

Self-Soothe: A Distress Tolerance Skill

Distress Tolerance

Distress Tolerance skills help us to deal with frustrating things in the moment. For example, you might be feeling frustrated that you have to stay at home in quarantine and can't visit your favorite places, like school, the park, or the library.



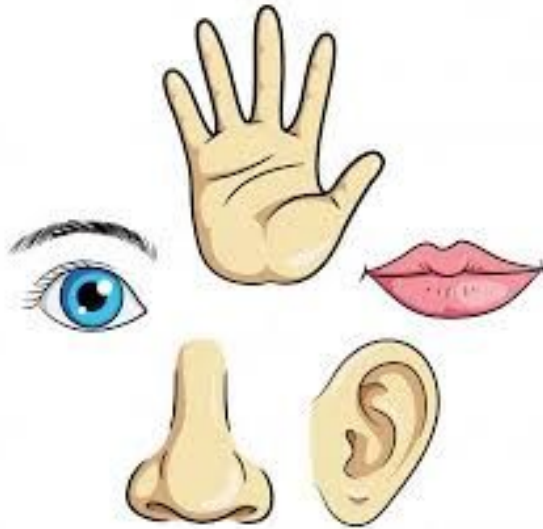
Practicing distress tolerance skills can help you feel better about your situation.



Self-Soothe

What is Self-Soothe? Self-soothe is calming yourself down when you are upset by using the five senses plus DBT's sixth sense, movement.

The senses include: sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and movement.



Why is it important to learn Self-Soothe?

1. Life is full of frustrating moments and we must learn how to handle them appropriately! Moments like waiting in line, your favorite restaurant getting your order wrong, and even running out of toilet paper are certainly frustrating! Moments like these can happen and it helps to be prepared for them.
2. Self-soothe can help us to improve our social/emotional wellbeing. If we can handle a frustrating moment appropriately, the people around us will appreciate it and those relationships will get stronger.
3. Self-soothe can increase your sense of autonomy and independence. If you can handle frustrating moments appropriately, you can do more by yourself and feel confident that you can manage new or unexpected situations.

Understanding Check

Without looking at the previous page, please write what sense each image represents.



In the box below, please draw a picture and label DBT's sixth sense that is missing from the image above.

Self-Soothe Examples

Below is a list of how you might use each sense to self-soothe during a stressful moment. After reading the list, please add one or two more examples of how you might use that sense to self-soothe.

Sight

- Focus on certain objects or colors in the room.
- Look at some of your favorite images, like cute cats or puppies.

- _____
- _____

Hearing

- Listen and focus on the sounds happening around you.
- Listen to the radio.

- _____
- _____

Taste

- Chew some gum.
- Eat a mint.

- _____
- _____

Touch

- Wrap yourself in a warm blanket.
- Touch three things around you and notice how they feel (i.e., cool desk, warm lamp, smooth paper, etc.)

- _____
- _____

Smell

- Notice what you can smell around you. Can you identify what it is?
- Place a few drops of your favorite essential oils on a cotton ball and put it in a small plastic bag so it's there when you need it.

- _____
- _____

Movement

- Take a short walk.
- Dance to your favorite song.

- _____
- _____



Self-Soothe Personal Story

Now that we have covered how to use self-soothe, let's apply it to your own experience. Take a moment and think about the most distressing thing to happen to you this week. During that distressing moment, what did you do to help yourself calm down? What sense were you using? If you did not use self-soothe, what could you have done to help yourself calm down?

Grounding

When we experience anxiety or stress, we are not rooted in the moment. Grounding is a technique that physically brings us back to the moment. We can ground ourselves anytime, anywhere by using our senses.

Signs we may not be grounded

- Easily distracted/can't focus
- Overthinking/perseverating
- Emotion mind/irritable
- Not sleeping well/tired
- Super anxious



Self-Soothe helps us to stay grounded!

By using our physical senses, we pull ourselves back into the moment. Running your hands under cold water, taking a short walk, listening to music, or focusing on what you can see around you, are all great ways to ground yourself.

GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

- 5 THINGS YOU CAN SEE
- 4 THINGS YOU CAN FEEL
- 3 THINGS YOU CAN HEAR
- 2 THINGS YOU CAN SMELL
- 1 GOOD THING ABOUT YOURSELF

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