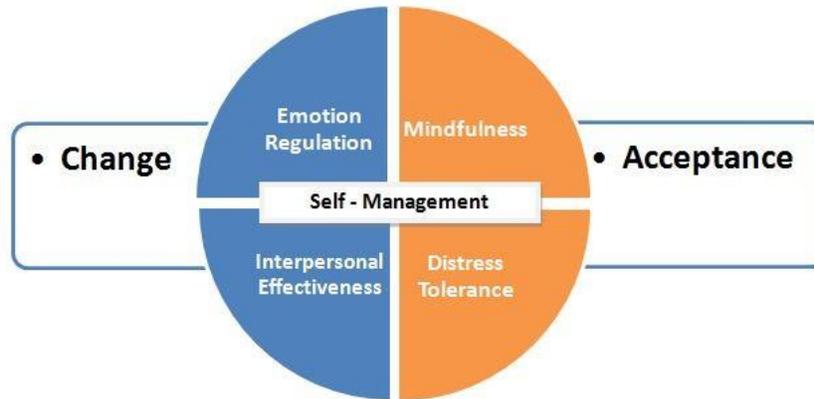


Practical DBT Skills you can use with your children:



Skills to Increase:

Emotional Regulation: Learning how to identify, express, and cope with emotions in a healthy way.

Interpersonal Effectiveness: Normalizing relationships, dealing with others, interacting with the world, identifying dangerous or safe situations. This requires a stable sense of self and a capacity to express emotions

Distress Tolerance: Managing distressing feelings before they occur (prevention) or when they occur without hurting yourself or others.

Mindfulness: Intentionally living with awareness in the present moment without judging or rejecting the moment and without attachment to the moment. (Linehan Handouts , page 17)

Emotional Regulation:

Self-Soothing: Encourage your child to use their 5 senses to help them balance their own emotions. Pleasant things to see, smell, hear, taste, and touch.

Acting the Opposite of Urge: Encourage your child to change their mood by engaging in a behavior that would be consistent with the opposite emotion of their current feeling. For example, smiling even though they are feeling sad or laughing even though they are angry.

Relaxation/Meditation: Encourage your child to engage in relaxing or meditative activities on a consistent daily basis.

Loving Kindness: Using a guided relaxation to encourage your child to increase love and compassion for themselves, loved ones, friends, people they are angry with, enemies, and then all people. For example, you can encourage them to close their eyes and think about how much someone cares about them.

Interpersonal Effectiveness:

Validation/Self-validation: Encourage your child to find the kernel of truth in another person's perspective or situation by acknowledging that a person's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors have causes and are therefore understandable. * *Not* necessarily agreeing with the other person. This can be modeled by validating your child's feeling even though you're not approving of their behaviors.

Non-Judgements: Encourage your child to look at a situation objectively without personal bias. For example, you can practice this by having your child read an article and discuss both sides of a major issue.

Options for Solving any Problem: Remind your child of their options when they are having a problem. Encourage them to try to trouble shoot difficulties, change how they feel about the situation, or use their distress tolerance skills. Discuss with them the importance of being active instead of staying miserable.

Distress Tolerance:

Grounding: Encourage your child to focus on their immediate situation and using the 5 senses to ground them to the present moment. Have them describe sensations and feelings they are having. For example, "what color are your shoes?" or "I wonder if that shirt is soft?".

Distraction: Intentionally move your child's attention from the negative urge to something else. You know what interests your child has; offer one of those activities when they are struggling. Doing activities together can also be helpful.

Paced Breathing: Encourage your child to pace their breathing by slowing it down. Have them take big breaths in, hold them, and slowly release their breaths. A 5:3 ratio of intake to outtake is helpful.

Safe Place: Encouraging your child to come up with a place in their mind where they are completely safe and surrounded by positive things. This could be a guided imagery activity or a discussion you have with your child when they are less emotionally triggered and use when they are struggling.

Intense Exercise: Encourage your child to engage in short, intense periods of exercising to help them manage their emotions when overloaded.

Paired Muscle Relaxation: Encourage your child to tense up and let go muscle groups to help them relax.

Container: Encouraging your child to metaphorically build a container for their emotions to help them maintain them. Use the image of the container and ask them if they need to work on their emotions immediately or if they can store them for later.

Emptying Bucket: Help your child to imagine their stress as a bucket and encourage them to use skills to empty their bucket by working through or letting go or stress. This can be done during an emotional crisis or done proactively throughout the day as a preventative measure.

Mindfulness:

Radical Acceptance: Encouraging your child to accept reality as it is instead of how they want it to be. Remind your child or give them examples of how struggles and pain are normal parts of living in the world and accepting that can make them stronger.

Walking the middle path: Encouraging your child to find common ground when using extreme thinking. Present both sides of an issue and encourage your child to see common ground.

Wise Mind: Point out when a client is only using their emotional mind or their rational mind. You can either remind them to use both at the same time or encourage the opposite when it is not being used. For example, have your child do a math problem or a puzzle when they are getting upset.

Improve the Moment: Encouraging your child to utilize a combination of skills to help them improve the situation they are currently in. For example, if they are doing something they don't like encourage them to play music or play with some sort of sensory item while they do the task they do not want to do.

Noticing Thoughts and Emotions: Point out to a client when they are engaging in thinking patterns or certain emotions. This should be done in a validating and affirming way instead of as a criticism. For example, if your child catastrophizes and expects the worse to happen, have a discussion about how realistic their concerns are and offer positive alternative outcomes.

Looking for additional support for yourself or your children, give me a call!!!

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