

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 Alternately (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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