**C.A.R.E.S.S.**

I agree that when I get the impulse to engage in my self-destructive behavior, BEFORE I do, I will incorporate one behavior from each category below. (Set and re-set a timer before you begin each section, so you have an external boundary to re-ground you after 10-15 minutes.)

###### C.A.- Communicate Alternatively (10-15 minutes)

Hurting the body is a way to communicate feelings, thoughts, needs, and unresolved trauma memories/pain. Clients need other, less destructive modalities to communicate.

 Draw/paint the body part you want to “hurt”

 Draw the emotions that accompany the urge to self-harm

 Make a collage of words/images that capture thoughts/feelings

 Write a poem about your feelings

 Draw an outline of your body and write words on various body parts

Visualize doing the self-destructive behavior and write about what you think/feel

Write about what was happening when you felt the urge to self-harm

R.E.- Release Endorphins (10-15 minutes)

Clients feel better after they self-harm because the brain releases endorphins, (naturally occurring opiates), in response to pain/body trauma. Clients need other ways to experience the release of endorphins. (Exercise, laughter, hugging)

 Run up/down the stairs or the periphery of your house/march in place

 Do 100 jumping jacks

 Go on a piece of exercise equipment

 Do a part of an at-home exercise tape

 Put on the radio and dance

 Listen to a funny comedian on a CD/video

 Watch a funny movie/TV show

 Read something that tickles you

 Hold/ stroke and hug a stuffed animal or live pet

Hug a pillow, rag doll, or a tree

###### S.S.-Self-Soothe(10-15 minutes)

Clients need to learn new strategies that promote self-care and decrease anxiety from future triggering events.

 Wrap in a quilt and rock in rocking chair

 Take a warm shower/bubble bath

 Light scented candles or oil/play soothing music

 Read positive affirmations

 Massage hands with soothing lotion

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