

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 PRACTICE



SKILLS PRACTICE REVIEW: RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

- Identify one example of something in your life that needs acceptance (big or small)
 - Identify 1-3 signs of non-acceptance
 - Identify 1-3 acceptance behaviors (things you would do or tell yourself if you accepted)
- Optional advanced practice:
 - Catch signs of non-acceptance in the moment & practice steps of acceptance in real time!

DBT Skills categories

- Mindfulness
- Distress Tolerance
- **Emotion Regulation:** Skills that help us prevent or reduce the intensity of unhelpful/ineffective emotions
- Interpersonal Effectiveness

Why not try to get rid of emotions?



You've probably tried already!
(Has it worked yet...?)

- Generally, trying to avoid emotions makes them worse
- Specifically, trying to avoid trauma-related emotions **keeps us stuck in PTSD**

We need emotions to survive.

They do many important things for us:

- Motivate us to respond to the moment
- Communicate to others
- Communicate to ourselves



MINDFULNESS OF CURRENT EMOTIONS

Definition: Observing, describing, and allowing emotions without judging or trying to get rid of them

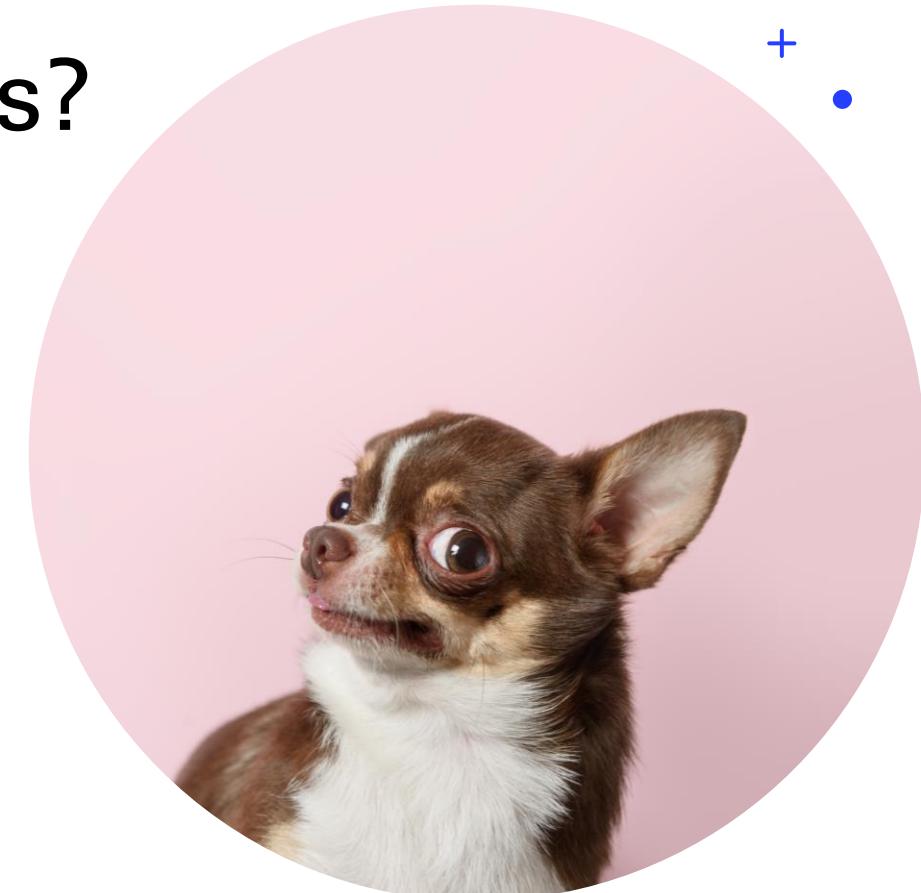
Trauma and emotional mindfulness



- After trauma, we are out of the habit of paying attention to our emotions mindfully
- Makes sense (**why?**)
- There are downsides!
 - Numbs ALL emotions
 - Avoiding things that add value to life creates more painful emotion
 - Avoiding emotion causes them to build up & become even more intense/scary

Why practice noticing emotions?

- Can learn emotions are not catastrophic
- Just experiencing natural emotions = no longer controlled by emotions, ultimate freedom
- Only pain, not suffering
 - Less extra unwanted emotions
 - Fewer values inconsistent actions
 - Emotions become more manageable



How to practice mindfulness of emotions



Observe your emotion



Pay attention to body sensations



Radically accept what you feel

Observe your emotion

- Acknowledge presence of, step back, and get unstuck from the emotion
 - Emotions = waves
- Be willing to have it
- Do not cling to the emotion or amplify it



Tune into body sensations

- Concentrate on physical parts of the emotion
 - Where is it in your body?
 - Quality of sensation?
- Notice changes over time
- Be curious



Accept your emotion

- Remember...
 - You are not your emotion
 - You don't have to act on your emotion
- Love, accept, and respect your emotions
 - No judging or dismissing
 - Attempt to validate your emotion
- Dandelion story



LET'S PRACTICE

Mindfulness of current emotions while
listening to music



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SKILLS PRACTICE OPTIONS:

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