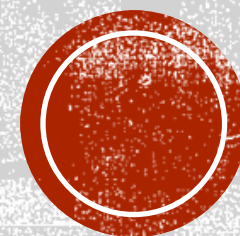


DBT SKILLS GROUP

- 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: TIPP

- Practice at least one of the TIPP skills during a moment when you feel low to moderate distress and use worksheet to record results

OR

- Practice during moment of high distress and use worksheet to record results

DBT SKILLS CATEGORIES

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



***Reducing
suffering and
increasing
freedom by
accepting your
experience as it
is in the moment***

HOW DOES DENYING REALITY (NONACCEPTANCE) INCREASE SUFFERING OR KEEP US STUCK?

- E.g. :
 - Trying to push down emotions instead of acknowledging that they are happening
 - Blaming yourself when a friend says something mean to you instead of acknowledging it as unkind or painful
 - Telling yourself that a traumatic event you experienced was “not a big deal”
- Other examples?



ACCEPTANCE SKILLS

Acceptance

- **Acknowledging the facts of reality as they are**
- E.g. “Logically, I recognize that the traumatic event occurred and was not my fault.”

Radical Acceptance

- **Fully embracing reality with your heart, mind, and *behavior***
- E.g., “The traumatic event occurred and was not my fault, and therefore I will:
 - Acknowledge, validate, & let myself feel natural emotions (e.g., grief)
 - Practice self-compassion & check the facts when self-blame thoughts arise
 - Acknowledge current difficulties caused by trauma without catastrophizing about the future

WHAT RADICAL ACCEPTANCE IS NOT

- **Approval**
 - Ex) spouse is messy in the house
 - Ex)my trauma happened
- **Compassion or love**
 - Ex) rats in the attic
 - Ex) boss having power over you without thinking they deserve it
- **Passivity or giving up**
 - in fact, gives you more info to actually change the problem
 - Ex) if don't accept trauma happened, can't get PTSD treatment to feel better; can't get solution to rats in the attic
- **Not incompatible with change** – in fact essential to change



WHAT HAS TO BE ACCEPTED?

- Current facts and **realistic** limitations of the future
 - Current Fact: “I have applied to 25 jobs and not received an interview yet”
 - Realistic limitation: “I am unlikely to have a new job tomorrow. I don’t know when I will get an interview.”
 - Unrealistic/do not accept: “I will never be successful”

WHAT HAS TO BE ACCEPTED?

- Causes & context of reality

- Common type of nonacceptance is getting stuck on “SHOULD” or “WHY” thoughts
- To get unstuck, we need to accept that every difficult fact has a cause or context, even if we don’t know what it is
- Example:
 - Stuck: “I **should** have been more productive today” → “I’m lazy/bad/worthless”
 - Unstuck: “I didn’t do as many tasks as I wanted to today.” Possible causes of this are:
 - The goals I set were too ambitious and it wasn’t possible to do all of them today
 - I felt intense emotion that made it hard to focus
 - My body or brain really needed rest today
 - Others?

WHAT HAS TO BE ACCEPTED?

- We can build a life worth living while also experiencing pain
 - If life had to be pain-free to be worth living, no one would have a life worth living!
 - Doing so requires practicing accepting that some things are not the way we want them to be, and moving forward anyway.
 - No one should have to experience trauma, AND many people do.
 - Nonacceptance = suffer from PTSD symptoms while rejecting the reality of what happened and how it affects us
 - Radical acceptance = Validate our experience and take steps to build a life worth living

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO RADICALLY ACCEPT?

- Identify 1-2 things
- Rate level of current acceptance from 0-100



WHY PRACTICE?

- Rejecting reality does not change reality – and it may make things worse (turns pain into suffering)
- Changing reality requires accepting reality as first step
- Pain is impossible to completely avoid
- Acceptance increases sense of freedom, peace



WHEN TO USE RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

1. **When you experience a major trauma, pain, or life difficulty**
 - e.g., lack of family support, things you regret, medical problems that interfere with your quality of life
2. **When you are in distress, but not a crisis, and the situation can't be changed right away**
 - e.g., rain on a day with outdoor plans, stuck in traffic
3. **When problem-solving is not working**
 - E.g. asked someone to stop violating a boundary but they refused



RADICAL ACCEPTANCE STEPS

- Identify signs of non-acceptance in the moment using mindfulness
- Observe and describe body sensations & current emotions, and allow them to stay
- Describe the facts of what you need to accept
- Consider the context or causes of what you need to accept
- List things you would do if you accepted the facts, and then do them, using whatever skills are needed to support you in doing so (cope ahead, opposite action, grounding, etc)

IF EMOTIONS ARE HIGH:

- Practice “willing hands” & relax body posture
- Use other distress tolerance skills as needed
- Okay to take breaks or limit goal to focusing on accepting current emotions



**RADICAL
ACCEPTANCE:
*EXAMPLE 1***

Imagine you have been avoiding your therapy homework (an in vivo exposure to visit the grocery store) for 2 days.

When your therapist brought it up yesterday you became irritable, told them you had a busy day and that it wasn't avoidance, and changed the topic.

Now, you are starting to feel guilty, more anxious about this, and stuck on thoughts that it is unfair that you have to do this work – you didn't ask to experience the trauma after all.

WHAT ARE SIGNS OF NON-ACCEPTANCE?



Thoughts

Behaviors

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU RADICALLY ACCEPTED THIS SITUATION?

What I need to accept:

What acceptance looks like:



**RADICAL
ACCEPTANCE:**
EXAMPLE 2

You have a friend/family member who is consistently invalidating. You have tried addressing this with them, but they continue.

You have also tried to ignore that the invalidation bothers you.

However, you are noticing you frequently end up beating yourself up and spiraling with your target behaviors after talking to them.

WHAT ARE SIGNS OF NON-ACCEPTANCE?



Thoughts

Behaviors

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU RADICALLY ACCEPTED THIS SITUATION?

What I need to accept:

What acceptance looks like:

SUMMARY

- **Radical acceptance is accepting your life as it is in the moment** (especially when not what you want), but does NOT mean liking, approving, or giving up
- Since refusing to accept reality increases suffering, radical acceptance:
 - **Increases a sense of freedom** including making helpful changes and letting go of avoidance struggles
 - **Helps us tolerate distress** and changes our perspective on difficult emotions



HOMEWORK

- 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!

