Tolerance
- **Emotion Regulation**
- Interpersonal Effectiveness

## EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 14

(Emotion Regulation Worksheets 9–14b)

### Overview:

#### Reducing Vulnerability to Emotion Mind— Building a Life Worth Living

A way to remember these skills is to remember the term **ABC PLEASE**.

##### **A** ACCUMULATE POSITIVE EMOTIONS

**Short Term:** Do pleasant things that are possible now.

**Long Term:** Make changes in your life so that positive events will happen more often in the future. Build a "life worth living."

##### **B** BUILD MASTERY

Do things that make you feel competent and effective to combat helplessness and hopelessness.

##### **C** COPE AHEAD OF TIME WITH EMOTIONAL SITUATIONS

Rehearse a plan ahead of time so that you are prepared to cope skillfully with emotional situations.

##### TAKE CARE OF YOUR MIND BY TAKING CARE OF YOUR BODY

Treat Physical illness, balance Eating, avoid mood-Altering substances, balance Sleep, and get Exercise.

**PLEASE**

# ABC PLEASE

Skills that help us change the way we live our lives to reduce emotional vulnerability and increase resiliency to painful emotions

-> **Accumulate positive emotions** through experiences and valued behavior patterns

-> **Build Mastery:** doing things that make you feel competent and effective

-> **Cope ahead of time with difficult emotional situations**

-> **PLEASE:** a set of skills that helps take care of your body

## Why is this important?

After trauma, we can have trouble taking care of ourselves and doing things that matter to us

# Common PTSD Barriers

- Feel like it's not worth bothering to take care of self or give self opportunities for enjoyment
- Avoiding self-care tasks or enjoyable activities that bring up reminders of trauma
- Social avoidance/isolating
- Feeling unmotivated, numb, and/or not enjoying pleasant/valued activities as much as before
- Feeling afraid of or disgusted by things you used to enjoy, or your own body
- Belief that you do not deserve self-care or pleasure
- Belief that you are incompetent/helpless
- Hard time envisioning or haven't given thought to what a full/happy life looks like due to being in survival mode

# Accumulating Positive Emotions: Short Term

A

## **ACCUMULATE POSITIVE EMOTIONS**

**Short Term:** Do pleasant things that are possible now.

**Long Term:** Make changes in your life so that positive events will happen more often in the future. Build a "life worth living."

- Why add positive events to your life?
  1. We all need positive events to feel happy and fulfilled, both in short and long term
  2. Increasing positive emotions now (short-term) can accumulate into a life filled with more positive emotions
  3. Decreases sadness and numbness
  4. Without positive events, we are more vulnerable and less resilient to negative emotions
- These can be *in vivos!*
- Especially when feeling anxious/depressed/driven to avoid, making space for these is important

# How do we build positive experiences now



Do at least one thing per day that will increase pleasure, joy, love and self-confidence



Plan in advance and have someone hold you accountable when your mood says no



Use opposite action and problem solving to address practical and emotional barriers

# Examples of Positive Experiences

- Take dog on a walk (especially somewhere with a nice view when possible)
- Sitting outside & watch birds, nature, flowers
- Take a mindful walk noticing nature around
- Drawing (or other artistic activities)
- Puzzles
- Go to the beach



# Examples of Positive Experiences

### Pleasant Events List

1.  Working on my car
2.  Planning a career
3.  Getting out of (paying down) debt
4.  Collecting things (baseball cards, coins, stamps, rocks, shells, etc.)
5.  Going on vacation
6.  Thinking how it will be when I finish school
7.  Recycling old items
8.  Going on a date
9.  Relaxing
10.  Going to or watching a movie
11.  Jogging, walking
12.  Thinking, "I have done a full day's work"
13.  Listening to music
14.  Thinking about past parties
15.  Buying household gadgets
16.  Lying in the sun
17.  Planning a career change
18.  Laughing
19.  Thinking about past trips
20.  Listening to other people
21.  Reading magazines or newspapers
22.  Engaging in hobbies (stamp collecting, model building, etc.)
23.  Spending an evening with good friends
24.  Planning a day's activities
25.  Meeting new people
26.  Remembering beautiful scenery
27.  Saving money
28.  Going home from work
29.  Eating
30.  Practicing karate, judo, yoga
31.  Thinking about retirement
32.  Repairing things around the house
33.  Working on machinery (cars, boats, etc.)
34.  Remembering the words and deeds of loving people
35.  Wearing shocking clothes
36.  Having quiet evenings
37.  Taking care of my plants
38.  Buying, selling stock
39.  Going swimming
40.  Doodling
41.  Exercising
42.  Collecting old things
43.  Going to a party
44.  Thinking about buying things
45.  Playing golf
46.  Playing soccer
47.  Flying kites
48.  Having discussions with friends
49.  Having family get-togethers
50.  Riding a bike or motorbike
51.  Running track
52.  Going camping
53.  Singing around the house
54.  Arranging flowers
55.  Practicing religion (going to church, group praying, etc.)
56.  Organizing tools
57.  Going to the beach
58.  Thinking, "I'm an OK person"
59.  Having a day with nothing to do
60.  Going to class reunions
61.  Going skating, skateboarding, rollerblading
62.  Going sailing or motorboating
63.  Traveling or going on vacations
64.  Painting
65.  Doing something spontaneously
66.  Doing needlepoint, crewel, etc.
67.  Sleeping
68.  Driving
69.  Entertaining, giving parties
70.  Going to clubs (garden clubs, Parents without Partners, etc.)
71.  Thinking about getting married
72.  Going hunting

(continued on next page)

# Mindfulness within Positive Experience

- We need to pay attention to the pleasant experience in order to change our emotional experience!
- Use your Mindfulness Observe/Describe/Participate skills
  - Focus attention on activity as it happens
  - Refocus on positives in present moment when mind wanders to negative
  - Participate and fully engage
  - Be unmindful of worries and gently redirect to pleasant and positive in the moment (including physical sensations, sights, sounds, etc.)
- Be patient – may not immediately “feel good” but benefit can build over time



## Build Mastery

- Doing things that make you feel competent, self-confidence, in control and capable of mastering things
- Creating a series of accomplishments
- Setting step by step goals to work towards something
- Do something that is a little bit challenging but possible, in order to achieve a sense of accomplishment and show yourself you can do hard things
- Sometimes these can double as a “pleasant events” practice as well, but not always! Goal is moreso to feel accomplished than to enjoy every minute of the experience.

# Examples of Building Mastery Activities

- Working on building skills in a creative area (drawing, knitting, painting, etc)
- Try a new recipe
- Cleaning! (or, work on one small cleaning goal e.g. clear one small area or surface)
- Following through on difficult therapy “homework”

# PLEASE: Taking Care of Your Mind by Taking Care of Your Body



PL : treat physical illness and injury



E: balanced Eating



A: Avoid Mood altering substances



S: balance Sleep



E: get Exercise

# Homework

- Practice at least one:
  - Choose and practice a “pleasant event” activity
  - Choose and practice a “building mastery” activity
  - Identify one PLEASE skill you would like to improve, make a plan for improving this skill, and take one step towards this today
- Remember that one activity may include multiple skills! E.g. if a walk is both enjoyable (Pleasant Event) and an increase in physical activity (PLEASE skill)