

DBT Distress Tolerance: ACCEPTS

Short-term distraction strategies for surviving a difficult moment without making it worse.

ACCEPTS

- Activities: engage in a task that occupies attention.
- Contributing: do something useful for another person or community without neglecting your own limits.
- Comparisons: notice perspective carefully without invalidating your pain.
- Emotions: use music, media, or activity to evoke a different emotion.
- Pushing away: temporarily set the problem aside when you cannot solve it now.
- Thoughts: focus on puzzles, counting, reading, or another cognitive task.
- Sensations: use strong but safe sensory input such as cool water, texture, scent, or movement.

When to use it

ACCEPTS is a short-term crisis survival strategy. After the intensity drops, return to the underlying problem, need, or decision.

Try this reflection

Which two ACCEPTS strategies fit you well enough to practice before you are in crisis?

Using this resource: For education and skill-building only; not diagnosis, medical advice, or crisis care. If you feel overwhelmed, pause and seek appropriate professional support. In the U.S., call or text 988 for crisis support; call 911 for an immediate emergency.