



DBT  
Emotional  
Regulation  
Journal





## ABC PLEASE

The ABC PLEASE skills are two separate skill sets. The first (ABC) is about making sure that we regularly spend time doing things that will improve our mood. The second (PLEASE) set involves taking care of our bodies to reduce our vulnerability to emotion mind.

### ACCUMULATE POSITIVE EMOTIONS

**A**

This means intentionally making an effort to engage in pleasant activities. We need this feeling regularly and need to make sure we are engaging in positive experiences or events, ideally, every day, even if it is something relatively small or fast

### BUILD MASTERY

**B**

Mastery is the feeling we get when we succeed at something. Gradually increase the difficulty of the task over time. Building mastery can help against feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. Examples could include gradually learning and a new sport, musical performance or learning to cook.

### COPE AHEAD

**C**

We all face emotionally difficult situations. If you have one on the horizon, plan how to respond when it happens. This must be a conscious and intentional process, often involving visualizing yourself in the situation.



## ABC PLEASE

### PHYSICAL ILLNESS

PL

Emotions are not only mental but physical experiences; we feel them in our bodies. If we don't take care of our bodies by treating our illnesses, we will be poorly prepared to cope with emotionally difficult situations when they arise. Also, poor health can create its own emotionally difficult situations

### BALANCE EATING

E

Eat balanced and nutritious foods. Eat mostly whole, unprocessed foods, with the correct servings of grains, vegetables, fruits and proteins.

### AVOID MOOD-ALTERING SUBSTANCES

A

Eating too much or eating too little makes us more vulnerable to emotion mind. Be mindful of when, how, and how much you eat. Stay away from foods you know make you feel bad.

### BALANCE SLEEP

S

You may be undervaluing the importance of getting enough sleep. If you are tired and irritable, and there's no underlying physical cause, you may be shorting yourself on sleep.

### GET EXERCISE

E

Exercise has physical effects on the body and on the brain that help us regulate mood; take advantage of these effects by being physically active on a regular basis.



## STOP SKILL

This skill is useful when noticing that your emotions may be causing you to want to act impulsively on unhealthy behaviors. Use it when your emotions are threatening to get the best of you, and you're tempted to take unhelpful actions such as yelling, screaming or sending a nasty message to someone.

### STOP

**S**

Interrupt your negative thinking with the command STOP. Before the emotion you're feeling gets out of control, freeze for a moment and pause with what you are doing.

### TAKE A BREATH

**T**

Take a step back. Allow yourself a little time to sort through your emotions. Practice some deep breathing techniques to slow your heart rate down.

### OBSERVE

**O**

How might a stranger describe the situation? Try to notice what's happening without judgmental language. Observe your thoughts, feelings, and behavior. How does your body feel?

### PROCEED

**P**

Purposefully and mindfully proceed with your next activity, one step at a time. What outcome would be consistent with your wants, needs, and values?



## CHECK THE FACTS

### THE THOUGHT

What is my worry or thought?

Blank space for writing the thought.

### THE DEFENCE

What evidence (facts) do I have that my thought is true?

Blank space for writing evidence supporting the thought.

### THE PROSECUTION

What evidence do I have that my thought is not true?

Blank space for writing evidence contradicting the thought.

### THE JUDGE'S VERDICT

When I examine all of the evidence, based on the facts. Can I decide whether my thought or worry is likely to come true or unlikely?

Blank space for writing the verdict.



# OPPOSITE ACTION

All emotions activate us to respond, and the type of activation is biologically wired; they prepare us to act. The Opposite Action Skill involves doing precisely the opposite of what your emotions tell you to do.

For example, we often feel the urge to avoid or escape a situation when fearful. When angry, we quickly become defensive or lash out. When sad or depressed, we tend to withdraw, isolate, and become passive. With shame and guilt, we typically hide, avoid, or beg for forgiveness from others.

WHAT HAPPENED?

IDENTIFY YOUR EMOTIONS

IDENTIFY YOUR NATURAL URGE

## SHOULD I FOLLOW MY URGE?

NATURAL ACTION/URGE

OPPOSITE ACTION/URGE

## OUTCOME

DID I NOTICE A DECREASE IN MY EMOTIONS?

DID I NOTICE A DECREASE IN MY EMOTIONS?

WOULD I ACT THE SAME WAY NEXT TIME?

WOULD I ACT THE SAME WAY NEXT TIME?



## OPPOSITE ACTION

“ IF YOUR EMOTIONS ARE DOING MORE HARM THAN GOOD, TRY ACTING OPPOSITE ”

### NATURAL URGE

### OPPOSITE

Anger gets us ready to attack/ It activates us to attack or defend.



Show kindness/concern or walk away.

Shame gets us ready to hide. It activates us isolate.



Raise your head up, give eye contact, shoulders back.

Fear gets us ready to run or hide. It activates us to escape danger.



Go towards it, stay involved in it, and build courage.

Depression gets us ready to be inactive. It activates us to avoid contact.



Get active

Disgust gets us ready to reject or distance ourselves.



Push through and get through situation.

Guilt gets us ready to repair violations. It activates us to forgive.



Apologize and mean what we say.



## COPE AHEAD OF TIME

The Cope Ahead skill is intended to have us consider how we might be prepared in some way to help us reduce stress ahead of the time.

Describe the situation that is likely to prompt uncomfortable emotions. Check the facts. Be specific in describing the situation. Name the emotions and actions likely to interfere with using your skills.

Decide what coping or problem-solving skills you want to use in the situation. Be specific. Write out in detail how you will cope with the situation and with your emotions and action urges.

Rehearse in your mind coping effectively. Rehearse in your mind exactly what you can do to cope effectively. Rehearse your actions, your thoughts, what you say, and how to say it.

What calming exercises could you try now?





# EMOTIONAL SURFING

A surfer doesn't fight the waves; they move with the wave riding its natural tide. "Riding the wave" is also a psychological practice of surfing your own powerful and negative emotions. Fighting emotions such as sadness and anger delays the acceptance of these emotions. Riding the wave is about allowing your emotions to be with you without acting ineffectively. Like a tidal wave coming and going, you will return to a place of calm rather than emotional turmoil.

## NOTICE:

Notice how you feel?



## ALLOW AND RELEASE:

Release judgements of struggles with thoughts. Breathe deeply.



## NAME:

Name the emotion?  
What words describe it?

## INVESTIGATE:

How intense is it?  
How are you breathing?  
How do you feel inside your body?

## ACCEPT:

Accept the emotion.  
What prompted it?  
Just let the feeling be.

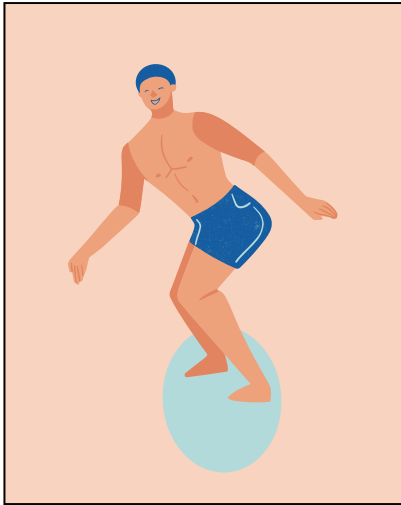
## EMOTIONAL REMINDERS

Emotions are **like waves**, they can be strong and powerful, but they eventually pass.

**Surf your emotions** with mindfulness, where you watch your breath and notice your thoughts without judgment.

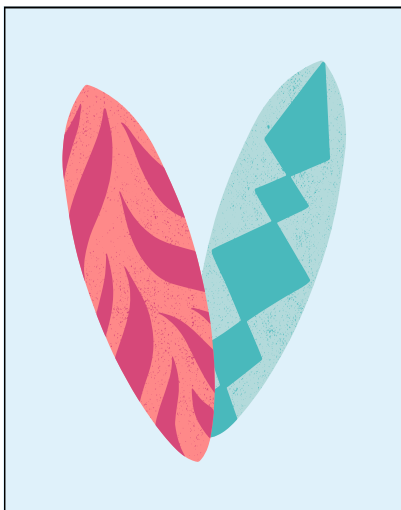


# EMOTIONAL SURFING



Notice what is happening? How do I feel?

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Name the emotion. What words describe it?

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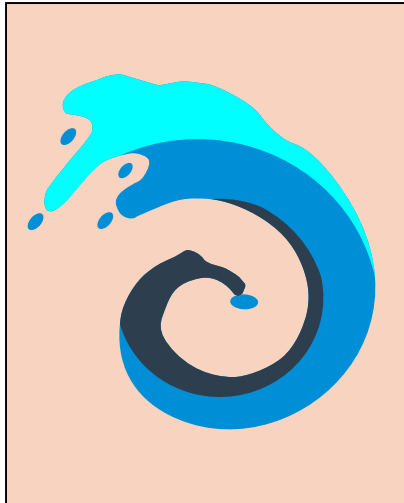


How can I accept the emotion?

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# EMOTIONAL SURFING



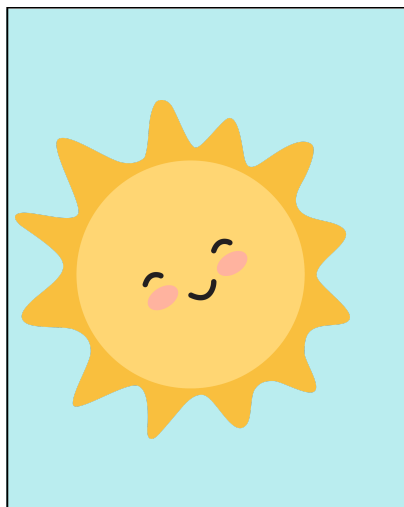
Investigate: How intense is my feeling? What can I feel in my body?

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How can I allow and release my emotions?

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REFLECTION

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