

GETTING STARTED

Getting Started

Begin with what feels possible - not with what you think you should finish.

**ONE PAGE
CAN BE
ENOUGH.**

USE THE WORKBOOK YOUR WAY

There is no single right place to begin.

Use the structure that fits today. These are three independent entry points, not steps you must complete.

CHOOSE AN ENTRY POINT

FOLLOW THE PATH

Move through the workbook in order when you want structure.

GO BY NEED

Use the starting-point map on p. 8 to find the closest skill.

RETURN TO WHAT HELPS

Repeat any reprintable page when practice or tracking would be useful.



Not sure? Turn the page for a brief check-in.

Quick Check-In: What Feels Possible Today?

This is not a test of motivation or wellness. It is a brief check-in so the practice fits the capacity you have today. Choose what is realistic now, not what you think you should be able to do. You can change your answer at any point.

1. Date

2. How much room do I have for practice right now?

0 almost none 1 2 3 4 5 some room

3. What do I need most right now?

Return to the present

Get through a hard moment

Understand what is happening

Prepare one next step

4. Today, I can...

Examples: read one page, fill one box, or practice for two minutes.

☐

I give myself permission to do less, stop, or return later.



A low-capacity day does not mean you are doing it wrong. Reading one prompt can be the whole practice.

Choose a Skill for What You Need Now

You do not need to diagnose the problem or choose the perfect skill. Mark the need that sounds closest, then start with one suggested page. If more than one row fits, choose the lightest place to begin.

☐

RETURN TO THE PRESENT

Mindfulness Practice Record, p. 11 | Wise Mind, p. 13

☐

GET THROUGH AN EMOTIONAL PEAK

STOP, p. 15 | TIPP Plan, p. 17 | ACCEPTS Plan, p. 19

☐

UNDERSTAND AN EMOTION

Emotion Signals Map, p. 29 | Check the Facts, pp. 31-32

☐

PREPARE A CONVERSATION

Which Goal Matters Most?, p. 37 | DEAR MAN, pp. 38-39 | FAST, p. 41

☐

NOTICE A REPEATING PATTERN

Emotional Regulation Tracker, p. 30 | Optional Behavior Chain, pp. 43-45

☐

REVIEW WHAT HAS HELPED

Personal Toolkit, p. 48 | Weekly Review, pp. 50-51 | Closing Reflection, p. 52

I will try...

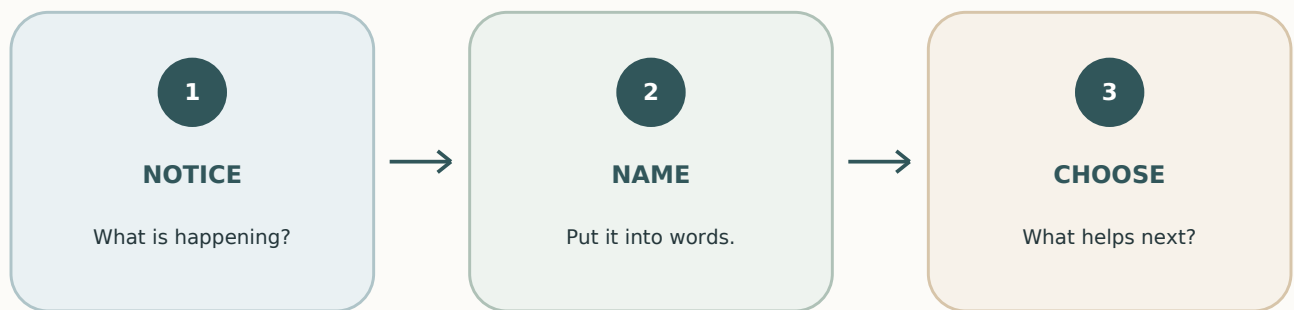
Write one page or skill, not the whole plan.



These are navigation options, not rules. If a page does not fit once you open it, choose another or return later.

Mindfulness

Use this simple cue in sequence. Pause at any step and return when you are ready.



Mindfulness is not a requirement to relax or empty your mind. It is a way of observing, describing, and participating with more awareness and less automatic reaction.

For the full teaching, return to Chapter 2 in The DBT BOOK For Adults.

Mindfulness What and How - At a Glance

WHAT skills are what you do with attention; HOW skills are the way you practice. For this record, move through all three WHAT actions and bring all three HOW qualities to the activity.

WHAT | THREE ACTIONS

1 OBSERVE

Notice thoughts, feelings, sensations, urges, or surroundings without fixing them.

2 DESCRIBE

Put what you notice into clear words that stay close to the facts.

3 PARTICIPATE

Bring your full attention to the activity instead of watching yourself from the sidelines.

HOW | THREE QUALITIES

1 NONJUDGMENTALLY

Notice labels such as good, bad, weak, or unfair, then return to description.

2 ONE-MINDFULLY

Do one thing in this moment, returning gently whenever your attention wanders.

3 EFFECTIVELY

Choose what serves the situation and your goal, not what proves a point.

ONE ADULT EXAMPLE

- WHAT**
- 1 Observe the tension and urge to reply.
 - 2 Describe: 'My jaw is tight, and I want to defend myself.'
 - 3 Participate by rereading once and drafting a response.

HOW Stay nonjudgmental, one-mindful, and effective while choosing what serves your goal.



The aim is practice, not perfect focus. If you lose the thread, return to Observe and continue.

Related teaching: Chapter 2, especially p. 11

Mindfulness Practice Record - What + How

Choose an ordinary activity that is safe to practice with. Complete every numbered item below. The WHAT actions and HOW qualities are not choices: use all three of each during the practice. Returning after attention wanders counts as practice.

1. Date / ordinary activity

Examples: drinking coffee, walking to the car, folding laundry, reading an email.

2. WHAT - COMPLETE ALL 3

DO 1, THEN 2, THEN 3. THESE ARE NOT OPTIONS.

- 1 OBSERVE
- 2 DESCRIBE
- 3 PARTICIPATE

3. HOW - APPLY ALL 3

USE EVERY QUALITY. THESE ARE NOT OPTIONS.

- 1 NONJUDGMENTALLY
- 2 ONE-MINDFULLY
- 3 EFFECTIVELY

4. What did I notice in my thoughts, emotions, body, or surroundings?

5. What supported the practice?

6. What pulled my attention away, without judging it?

7. My next micro-practice

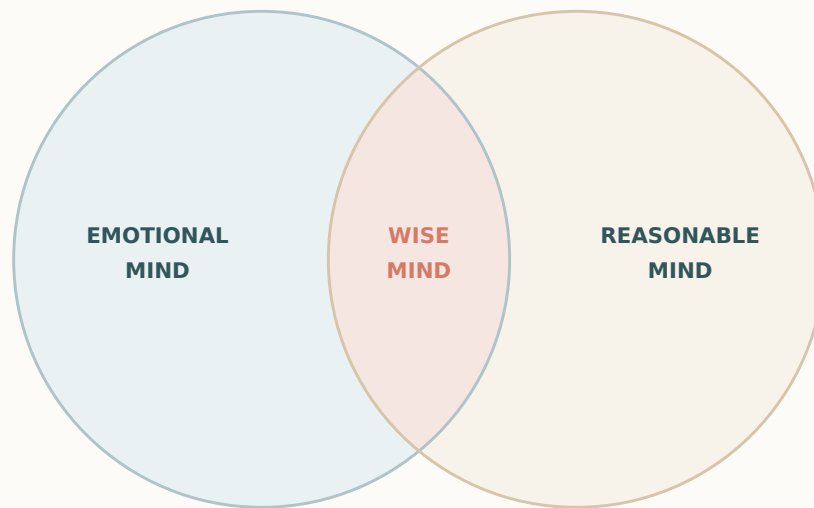
Keep it small and specific.



If an activity becomes activating or unsafe to continue, stop the practice and orient to your present surroundings or seek appropriate support.

Wise Mind - A Brief Guide

These are perspectives, not steps, and none is morally better. Wise Mind makes room for both emotion and reason in the present situation.



EMOTIONAL MIND

Feelings, urges, needs, memories, and values are loud. This state carries important information, but intensity can narrow the view.

WISE MIND

Emotion and reason are both heard with context, values, and safety. It may feel clear or simply less pulled. It is integration, not automatic compromise.

REASONABLE MIND

Facts, logic, planning, and practical limits lead. This state can clarify options, but it may underweight emotional needs.

A DECISION EXAMPLE

Emotional Mind: Quit today.

Reasonable Mind: Stay because I need the income.

Wise Mind: Do not decide at the peak. Gather options, rest, and choose a workable next step.

Wise Mind may support action, a pause, a boundary, or a firm no.

Use the worksheet on p. 13

Wise Mind Decision Worksheet

Use this page for a decision that is safe to explore without immediate pressure. Let emotion and reason each contribute; Wise Mind does not silence feelings or discard facts.

1. What decision or situation am I considering?

2. Emotional Mind

What do my feelings, fears, wishes, or urges say?

3. Reasonable Mind

What do the facts, priorities, and practical limits say?

4. Wise Mind

What becomes clearer when I make room for both perspectives?

5. One manageable next step

Choose a step that is specific, realistic, and consistent with safety and your values.

6. How ready do I feel to take that step?

0 1 2 3 4 5
not ready ready



If this decision involves threat, coercion, abuse, or urgent risk, prioritize protection and qualified support over completing the worksheet.

Emotional Regulation

Emotions carry information. The skill is to understand what is happening and choose what helps next.

THE GOAL IS NOT TO CONTROL EVERY FEELING

The goal is to respond with more awareness, safety, and choice.

THE 4-STEP EMOTIONAL REGULATION PATH

Complete all four steps in order. They are not options to choose from.

1

NOTICE THE SITUATION

What happened? What is the context?



2

NAME THE EMOTION + SIGNALS

Name the feeling. Notice body sensations, thoughts, and the action urge.



3

CHECK THE FACTS

Separate what you know from assumptions. Does the emotion and its intensity fit?



4

CHOOSE A RESPONSE

Protect, problem-solve, soothe, or use Opposite Action when it is safe and appropriate.

Emotion Signals Map

Use one specific episode. The aim is to notice the pattern - not to diagnose yourself, prove the emotion wrong, or explain everything at once.

1. Date / context

2. Emotion name

3. What happened? Stay with one situation.

4. Intensity at the time

0 - low



0



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10

10 - very strong

5. Body signals

6. Thoughts or interpretations

7. Action urge - what did I feel pulled to do?

8. What did I do next?

9. What need, value, boundary, loss, or uncertainty might this emotion be pointing to?



An emotion is information, not a diagnosis or a score of progress. If a credible threat is present, prioritize protection and appropriate support.

Emotional Regulation Tracker

Use keywords for up to five moments. Repeat this page only when tracking is useful; a complete record is not required for the practice to count.

DATE	SITUATION	EMOTION / 0-10	URGE	SKILL	EFFECT	NEXT ADJUSTMENT



Tracking is optional. Stop or simplify if it becomes exhausting, perfectionistic, or too detailed. One useful pattern matters more than a complete log.

See emotional tracking examples in Chapters 3 and 8

Check the Facts - What I Observed

Start with one emotion and one event. Separate what could be recorded by a camera or microphone from the meaning, prediction, or judgment your mind added.

Date / context

1. Emotion I want to understand

2. Intensity now

0 - low



0



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10

10 - very strong

3. Prompting event - who, what, when, and where?

4. Observable facts - what could a camera or microphone record?

5. Interpretations, assumptions, judgments, or predictions I added

6. One other plausible interpretation that also fits the known facts

Continue to page 18. The purpose is accuracy, not forcing yourself to feel differently.

Check the Facts - Risk, Fit, and Response

Now examine risk and likelihood. If the situation is uncertain, choose the safer path while you gather information or support.

7. What credible risk or real problem, if any, is present?

8. What outcome am I predicting or fearing?

9. Facts that make it more likely

10. Facts or alternatives that make it less certain

11. If it happened, how could I cope, protect myself, or get support?

12. A balanced description of the situation now

How closely do the emotion and its intensity fit the known facts?

0 - do not fit ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 10 - strongly fit

My conclusion

☐ Fits

☐ Does not fit

☐ Uncertain

Choose the response that best fits now

☐
PROTECT / SUPPORT

☐
PROBLEM-SOLVE

☐
ACCEPT / BE MINDFUL

☐
SAFE OPPOSITE ACTION



Do not use this worksheet to argue against credible danger, abuse or coercion, illness, exhaustion, or an unrealistic demand. Choose protection, problem-solving, rest, or support first.

Use the guide on page 19 before choosing Opposite Action

Opposite Action - Fit-the-Facts Guide

Every emotion carries an urge. Opposite Action may help when the emotion or its intensity does not fit the facts, or when acting on the urge would be ineffective. It must also be safe.

START WITH CHECK THE FACTS

CREDIBLE DANGER OR A CONCRETE PROBLEM?

Protect yourself, seek support, set a boundary, rest, or problem-solve. Do not approach danger to prove courage.

URGE INEFFECTIVE OR EMOTION DOES NOT FIT?

Choose one safe action that moves opposite to the urge. Try it fully enough to learn from the result.

UNCERTAIN? Pause, gather more facts, or ask a trustworthy person for perspective before acting.

EMOTION	COMMON URGE	POSSIBLE SAFE OPPOSITE
FEAR	Avoid or escape	Approach one manageable step only when no credible danger is present.
ANGER	Attack or argue	Step back, soften tone, or act respectfully; use assertiveness for a real problem.
SADNESS	Withdraw	Try gentle activity or connection when isolation is no longer helping.
SHAME	Hide	Speak with a safe person if no value was violated; if guilt fits, repair.

Opposite Action is not exposure to danger, forced forgiveness, or proof that an emotion is wrong. Stop if the action increases risk, pain, exhaustion, or pressure. A neutral result is still useful information.



Use this guide with the practice plan on page 20

Opposite Action Plan and Outcome

Use this after Check the Facts. Choose a safe, manageable action, try it without demanding a particular emotional result, and treat what happens as information.

1. Date / situation

2. Emotion

3. Intensity before

0 - low ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 10 - very strong

4. Action urge

5. Check the Facts result - what fits and what does not?

6. Safety gate - is it safe to try an opposite action now?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Uncertain

7. My safe opposite action

8. Smallest manageable step

9. What I did and what happened

10. Intensity after

0 - low ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 10 - very strong

11. One adjustment or next step



Stop and switch to protection, problem-solving, rest, or support if the action increases danger, pain, exhaustion, or pressure. A neutral result is not failure.

Review the guide on page 19 whenever the safety gate is uncertain

PLEASE Skills - Gentle Vulnerability Check

PLEASE is a reminder to notice body-based factors that can make emotions harder to manage. A checkmark means 'I gave this area some attention' - not 'I did it perfectly.' Leave boxes blank when an item is not relevant or safe. For each day, mark what you noticed or supported, then add one brief note. This is a pattern check, not a score.

PL Treat Physical Illness

E Balance Eating

A Avoid Mood-Altering Substances

S Balance Sleep

E Get Exercise

DAY	DATE + ONE SHORT NOTE	PL	E / EAT	A / SUB.	S / SLEEP	E / MOVE
1		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

One realistic priority for the next seven days



Use existing professional guidance for health, medication, eating, substances, sleep, or movement. Do not use this tracker to start, stop, or abruptly change a care plan.

Interpersonal Skills

DBT calls this module Interpersonal Effectiveness: skills for asking clearly, caring for a relationship, and protecting self-respect.

THREE GOALS TO WEIGH

These are priorities to compare, not steps to complete. One may matter most, or you may combine skills.

OBJECTIVE

O

What result do I want?

PRIMARY SKILL: DEAR MAN

RELATIONSHIP

R

How do I want to care for the connection?

PRIMARY SKILL: GIVE

SELF-RESPECT

SR

What values or limits must I keep?

PRIMARY SKILL: FAST

THE GOAL IS EFFECTIVENESS, NOT PERFECT HARMONY

A useful conversation may still include disagreement, a pause, or a clear no.

!

No communication skill can guarantee agreement or safety. Under threat, coercion, abuse, or a serious power imbalance, protection, distance, or support may matter more than the conversation goal.

Which Goal Matters Most?

Before choosing a skill, name what matters in this interaction. Rate each goal independently - ties are allowed - then choose the skill or combination that best fits.

1. Situation or conversation I am preparing for

RATE EACH GOAL: 1 = LOWER | 2 = MEDIUM | 3 = HIGH

2. OBJECTIVE

What concrete result, request, refusal, or decision do I want?

IMPORTANCE

☐

1

☐

2

☐

3

3. RELATIONSHIP

What do I want to protect, improve, or understand in this relationship?

IMPORTANCE

☐

1

☐

2

☐

3

4. SELF-RESPECT

What value, limit, or way of treating myself must remain intact?

IMPORTANCE

☐

1

☐

2

☐

3

5. What would realistic success look like?

6. What compromise is acceptable - and what is not?

MY PRIMARY PLAN - CHOOSE ONE STARTING POINT

☐

DEAR MAN

☐

GIVE

☐

FAST

☐

BLEND

☐

SAFETY / SUPPORT

If pressure, threat, coercion, or a serious power imbalance is present, safety can take priority over all three goals. The next step may be to pause, leave, document, or seek appropriate support.



Use this page before DEAR MAN, GIVE, or FAST

DEAR MAN - Clarify + DEAR

Use DEAR MAN when your main goal is to ask, say no, or address one concrete issue. Keep the plan specific. Add GIVE or FAST when the relationship or self-respect also needs attention.

1. Situation - the one issue I want to address

2. Objective - what I am asking for or saying no to

DESCRIBE

D

State observable facts without labels, motives, or accusations.

EXPRESS

E

Name your feelings or perspective. Do not require mind-reading.

ASSERT

A

Ask clearly or say no directly, in one workable sentence.

REINFORCE

R

Explain what agreement makes possible; avoid pressure or threats.

A clear request is not a demand. The other person may refuse. Do not use this plan to pressure, corner, punish, or manipulate someone into agreement.

!

Continue to page 25 for MAN, possible responses, and review

DEAR MAN - MAN + Plan for Responses

Plan how you will stay with your objective while remaining flexible. Confidence can be quiet; negotiation stays inside your limits.

MINDFUL

M

Return to the objective. Write the short sentence you can repeat.

APPEAR CONFIDENT

A

Choose a steady voice, pace, or posture. Eye contact is optional.

NEGOTIATE

N

Offer alternatives you can genuinely accept; keep your non-negotiables.

4. A response or objection I may hear

5. My boundary or next safe step if it becomes unproductive

AFTER THE CONVERSATION - SELECT THE CLOSEST OUTCOME



ACCEPTED



PARTLY



DECLINED



PAUSED



NOT USED

6. What happened, what I learned, or what I want to adjust



Under threat, coercion, abuse, retaliation risk, or a serious power imbalance, prioritize protection, distance, documentation, or qualified support. No script can guarantee safety or agreement.

A refusal or pause is information, not proof that the skill failed

GIVE - Listening and Validation Practice

Use GIVE when the relationship is a central goal. Validation means showing that you understand the other person's experience; it does not require agreement, approval, or giving up a boundary.

1. Person or situation

2. Relationship goal

G

GENTLE

Be respectful and direct without attacks, threats, or contempt.

I

INTERESTED

Listen to understand. Ask rather than assume or mind-read.

V

VALIDATE

Acknowledge what makes sense in their experience without pretending to agree.

E

EASY MANNER

Use a low-pressure tone if it fits. Warmth, smiling, or humor are optional.

OPTIONAL INTENTIONS - CHECK ANY THAT FIT

☐

Listen before preparing my reply

☐

Ask one clarifying question

☐

Validate without pretending to agree

3. Boundary or concern I will not minimize

4. Afterward: what helped, and what will I adjust?

!

Gentle and validating do not mean staying, agreeing, smiling, minimizing harm, or tolerating disrespect. If the interaction is unsafe, leaving or seeking support may be the effective response.

GIVE supports relationship effectiveness; it does not replace boundaries

FAST - Self-Respect and Boundaries

Use FAST when the central goal is to act in line with your values and keep self-respect. FAST does not require hardness; it supports fairness, appropriate accountability, and clear limits.

1. Situation or pressure I am responding to

2. Value or limit I want to protect

F

FAIR

What is fair to me and to the other person in this situation?

A

NO UNNECESSARY APOLOGIES

Drop apologies for existing or asking. Keep repair when harm was done.

S

STICK TO VALUES

How will I stay aligned with my value if I feel pressured?

T

TRUTHFUL

Use specific facts. Avoid exaggeration, excuses, or manipulation.

3. My boundary or refusal in one clear sentence

4. If there is pushback, what will I repeat or do next?

5. Afterward: what preserved self-respect, and what needs repair or adjustment?



FAST protects self-respect; it does not control the other person's reaction. If risk or retaliation is credible, prioritize protection, distance, documentation, or appropriate support.

No unnecessary apologies means apologies and repair still matter when they are due

Distress Tolerance

These skills help you move through a difficult moment without making it worse, so you can choose what comes next.

A SMALL SEQUENCE FOR A BIG MOMENT

Follow the three steps in order. Repeat or return to any step as needed.

1

PAUSE

Interrupt the automatic reaction.



2

STABILIZE

Lower the intensity enough to think.



3

CHOOSE

Take the next safe, effective step.

THE GOAL IS NOT TO ERASE THE FEELING

The goal is to get through this moment without adding harm, then return to what needs attention.

Return to Chapter 6 in The DBT Book for Adults.

STOP - One Real Situation

Use STOP when an urge to react is moving faster than your judgment. Create a pause, notice what is happening, and choose the next safe, effective response.

S **Stop**
Pause before the next action.

T **Take a step back**
Breathe or create a little space.

O **Observe**
Notice facts, feelings, thoughts, and urges.

P **Proceed mindfully**
Choose what helps rather than adds harm.

1. What happened just before I needed a pause?

2. S - What did I stop or delay?

3. T - How did I create space?

4. O - What facts, feelings, thoughts, or urges did I notice?

5. P - What response did I choose?

6. What happened next, and what would I adjust next time?



Proceed mindfully may mean leaving, setting a boundary, protecting yourself, waiting, or asking for support. A pause is not an instruction to stay in an unsafe situation.

TIPP - Brief Guide and Precautions

TIPP offers short, body-based options when arousal is too high to think clearly. Use only what is safe; these are not required steps.

OPTIONS - NOT REQUIRED STEPS

T

TEMPERATURE

Try a cool washcloth or brief splash of cool water. Avoid extreme cold, and skip this option if cold is unsafe.

I

INTENSE EXERCISE

If vigorous movement is already safe for you, try a brief burst. Gentler choices include walking or seated movement.

P

PACED BREATHING

Slow the breath without straining, letting the exhale run slightly longer. Stop if you feel dizzy or short of breath.

P

PAIRED MUSCLE RELAXATION

Gently tense one area while breathing in, then release while breathing out. Skip painful or injured areas.

i

BEFORE YOU PRACTICE

Very cold water can quickly lower heart rate; intense exercise raises it. Ask a qualified health professional before either option if you have a heart or medical condition, a low resting heart rate, take medication affecting heart rate (including beta-blockers), have a cold allergy, or have an eating disorder. Stop for chest discomfort, faintness, severe dizziness, unusual shortness of breath, pain, or other concerning symptoms. A gentler option is valid.

This guide offers general information, not individualized medical advice.

Review this guide before completing the practice plan on page 31.

My TIPP Practice Plan

You do not need to use all four. Write only the versions that feel safe, then choose a first option and a backup. Leave any component blank if it is not right for you. Use the precautions on page 30, and treat stopping or switching as part of an effective plan.

1. When might I use this plan, and what early signal will I notice?

T

TEMPERATURE

My safe, non-extreme version

I

INTENSE EXERCISE

Movement already safe for my body

P

PACED BREATHING

A pace I can use without straining

P

PAIRED RELAXATION

Areas I can gently tense and release

2. My first safe option

☐ T
 ☐ I
 ☐ P breath
 ☐ P relax
 ☐ Not yet

3. My backup option

☐ T
 ☐ I
 ☐ P breath
 ☐ P relax
 ☐ Not yet

4. What tells me to stop or switch, and what will I do after TIPP?

i

Stop if discomfort increases or unusual symptoms appear. Choosing a different skill is part of an effective plan, not a failure to complete TIPP.

Use the precautions on page 30 each time you revisit this plan.

ACCEPTS - Personal Menu

ACCEPTS offers temporary ways to shift attention until intensity drops. It is a bridge, not a way to ignore danger or avoid a problem indefinitely. Create one safe, realistic option per letter. The goal is to buy time until you can return more effectively.

SKILL	TEMPORARY ATTENTION SHIFT	MY OPTION	WORKS
A Activities	An absorbing task that uses attention		☐
C Contributing	A small act of care or usefulness		☐
C Comparisons	Perspective without ranking or minimizing pain		☐
E Emotions	Invite a different emotion for a while		☐
P Pushing Away	Set it aside until a named return time		☐
T Thoughts	Give the mind a neutral challenge		☐
S Sensations	Use a safe, non-painful sensation		☐



For Pushing Away, decide when you will return. For Comparisons, do not invalidate your pain. For Sensations, avoid pain, injury, or extreme temperature.

My ACCEPTS Plan

Use this plan for a temporary bridge through one difficult moment. Choose one or two ACCEPTS options, set a return point, and decide what you will do next. Keep the plan specific enough to use.

1. What situation or trigger am I preparing for?

2. What early signal tells me I need a temporary shift?

3. OPTIONS I MAY USE - CHECK ANY THAT FIT

☐ Activities

☐ Contributing

☐ Comparisons

☐ Emotions

☐ Pushing Away

☐ Thoughts

☐ Sensations

4. My first option

5. How long will I use it?

6. When and how will I return to the issue?

7. What will I do next, or who will I contact, after intensity drops?



If protection, problem-solving, or support is needed now, do that first. ACCEPTS is temporary; it does not replace action that keeps you safe.

My IMPROVE Options

Personalize the seven components, then mark up to three priorities. Meaning and Personal Reflection are optional; no spiritual interpretation is required. These options do not solve the situation; they help make the current moment a little more workable. You may change them over time.

Situation or moment I want to make more tolerable

OPTION	MY PERSONAL VERSION	PRIORITY
I Imagery A mental image that offers a little space		☐
M Meaning Optional: a value or purpose that helps me continue		☐
P Personal Reflection Optional: a question, prayer, meditation, or Wise Mind reminder		☐
R Relaxation A safe way to soften tension		☐
O One Thing The one task or sensation I can return to		☐
V Vacation A brief, realistic pause - not abandoning responsibilities		☐
E Encouragement Words I can actually believe		☐



Use only the components that fit your values and situation. You may leave any row blank and change your priorities later.

Self-Soothe with the Senses - Personal Menu

Self-soothing uses comfortable sensory input to support the present moment. Choose only what is accessible and safe for you. No purchase is required, and any sense may be skipped. Preferences can change from one day or setting to another.

SENSE	MY COMFORTABLE, ACCESSIBLE OPTION	SUPPORTIVE
SIGHT What I like to see or soften visually		☐
SOUND What I like to hear - or when quiet helps		☐
SMELL A scent I already know is comfortable		☐
TASTE A safe, available taste or mindful sip		☐
TOUCH A texture, temperature, or pressure I welcome		☐

Sensitivities, allergies, foods, scents, temperatures, textures, or costs I want to avoid



Flames, scents, foods, temperature, and touch are optional. Skip anything that causes discomfort, risk, or unwanted expense.

My Self-Soothe Plan

Build a short plan with what you already have. The three options below are alternatives, not required steps. Use one, combine them only if helpful, and switch if discomfort increases.

1. CONTEXT

☐ Home

☐ Work

☐ Away

☐ Other

2. What situation or time am I preparing for?

3. BACKUP MENU - THESE ARE ALTERNATIVES, NOT STEPS

A

B

C

4. What can I prepare without buying anything?

5. What tells me to stop or switch?

6. After a few minutes, what will I do next or what did I notice?

DBT Pros and Cons - The Immediate Picture

Use this two-page worksheet for a problem urge: something you feel pulled to do that may make the situation worse. Compare acting on the urge with resisting it; this is not a general decision matrix.



If immediate danger or urgent protection is involved, pause the worksheet and seek safety or support first.

1. Problem urge or behavior I am considering

2. Situation or trigger

3. How strong is the urge right now?

0 - low

☐

0

☐

1

☐

2

☐

3

☐

4

☐

5

5 - very strong

NEXT FEW HOURS

IF I ACT ON THE URGE

IF I RESIST THE URGE

POSSIBLE
BENEFIT / PRO

POSSIBLE
COST / CON

Continue on page 38 to compare longer-term effects before choosing a first step.

DBT Pros and Cons - The Longer View

Now look beyond the immediate moment. Include possible effects on your body, relationships, values, responsibilities, and future options.

	AFTER THE MOMENT	IF I ACT ON THE URGE	IF I RESIST THE URGE
POSSIBLE BENEFIT / PRO			
POSSIBLE COST / CON			

4. What stands out when I compare all eight boxes?

5. My Wise Mind choice and first manageable step

6. How ready do I feel to take that step?

0 - not ready ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ 5 - ready

0 1 2 3 4 5



Your choice may be to wait, leave, protect yourself, reduce access to the urge, or ask for support. A low readiness rating is information, not failure.

Radical Acceptance - Naming Reality



Radical acceptance means acknowledging the reality that exists now. It does not mean approval, forgiveness, agreement, giving up, or staying in a harmful situation. Choose something safe enough to reflect on today.

1. How strongly am I fighting this reality right now?

0 - little resistance

☐

0

☐

1

☐

2

☐

3

☐

4

☐

5

5 - strong resistance

2. What reality am I practicing accepting? Write observable facts only.

3. What do I wish were different?

4. How do I notice resistance in thoughts, urges, or my body?

5. What is fighting reality costing me right now?

6. What pain, loss, unfairness, or need deserves to be acknowledged?

PAUSE BEFORE PAGE 40

If writing increases distress, stop, orient to the room, or return later with support.

Radical Acceptance - Make Room and Choose

Acceptance does not end action. It helps separate what is already real from what remains possible, including boundaries, protection, support, and problem-solving.

7. In this situation, what would acceptance mean - and what would it not mean?

8. A sentence I can use to acknowledge reality

9. What limit, boundary, or protective action is still available?

10. What can I influence now?

11. What support or next step would help?

12. How strongly am I fighting this reality now?

0 - little resistance ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 5 - strong resistance

NO CHANGE IS ALSO INFORMATION

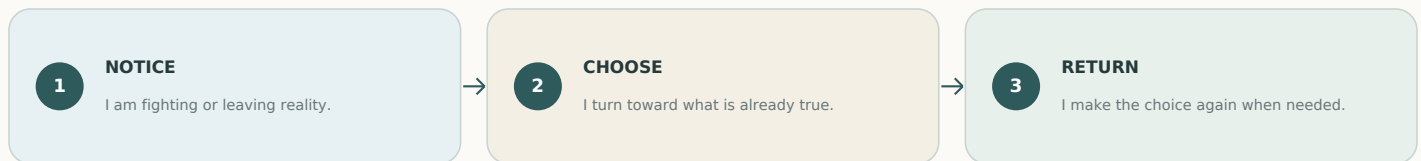
The rating is not a performance score; use it only to notice what needs support.



Acceptance never cancels protection, boundaries, accountability, medical care, or problem-solving.

Turning the Mind

Turning the Mind is the small, repeated decision to move from fighting reality toward acknowledging it. It is not a one-time achievement; you may need to choose again whenever pain returns. Notice that your mind has turned away, name the reality again, and take one supportive action. If a situation is unsafe, turning the mind can include acknowledging the danger and moving toward protection.



1. The reality I am choosing to acknowledge

2. How I know my mind has turned away

3. A phrase that helps me choose acceptance

4. A gesture, posture, or action that supports the choice

5. What acceptance allows me to do next

RETURN LOG - THE CHOICE CAN BE MADE AGAIN

A	
B	
C	

Use each line for: date/time - what pulled me away - what helped me return.

INTEGRATE + PERSONALIZE

Personal Integration

Bring the skills together around one pattern, one plan, or the few tools you want easiest to reach.

CHOOSE THE DEPTH THAT FITS

These pages are different entry points, not required steps. The behavior chain is optional; the response plan and toolkit can be used on their own.

THREE WAYS TO USE THIS PART

Choose one route now. Return to the others only if they are useful.

LOOK BACK

Optional Behavior Chain Analysis

Understand one repeated sequence and find a workable choice point.

PREPARE AHEAD

Coping + Trigger Response Plan

Notice early signals and decide what to try before the moment gets harder.

KEEP IT CLOSE

Personal DBT Toolkit

Select a few skills and record exactly where you can find them.



Use Personal Integration for ordinary, moderate situations. If safety, crisis, trauma activation, or daily functioning is in question, pause self-practice and seek appropriate support.

Personal Integration follows the four core DBT sections

Behavior Chain Analysis - Brief Guide

A behavior chain analysis helps you examine one episode in sequence, without reducing it to a flaw or label.

WHAT THIS PRACTICE DOES

Trace what was already affecting your capacity, the event that began the sequence, and the links that followed: body sensations, emotions, thoughts, urges, and actions. Then name the behavior and its immediate and later effects. The goal is not blame or a single cause. It is to find an earlier point where a DBT skill, practical change, repair, boundary, or support could create more choice.

Use one recent, moderate, clearly bounded event. If the review moves into traumatic material, self-harm, crisis, or rapidly rising distress, stop and seek appropriate support rather than finishing alone.



COMPLETE ALL 6 TO SEE THE SEQUENCE

1

CONTEXT + VULNERABILITIES

What was already affecting capacity?



2

PROMPTING EVENT

What observable event began this episode?



3

LINKS

Body, emotion, thought, urge, and action.



4

BEHAVIOR

What did I specifically do or not do?



5

CONSEQUENCES

What happened immediately and later?



6

CHOICE POINT

Where could one workable response enter?

NEUTRAL EXAMPLE

Short night + overloaded day -> urgent request at 4:45 -> shoulders tighten + 'I cannot do one more thing' -> avoid replying -> quick relief, then more deadline pressure -> send a brief reply that names capacity and asks for time.

A chain is a reconstruction, not a verdict. It can be incomplete and still reveal one useful place to respond differently.

Behavior Chain - Build the Sequence

Use one recent, moderate episode. Complete the numbered steps in order and describe what you noticed without judging yourself.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This event feels safe enough to review now:

☐

YES

☐

NOT SURE

☐

NO - PAUSE

1. One specific episode I want to understand

2. What was already affecting my capacity?

BODY / ENERGY

Sleep, hunger, pain, illness, tension

EMOTIONAL LOAD

Stress, grief, conflict, loneliness

SETTING / PRESSURE

Noise, timing, workload, power dynamics

3. Prompting event - observable facts only

FIRST LINK - BODY OR EMOTION

4

What appeared first in your body or emotional state?

NEXT LINK - THOUGHT OR MEANING

5

What did your mind say the event meant?

NEXT LINK - URGE OR ACTION

6

What did you want to do, or what did you do next?

If you selected Not sure or No, pause and return with appropriate support

Behavior Chain - Find a Choice Point

Continue the same episode. The goal is one realistic place for more choice, not a perfect reconstruction or a promise that the outcome will change.

BEHAVIOR

7

What did you specifically do or not do? Use observable words.

IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCES

8

What happened right away, including any relief or escape?

LATER CONSEQUENCES

9

What happened later for you, others, the task, or the relationship?

EARLIEST WORKABLE CHOICE POINT

10

Choose the place you could realistically notice or respond.



BEFORE EVENT



BODY / EMOTION



THOUGHT / URGE



BEFORE BEHAVIOR



AFTER: REPAIR

REPLACEMENT RESPONSE

11

Name the skill, practical change, and first small move you can try.

REPAIR, BOUNDARY, OR SUPPORT

12

What step is useful now, even if the earlier chain cannot be changed?

Understanding a chain does not excuse harm or require self-blame

My Coping and Trigger Response Plan

Build this plan for ordinary, moderate situations. It is a reminder for early signals and usable skills, not a crisis, medication, or treatment plan.

1. Situation or pattern this plan is for

STEADY ENOUGH TO PLAN?

☐

YES

☐

UNSURE

☐

PAUSE

2. Common triggers or conditions I want to notice earlier

3. My early signals - write what is observable for you

BODY

Tension, heat, fatigue, breath, restlessness

EMOTIONS

Emotion names, shifts, or rising intensity

THOUGHTS

Repeated phrases, predictions, or narrowing attention

URGES + ACTIONS

Avoiding, arguing, shutting down, rushing, freezing

4. Factors that make this harder

5. What usually makes the moment worse

WHAT DO I USUALLY NEED FIRST? - CHOOSE ONE STARTING NEED

RETURN TO PRESENT

☐

LOWER INTENSITY

☐

GAIN CLARITY

☐

COMMUNICATE

☐

PRACTICAL CHANGE

☐

GET SUPPORT

☐

If you selected Unsure or Pause, step away and use appropriate support

My Response Plan - Keep It Reachable

Choose options that are safe, available, and realistic. The first response can be small; the plan can change after you learn what actually helps.

6. My first two-minute step

MY STARTING LANE - CHOOSE ONE

☐ BODY FIRST	☐ FACTS FIRST	☐ SETTING FIRST
☐ WORDS / LIMIT	☐ ONE SMALL TASK	☐ SUPPORT FIRST

7. RETURN TO PRESENT

Mindfulness, grounding, or sensory cue

8. LOWER INTENSITY

A safe distress-tolerance option for my body

9. CHANGE THE SETTING

Reduce pressure, noise, demands, or task size

10. WORDS OR LIMIT

A sentence I can say, send, or repeat

11. SUPPORT ROUTE

WHEN?

☐

NOW

☐

IF NOT SETTLING

☐

LATER

12. STOP SIGN + NEXT SUPPORT STEP

What tells me self-practice is no longer enough, and what will I do next?

AFTER USING THE PLAN - SELECT THE CLOSEST OUTCOME

☐ SETTLED	☐ LOWER	☐ SAME	☐ HIGHER	☐ NOT USED
--------------------------------------	------------------------------------	-----------------------------------	-------------------------------------	---------------------------------------

My Personal DBT Toolkit

Choose a small set of skills you can actually find and use. This is a quick-access list, not a scorecard and not a promise to use every skill.

WHEN I NEED TO...	SKILL I CHOOSE	PAGE / WHERE
RETURN TO THE PRESENT Notice before reacting		
GET THROUGH A PEAK Avoid making the moment worse		
UNDERSTAND AN EMOTION Name signals and check facts		
COMMUNICATE OR SET A LIMIT Protect objective, relationship, or self-respect		
REDUCE VULNERABILITY Support steadier days and earlier noticing		

MY THREE EASIEST-TO-REACH SKILLS

Write skill names only. These can change.

1		2		3	
---	--	---	--	---	--

KEEP THE TOOLKIT ACCESSIBLE - CHECK ANY THAT FIT

☐ SAVE A BLANK COPY	☐ PRINT USEFUL PAGES	☐ KEEP IT EASY TO REACH
--	---	--

FIVE-MINUTE PLAN: When I notice...

My first small move will be...

--	--



If a skill does not fit, distress rises, or safety or daily functioning is in question, pause and use appropriate professional or crisis support.

REVIEW + CONTINUE

Review and Continue

Look back without grading yourself. Keep what helped, adjust what did not fit, and return only to the pages that still feel useful.

THIS IS REVIEW, NOT PERFORMANCE

There is no required pace and no ideal amount to record.

NO SCORE

Notice what happened without reducing the week to a grade.

NO STREAK

Return when reflection would help. A blank week remains valid.

NO PERFECT WEEK

Keep one useful detail, one respected limit, or one next attempt.

Weekly Skills Review

Review up to three moments from one week. One entry - or none - is valid; leave unused rows blank.

WEEK OF

1

MOMENT 1

Leave this row blank if you do not want to review another moment.

SITUATION	SKILL I TRIED	WHAT I NOTICED AFTERWARD
☐ DID NOT FIT THIS TIME	☐ HELPED A LITTLE	☐ HELPED ENOUGH

2

MOMENT 2

Leave this row blank if you do not want to review another moment.

SITUATION	SKILL I TRIED	WHAT I NOTICED AFTERWARD
☐ DID NOT FIT THIS TIME	☐ HELPED A LITTLE	☐ HELPED ENOUGH

3

MOMENT 3

Leave this row blank if you do not want to review another moment.

SITUATION	SKILL I TRIED	WHAT I NOTICED AFTERWARD
☐ DID NOT FIT THIS TIME	☐ HELPED A LITTLE	☐ HELPED ENOUGH

What Do I Want to Carry Forward?

Use only the prompts that add clarity. A difficult or blank week does not need to be repaired.

WHAT MADE PRACTICE HARDER?

Capacity, timing, environment, uncertainty, or something else.

WHAT DID I RESPECT?

A limit, need, pace, pause, safety concern, or choice not to continue.

ONE SKILL I MAY REPEAT

Choose one only if repeating it feels useful. You can also write 'none for now.'

A LIGHT PLAN

When, where, or what first small move could make access easier?

SUPPORT THAT MAY HELP

A person, service, environment, reminder, or practical resource.

Stop after one useful observation. This review does not create a new routine.



Closing Reflection

This is not a final test. Use it to notice what feels more available now and how you may return when support would be useful.

1

What do I notice earlier now - an emotion, body signal, urge, thought, or need?

2

Which skills have been useful, even once or only a little?

3

What limit, pace, or need did I respect while practicing?

4

If I return, which page or skill will be easiest to find?

5

What support is available if self-practice is not enough?

You can stop here, keep a blank copy, or return later. This workbook remains a resource - not an obligation.

References and Credits

The sources below guided terminology, sequence, and safety checks. The companion workbook itself was written and designed as an original practice resource.

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EDITORIAL REVIEW SET

During architecture development, user-supplied worksheets covering Wise Mind, Check the Facts, Opposite Action, Turning the Mind, Behavior Chain Analysis, DEAR MAN, GIVE, FAST, ACCEPTS, IMPROVE, TIPP, Pros and Cons, and related practices were reviewed for scope, sequence, density, and safety concerns. They were not used as page templates.

ORIGINALITY + USE NOTE

All instructions, prompts, examples, diagrams, tables, field labels, visual hierarchy, and page layouts in this companion workbook were newly written or designed for The DBT BOOK for Adults. No external worksheet text, proprietary example, illustration, or layout has been reproduced. Standard DBT skill names and widely recognized acronyms are identified for educational reference.

This independent companion resource was created for Avery Grace. It is not affiliated with or endorsed by Marsha M. Linehan, Guilford Press, Behavioral Tech Institute, Kaiser Permanente, or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

This workbook offers additional space for personal practice. It is not therapy, medical advice, crisis care, or a substitute for support from a qualified professional.