

DBT Skills

Cheat Sheet



The four skill modules of dialectical behavior therapy on one page - what each skill is for, in plain language.

1 SKIM THE FOUR MODULES

2 STAR THE SKILLS YOU NEED

3 PRACTICE WHILE CALM

1 Mindfulness

THE FOUNDATION • NOTICING WITHOUT JUDGING



WISE MIND

Find the overlap between emotion mind and logic mind, and act from there.

OBSERVE & DESCRIBE

Notice what is actually happening. Put words on facts, not judgments.

PARTICIPATE

Throw yourself into one activity completely, right now.

ONE-MINDFULLY

Do one thing at a time. When your mind wanders, walk it back gently.

NON-JUDGMENTALLY

Catch the "good/bad" labels and let them drop. Stick to what is.

2 Distress Tolerance

SURVIVING THE SPIKE WITHOUT MAKING IT WORSE



TIPP

Temperature, Intense exercise, Paced breathing, Paired muscle relaxation - drop the body's alarm fast.

STOP

Stop. Take a step back. Observe. Proceed mindfully.

ACCEPTS

Distract on purpose: Activities, Contributing, Comparisons, Emotions, Pushing away, Thoughts, Sensations.

SELF-SOOTHE

Comfort each of your five senses, one at a time, on purpose.

RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

Stop fighting what you cannot change. Pain fades faster when you stop feeding it.

3 Emotion Regulation

TURNING THE VOLUME DOWN BEFORE IT PEAKS



NAME THE EMOTION

Label it precisely: "disappointed," not "bad." Naming turns intensity down.

CHECK THE FACTS

Is the emotion the right size for what actually happened?

OPPOSITE ACTION

When the urge would make things worse, do its opposite, all the way.

PLEASE

Protect the basics: treat illness, eat regularly, avoid substances, sleep, move your body.

BUILD POSITIVES

Schedule small good moments daily. Steadier emotions need supplies.

4 Interpersonal Effectiveness

ASKING, REFUSING, AND KEEPING YOUR SELF-RESPECT



VALIDATE FIRST

Say the true part of the other person's view out loud before your ask.

DEAR MAN

Describe, Express, Assert, Reinforce - stay Mindful, Appear confident, Negotiate.

GIVE

Protect the relationship: be Gentle, act Interested, Validate, keep an Easy manner.

FAST

Protect self-respect: be Fair, no over-Apologizing, Stick to your values, be Truthful.