

# DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 7

(Distress Tolerance Worksheets 5–5b)



## Distracting

A way to remember these skills is the phrase “**Wise Mind ACCEPTS.**”

### With Activities:

- ☐ Focus attention on a task you need to get done.
- ☐ Rent movies; watch TV.
- ☐ Clean a room in your house.
- ☐ Find an event to go to.
- ☐ Play computer games.
- ☐ Go walking. Exercise.
- ☐ Surf the Internet. Write e-mails.
- ☐ Play sports.
- ☐ Go out for a meal or eat a favorite food.
- ☐ Call or go out with a friend.
- ☐ Listen to your iPod; download music.
- ☐ Build something.
- ☐ Spend time with your children.
- ☐ Play cards.
- ☐ Read magazines, books, comics.
- ☐ Do crossword puzzles or Sudoku.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### With Contributing:

- ☐ Find volunteer work to do.
- ☐ Help a friend or family member.
- ☐ Surprise someone with something nice (a card, a favor, a hug).
- ☐ Give away things you don't need.
- ☐ Call or send an instant message encouraging someone or just saying hi.
- ☐ Make something nice for someone else.
- ☐ Do something thoughtful.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### With Comparisons:

- ☐ Compare how you are feeling now to a time when you felt different.
- ☐ Think about people coping the same as you or less well than you.
- ☐ Compare yourself to those less fortunate.
- ☐ Watch reality shows about others' troubles; read about disasters, others' suffering.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### With different Emotions:

- ☐ Read emotional books or stories, old letters.
- ☐ Watch emotional TV shows; go to emotional movies.
- ☐ Listen to emotional music.
- (Be sure the event creates different emotions.)*
- Ideas: Scary movies, joke books, comedies, funny records, religious music, soothing music or music that fires you up, going to a store and reading funny greeting cards.*
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### With Pushing away:

- ☐ Push the situation away by leaving it for a while.
- ☐ Leave the situation mentally.
- ☐ Build an imaginary wall between yourself and the situation.
- ☐ Block thoughts and images from your mind.
- ☐ Notice ruminating: Yell “No!”
- ☐ Refuse to think about the painful situations.
- ☐ Put the pain on a shelf. Box it up and put it away for a while.
- ☐ Deny the problem for the moment.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### With other Thoughts:

- ☐ Count to 10; count colors in a painting or poster or out the window; count anything.
- ☐ Repeat words to a song in your mind.
- ☐ Work puzzles.
- ☐ Watch TV or read.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### With other Sensations:

- ☐ Squeeze a rubber ball very hard.
- ☐ Listen to very loud music.
- ☐ Hold ice in your hand or mouth.
- ☐ Go out in the rain or snow.
- ☐ Take a hot or cold shower.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_



# DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 8



(Distress Tolerance Worksheet 6–6b)

## Self-Soothing

A way to remember these skills is to think of soothing each of your **FIVE SENSES**.

### With Vision:

- ☐ Look at the stars at night.
- ☐ Look at pictures you like in a book.
- ☐ Buy one beautiful flower.
- ☐ Make one space in a room pleasing to look at.
- ☐ Light a candle and watch the flame.
- ☐ Set a pretty place at the table using your best things.
- ☐ Go people-watching or window-shopping.
- ☐ Go to a museum or poster shop with beautiful art.
- ☐ Sit in the lobby of a beautiful old hotel.
- ☐ Look at nature around you.
- ☐ Walk in a pretty part of town.
- ☐ Watch a sunrise or a sunset.
- ☐ Go to a dance performance, or watch it on TV.
- ☐ Be mindful of each sight that passes in front of you.
- ☐ Take a walk in a park or a scenic hike.
- ☐ Browse through stores looking at things.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### With Hearing:

- ☐ Listen to soothing or invigorating music.
- ☐ Pay attention to sounds of nature (waves, birds, rainfall, leaves rustling).
- ☐ Pay attention to the sounds of the city (traffic, horns, city music).
- ☐ Sing to your favorite songs.
- ☐ Hum a soothing tune.
- ☐ Learn to play an instrument.
- ☐ Burn a CD or make an iPod mix with music that will get you through tough times. Turn it on.
- ☐ Be mindful of any sounds that come your way, letting them go in one ear and out the other.
- ☐ Turn on the radio.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### With Smell:

- ☐ Use your favorite soap, shampoo, aftershave, cologne, or lotions, or try them on in the store.
- ☐ Burn incense or light a scented candle.
- ☐ Open a package of coffee and inhale the aroma.
- ☐ Put lemon oil on your furniture.
- ☐ Put potpourri or eucalyptus oil in a bowl in your room.
- ☐ Sit in a new car and breathe the aroma.
- ☐ Boil cinnamon. Make cookies, bread, or popcorn.
- ☐ Smell the roses.
- ☐ Walk in a wooded area and mindfully breathe in the fresh smells of nature.
- ☐ Open the window and smell the air.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### With Taste:

- ☐ Eat some of your favorite foods.
- ☐ Drink your favorite soothing drink, such as herbal tea, hot chocolate, a latté, or a smoothie.
- ☐ Treat yourself to a dessert.
- ☐ Eat macaroni and cheese or another favorite childhood food.
- ☐ Sample flavors in an ice cream store.
- ☐ Suck on a piece of peppermint candy.
- ☐ Chew your favorite gum.
- ☐ Get a little bit of a special food you don't usually spend the money on, such as fresh-squeezed orange juice or your favorite candy.
- ☐ Really taste the food you eat. Eat one thing mindfully.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### With Touch:

- ☐ Take a long hot bath or shower.
- ☐ Pet your dog or cat.
- ☐ Have a massage. Soak your feet.
- ☐ Put creamy lotion on your whole body.
- ☐ Put a cold compress on your forehead.
- ☐ Sink into a comfortable chair in your home.
- ☐ Put on a blouse or shirt that has a pleasant feel.
- ☐ Take a drive with the car windows rolled down.
- ☐ Run your hand along smooth wood or leather.
- ☐ Hug someone.
- ☐ Put clean sheets on the bed.
- ☐ Wrap up in a blanket.
- ☐ Notice touch that is soothing.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_



# Urge Management:

## What to do When Crisis Strikes

When a crisis arises, the most important thing to think about is how can you delay acting on the unhealthy urge.

1. Rate the intensity of the urge from 0 (no urge) to 10 (intense urge)
2. Set a timer for 15 minutes. The idea here is that you need to put time between when the urge arises, and when you act on it – hopefully you'll end up not acting on it at all. So set a timer – this is important, because you want to take your mind off the urge; if you don't set a timer, you're constantly going to be checking the clock to see how much time has passed. So set the alarm on your cell phone, set your alarm clock, or grab your egg timer, but use something.
3. In the meantime...
  - a. Mindfully distract yourself using distracting and self-soothing skills. Pull out your list of distracting skills and start at the top. If you find the first activity isn't keeping your mind off the urge, go on to the next, and so on.
  - b. Try to choose a relatively pleasant activity – these will be more likely to distract you from your urge.
  - c. Try to choose an activity that makes it more difficult for you to act on the urge – if your urge is to eat, leave the house and go for a walk so that you're not tempted to wander into the kitchen; if your urge is to go to the casino or the mall to go shopping, go take a hot bath – it will take you at least 15 minutes to dry yourself off and get dressed again, which makes it harder to act on the urge.
  - d. Pull out your Pro's and Con's chart (which you've completed ahead of time) and remind yourself of the reasons why you don't want to engage in this behaviour.
4. When your alarm goes off after 15 minutes, check into the intensity of your urge – if it has disappeared or decreased enough to be tolerable, you can pat yourself on the back and go about your day. If it has stayed the same or increased, do your best to set the timer for another 15 minutes and continue practicing skills.

The thing to remember about using this outline is that, even if you end up acting on your urge, you've just proven to yourself that you can use skills to delay the behaviour – and hopefully next time you'll be able to delay it longer, and longer, until you can get to the point that you don't act on the urge at all.