STOP Skill

**S**top  
Do not just react. Stop! Freeze! Do not move a muscle! Your emotions may try to make you act without thinking. Stay in control!

**T**ake a step back  
Take a step back from the situation. Take a break. Let go. Take a deep breath. Do not let your feelings make you act impulsively.

**O**bserve  
Notice what is going on inside and outside you. What is the situation? What are your thoughts and feelings? What are others saying or doing?

**P**roceed mindfully  
Act with awareness. In deciding what to do, consider your thoughts and feelings, the situation, and other people’s thoughts and feelings. Think about your goals. Ask Wise Mind: Which actions will make it better or worse?

*Note. Adapted from an unpublished worksheet by Francheska Perepletchikova and Seth Axelrod, with their permission.*
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.
- Work puzzles.
- Repeat words to a song in your mind.
- 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 WORKSHEET 2

(Distress Tolerance Handout 4)

## Practicing the STOP Skill

Due Date: __________ Name: ____________________________ Week Starting: __________

Describe two crisis situations that happened to you. Then describe your use of the STOP skill.

### CRISIS EVENT 1:

**Rate level of distress (0–100) Before:** _____ **After:** _____

**Prompting event** for my distress (who, what, when, where): What triggered the state of crisis?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior you are trying to stop:</th>
<th>Stop</th>
<th>Take a step back</th>
<th>Observe</th>
<th>Proceed mindfully</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At left, check the steps you used, and describe what you did here:

Describe the outcome of using skills:

Circle a number to indicate how effective the skill was in helping you tolerate the distress and cope with the situation (keeping you from doing something to make the situation worse). Use the following scale:

1. I still couldn’t stand the situation, even for one more minute.
2. I was able to cope somewhat, at least for a little while.
3. It helped somewhat.
4. I could use skills, tolerated distress, and resisted problem urges.

**CRISIS EVENT 2:**

**Rate level of distress (0–100) Before:** _____ **After:** _____

**Prompting event** for my distress (who, what, when, where): What triggered the state of crisis?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior you are trying to stop:</th>
<th>Stop</th>
<th>Take a step back</th>
<th>Observe</th>
<th>Proceed mindfully</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At left, check the steps you used, and describe what you did here:

Describe the outcome of using the skills:

Circle effectiveness of the skill:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I still couldn’t stand the situation, even for one more minute.</th>
<th>I was able to cope somewhat, at least for a little while.</th>
<th>I could use skills, tolerated distress, and resisted problem urges.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISTRESS TOLERANCE WORKSHEET 5
(Distress Tolerance Handout 7)

Distracting with Wise Mind ACCEPTS

Due Date: ___________________ Name: ___________________ Week Starting: __________

Describe two crisis situations that happened to you. Then describe your use of the ACCEPTS skills.

CRISIS EVENT 1: Rate level of distress (0–100) Before: _______ After: _______

Prompting event for my distress (who, what, when, where): What triggered the state of crisis?

☐ Activities
☐ Contributions
☐ Comparisons
☐ Emotions
☐ Pushing away
☐ Thoughts
☐ Sensations

At left, check the skills you used, and describe here:

Describe the outcome of using skills:

Circle a number to indicate how effective the skills were in helping you tolerate the distress and cope with the situation (keeping you from doing something to make the situation worse). Use the following scale:

1 2 3 4 5

I still couldn’t stand the situation, even for one more minute.
I was able to cope somewhat, at least for a little while.
I could use skills, tolerated distress, and resisted problem urges.

CRISIS EVENT 2: Rate level of distress (0–100) Before: _______ After: _______

Prompting event for my distress (who, what, when, where): What triggered the state of crisis?

☐ Activities
☐ Contributions
☐ Comparisons
☐ Emotions
☐ Pushing away
☐ Thoughts
☐ Sensations

At left, check the skills you used, and describe here:

Describe the outcome of using skills:

Circle effectiveness of skills: