

Therapeutic Master Skills List

DBT Skills:

- Behavior chain analysis (BCA): Use when there is a presence of a harmful behavior
- Missing links analysis (MLA): Use when there is an absence of a more effective behavior

Mindfulness skills:

- Wise Mind (States of mind)
- "What" skills (Observe, describe, participate)
- "How" skills (nonjudgmentally, one-mind-fully, effectively)
- Mindfulness practice: A spiritual perspective
- Skillful means: Balance doing mind and being mind
- Wise: Walking the middle path
- Dialectics

Interpersonal Effectiveness:

- Clarify interpersonal goals/priorities
- DEAR MAN (Describe, Express, Assert, Reinforce, stay Mindful, Appear confident, Negotiate)
- GIVE (be Gentle, act Interested, Validate, use an Easy manner)
- Validation
- Recover from invalidation
- FAST (be Fair, no Apologies, Stick to values, be Truthful)
- Determine if/how to say "no" to others
- Build relationships and end destructive ones

Emotion Regulation Skills:

- Understand and identify/describe emotions
- Check the facts
- Opposite action
- Problem-solving
- ABC PLEASE (Accumulate positives, Build mastery, Cope ahead, treat Physical illness, balance Eating, avoid mood-Altering substances, balance Sleep, Exercise (as recommended by the treatment team))

Distress Tolerance Skills:

- STOP skill (Stop, Take a step back, Observe, Proceed mindfully)
- Pros and Cons
- TIPP (Temperature, Intense exercise, Paced breathing, Paired muscle relaxation)
- Distract with ACCEPTS (Activities, Contributing, Comparisons, Emotions, Pushing away, Thoughts, Sensations)
- Self-soothe (sight, touch, listen, smell, taste)
- IMPROVE (Imagery, Meaning, Prayer, Relaxation, One thing or step at a time, Vacation, Encouragement)
- Radical acceptance
- Everyday acceptance
- Turn the mind
- Willingness
- Grounding yourself

CBT Skills:

- Behavioral activation (BA): TRAP/TRAC
- Behavioral Activation (BA)
- Cost-benefit analysis
- Respiratory control (RC)
- Sit with manageable anxiety
- Thought challenging
- Sleep hygiene skills

Thought Challenging

Questions to ask yourself when trying to Find Evidence Against:

- Have I had any experiences that show that this thought is not completely true all of the time?
- If my best friend or someone I loved had this thought, what would you tell them?
- If my best friend or someone who loves me knew I was thinking this thought, what would they say to me?
- What evidence would my friend point out to me that would suggest that my thoughts were not 100% true?
- When I am not feeling this way, do I think about this type of situation any differently? How?
- When I felt this way in the past, what did I think about that helped me feel better?
- Have I been in this type of situation before? What happened? Is there anything different between this situation and previous ones? What have I learned from prior experience that could help me now?
- Are there any small things that contradict my thoughts that I might be discounting as not important?
- Five years from now, if I look back on this situation, will I look at it any differently? Will I focus on any different part of my experience?
- Are there any strengths or positives in me or in the situation that I am ignoring?
- Am I blaming myself for something over which I do not have complete control?

COGNITIVE ERRORS

FILTERING

focusing on the negative and ignoring the positive

I must have done something wrong because my mom looked frustrated when she came home from work.

ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING

black & white thoughts; talking in always or nevers

I'm not good at anything. If I don't do this exposure I'll never get better.

LABELING

labeling yourself or others negatively

I'm an idiot. I'm worthless, so nothing matters.

BLAMING

self-blame and blaming others

*It's my fault my parents are getting divorced.
If my sister would leave me alone, I'd be fine.*

CATASTROPHIZING

focusing on the worst possible outcome

No one will ever love me because she is mad at me. This feeling will never go away.

MIND READING

thinking you know how other people feel about you

*She is just out to get me into trouble.
My therapist doesn't like me.*

FORTUNE TELLING

predicting things will turn out badly

*This will be the worst feeling ever.
I will die for sure if I touch something contaminated.*

DISCOUNTING POSITIVES

ignoring positive and focusing on negative experiences

It was just luck that I got an A.

SHOULD

focusing too much on what you cannot control

I should be able to get homework done quicker. I should have known this would happen.

FEELINGS ARE NOT FACTS

viewing your feelings as reality

He made me feel stupid by laughing at me, I must be stupid. I feel like my mom might die, so she will die.

Thought Challenging

Situation:

Automatic Thought:

Feeling(s):

Emotional

Physical

Behaviors that do NOT support my treatment goals:

Identify Thinking Error/Cognitive Distortion (list on other page):

Evidence for

Why do I *feel* this is an accurate/true thought?

(Often these thoughts/feelings are distorted thoughts/feelings also.)

Distorted Perception:

Evidence against

How can I prove this is an inaccurate/false thought (see other page)?

Healthy/Balanced Thought/Statement:

Behaviors that DO support my treatment goals:

ev•i•dence /evədəns/ (n) The available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid. (v) Be or show evidence of.

Synonyms: (n) proof - testimony - witness - attestation - obviousness (v) prove - show - testify - demonstrate

Thought Challenging

- ❖ All or Nothing
Deciding that falling slightly short of your goals makes you a total failure
- ❖ Overgeneralization
"Because it worked out badly one time, it will work out badly every time"
- ❖ Mental Filter
Allowing a single small negative detail to block out all the good details
- ❖ Disqualifying the Positive
Saying that positive experiences or evidence "don't count" for some reason
- ❖ Mind reading
Assuming other people think negatively of you without evidence
- ❖ Fortune Telling
Making a negative prediction and then taking it as established fact, before the fact
- ❖ Catastrophizing
Exaggerating the importance of a minor mistake
- ❖ Minimizing
Disregarding the importance of your qualities or accomplishments
- ❖ Emotional Justification
"I feel hopeless; Therefore, things are hopeless"
- ❖ Should, Must, and Ought
Disregarding the way things are in favor of how things "should be"
- ❖ Mislabeling
"I failed once, so I'm a total Failure." Or "He was mean to me once. He's a fucking Asshole."
- ❖ Personalization
Taking credit for things that you don't actually have control over.

When you catch yourself thinking this way, take a step back and ask yourself:

"Is this really true, or am I stuck in a loop?"

Simple stories are inherently false. Life is complicated, and perspective *matters*.

When life seems overwhelming, remember the Buddhist saying:

"The correct way to eat an elephant is *one bite at a time*"

And remember:
You can handle this.