

DBT-A

(DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOR THERAPY - ACCELERATED)
SKILLS TRAINING GROUP

EMOTION REGULATION MODULE (ER)

Emotion Regulation Skills Help You:

- ♥ Understand the emotions you experience by:
 - Learning to identify emotions as they are experienced: using mindfulness to observe and describe your emotions nonjudgmentally
 - Learning about the functions emotions serve: the purposes they serve or needs they fulfill
- ♥ Reduce emotional vulnerability (and give you more control) by
 - Decreasing your vulnerability to negative emotions
 - Increasing positive emotions
- ♥ Decrease emotional suffering by
 - Learning how to use your mindfulness skills to let go of painful emotions, instead of fighting them or walling them off
 - Changing painful emotions (at times) through opposite action
- ♥ In addition, emotion regulation skills help you to:
 - Quiet your body—high Emotion Mind leads to high stress (racing heart, fast breathing, muscle tension, etc).
 - Quiet your behavior—intense emotions lead to intense choices (often ones we regret).
 - Find Wise Mind—Emotion Mind can block out intuitive, creative, flexible, and value-based thinking.
 - Be more effective in meeting your goals—Emotion Mind leads us away from our goals and off on distracting emotional tangents.
 - Improve self-respect—making calm choices leads to better feelings about yourself.

What do you want to learn in this module??????

HEALTHY PERSPECTIVES ON EMOTIONS

- ♥ Our bodies come equipped with what we need to survive and emotions are part of the package!
- ♥ Emotions are not good or bad, right or wrong. Emotions just ARE. They exist. It is not helpful to judge your emotions.
- ♥ There is a difference between having an emotion and acting on the emotion.
- ♥ Emotions don't last forever. No matter what you're feeling, eventually, it will lift and another emotion will take its place.
- ♥ When a strong emotion comes, you do not have to act on your feeling. All you need to do is recognize the emotion and feel it.
- ♥ Emotions are not facts. When emotions are very powerful, they just *feel* like the truth.
- ♥ You cannot get rid of emotions because they serve important survival functions. Be willing to radically accept your emotions as they arise.
- ♥ Other healthy perspectives:

ABOUT EMOTIONS

1. There are 2 KINDS OF EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES:
 - a. Reactions to events in one's environment
 - b. Reactions to one's own thoughts, actions, and feelings
2. EMOTIONS CAN BE USEFUL OR DESTRUCTIVE, or (more rarely) neutral:
 - a. **When have emotions been destructive for you?**
 - b. **When have emotions been useful?**
 - c. **What emotions give you the most trouble?**
 - d. **Which ones would you like to work on most?**
3. The GOAL OF EMOTION REGULATION TRAINING is to reduce suffering; NOT to get rid of emotions or force emotions on people.
4. THEORY:
 - a. Emotions are particular types of patterned reactions to events. They are complex and involve lots of components.
 - b. Emotions come and go. They are like waves in the sea. Most emotions only last from seconds to minutes.
 - c. Emotions are self-perpetuating. Once an emotion starts, it keeps restarting itself. When an emotion seems to stay around, it is called a "mood."
 - d. There are 8 primary emotions: anger, sorrow, joy, fear, disgust, guilt/shame, interest, surprise. You are born with the potential or biological readiness for experiencing these emotions; you might say they are "hardwired" into your brain. This hardwiring causes your body to react in certain ways and for you to have certain urges when emotions arise.
 - e. Other emotions are usually some combination of the 8 basic emotions. Sometimes we have a secondary emotion which is an *emotional reaction to an emotion*. These are NOT hardwired into our bodies and brains, but are learned from our environment (e.g. family, culture, religion, etc.). Some examples are:
 - i. Feeling shame when you get angry
 - ii. Feeling angry when you have a shame response (e.g. hurt feelings)
 - iii. Feeling fear when you get angry (maybe you've been punished for being angry)
 - iv. Feeling disgusted when you feel depressed
 - v. Feeling scared when you feel joy or love

- f. There are many more. When you have a secondary emotion, the key is to figure out what the primary emotion is (i.e. the feeling at the root of your reaction), so that you can react effectively.

5. OUR UNIQUE RESPONSES TO EMOTIONS

- a. Research shows us that the 8 primary emotions cause a common reaction in all human beings no matter where they live in the world. In some ways, all human beings are the same in the way they feel and show these basic emotions.
- b. However, every person is also unique. For example, when you feel anger, you may notice tension in part of your body. Where you feel the most tension and exactly how you express that tension is unique to you. Some people feel anger in their chest, others in their stomach.
- c. Urges to **DO SOMETHING** are a natural part of having any emotion. For instance, if you are bored, you may restlessly seek out something to interest you.
- d. Your action urges may or may not be the same as someone else's action urges. For example, one person may want to avoid people when they feel shame; another may have the urge to attack. Think about your own action urges. **What do you have the (physical) urge to do when you feel:**

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| i. Fear - | v. Guilt/Shame - |
| ii. Sadness - | vi. Interest - |
| iii. Joy/Happiness - | vii. Surprise - |
| iv. Disgust - | viii. Anger - |

Examples: Fight? (Attack, Strike Out at Others/Yourself/Inanimate Object)
Flight? (Run, Hide, Avoid) Freeze? (Feel paralyzed)
Approach? Share? Listen? Care for?

FUNCTION OF EMOTIONS

What are they good for? What do they do for us?

EMOTIONS HAVE 3 JOBS (THE 3-8's)

COMMUNICATE

- Emotions are communicated most powerfully by our faces, our voice tone and volume, our posture, and our gestures. Often, other people can tell what we are feeling, even when we're trying to hide it.
- Non-verbal communication of this type is very rapid. For example, if we need to communicate alarm, we can do it with our faces and don't have to provide a lengthy explanation to someone.
- Whether we intend it or not, the communication of emotions influences others.

MOTIVATE

- Emotions motivate our behavior. Action urges connected to specific emotions are often "hardwired." Emotions prepare us for action. They tell us to **ACT NOW!!** And **STAY FOCUSED!** They give us motivation to change things.
- Emotions motivate us to act in important situations because we don't always have to think everything through (e.g. you don't want to have to think for a long time about running away from a mean dog).
- Strong emotions help us overcome obstacles—in our mind and in our environment (e.g. feeling fear can help a parent lift a car off their child; feeling anger can help someone express an opinion to an authority figure).

SELF-VALIDATE

- Emotions can give us information about a situation. This is what is meant by the saying "Pay attention to your gut (instinct)." Emotions can be signals or alarms that something is happening; they tell you to pay attention.
- However, when this is carried to an extreme, emotions are treated as facts (e.g. "If I *feel* incompetent, then I am...if I'm afraid, it is threatening...I have hurt feelings, so the other person must not care about me...I love him so he must be okay"). People use their emotions to tell themselves that what they believe is correct.
- Through trial and error people learn how to tell the difference.

ER PRACTICE SHEET # 2

EMOTION DIARY

Practice observing and describing your emotions, then record them (either the strongest emotion of the day, the longest-lasting one, or the one that was the most painful or gave you the most trouble). Note the event (may be internal or external) and the function(s) of the emotion:

COMMUNICATE, MOTIVATE, AND/OR SELF-VALIDATE

	Event	Function of Emotion
Day _____		
Emotion _____		
<hr/>		
Day _____		
Emotion _____		
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Day _____		
Emotion _____		
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Day _____		
Emotion _____		
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Day _____		
Emotion _____		
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Day _____		
Emotion _____		
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"The Way Emotions Work" Chart goes here

The Way Emotions Work

Emotions are complex. They involve a whole-body response.

Understanding how emotions work will help you develop an appreciation for them.

Observing and describing them non-judgmentally as they occur, gives you the opportunity to regulate and/or change them. It gives YOU the power!

- 1) **First, there is a PROMPTING EVENT** for an emotion. Lots of things can make an emotion start:
 - Things **outside** of you, such as other people's words or actions, the weather, the anniversary of an event, etc.
 - Things **inside** of you, such as your own thoughts, behaviors, neurochemical brain changes, feeling hungry or tired, pain or other physical reactions, etc.
 - One emotion can even trigger a new emotion—like feeling guilty because you feel angry, or feeling depressed because you are experiencing sadness, etc.

- 2) **Then you have an INTERPRETATION** of the above event; what it means to you; your beliefs and assumptions about the event. Different interpretations can set off different emotions.

- 3) **Next you experience PHYSICAL RESPONSES—Chemical changes lead to body changes and an urge to act.** Your brain and neurotransmitters try to regulate your emotional experience. Your facial muscles tense or relax; breathing, heart rate, and skin temperature changes. You have action urge. The urge to act on your feelings is part of most emotions. However, you have a choice as to whether you act on the urge or not.

- 4) **BEHAVIORAL EXPRESSIONS (facial expression, body language, action)** result from emotions *and* can influence your emotions (e.g. frowning, smiling, slouching, making eye-contact; expressing your emotion with words and tone of voice; acting on your emotion).

- 5) **AFTER-EFFECTS:** “Emotions love themselves.” - You might notice that once you are in a certain mood, you keep doing and thinking things that keep that mood going. Intense emotions can have a powerful after-effect on your thoughts, actions, memory, ability to think, and physical function.

LETTING GO OF EMOTIONAL SUFFERING: MINDFULNESS OF YOUR CURRENT EMOTION

OBSERVE and DESCRIBE YOUR EMOTION

- Note its presence; step back; get unstuck from the emotion
- Just be a witness to your emotion; watch it curiously
- Notice other feelings that you have at the same time you feel the strong emotion. Describe your emotion by saying "I have the feeling of _____," rather than, "I am_____."

PARTICIPATE and STAY IN THE MOMENT WITH YOUR EMOTION

- Experience your emotion as a wave, coming and going
- Try not to block, suppress, or push away your emotion
- Don't cling to your emotion or try to keep it around
- Don't try to increase or amplify your emotion

DON'T JUDGE YOUR EMOTION

- Practice accepting/respecting/loving your emotion
- Practice willingness with your emotion

BE EFFECTIVE: DO WHAT WORKS

- Act from Wise Mind. Remember, you are not your emotion!
- Do not automatically act on emotion urge
- Remember when you have felt differently

ER PRACTICE SHEET # 3

OBSERVING AND DESCRIBING EMOTIONS

The ability to regulate your emotions depends on solid mindfulness skills.

Practice, practice, practice identifying and labeling (observing and describing):

1) The prompting event (inside or outside); 2) The interpretation of the event (Thoughts/Images/Memories); 3) The physical sensations of the emotions and 4) the urge to act (Body/Biology/Physical); 5 & 6) The behaviors expressing the emotion; 7) The primary emotion(s); 8) Actions you took (Behavior/Action); and 9) The after-effects of the emotion.

1. What was/is the prompting event? What was going on when you began to have this feeling? Think about reactions to events in your environment or reactions to your own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors when answering this question.

2. What is your interpretation of the prompting event described above?
Ask: "What does it mean to me?"

3. What physical sensations do you notice in your body with this emotion? Notice and comment on your breath, heart rate, face, stomach, chest, legs, throat, neck, head, muscles, etc.

4. What is your action urge with this emotion? What do you feel like **DOING?** (Remember to stick with emotion mind here)

5. What is your body language with this emotion (posture, facial expression, gestures)? What would someone think was going on if they walked past and saw you while you were experiencing the emotion?

6. How did you express your emotion verbally? What tone of voice did you use? _____

7. What is the name of your main emotion?

8. What action did you take?

- a. Did you act on your urge? If so, what was the outcome?
- b. If not, what behavior did you use instead?
- c. What was/is the outcome of skillful behavior?

9. Were there any after-effects of the emotion? What were they?

**TRY THIS USING A 5-PART MODEL DIAGRAM.
IT CAN BE A HELPFUL SHORTCUT!**

REDUCING VULNERABILITY TO PAINFUL EMOTIONS

How to Stay Out of Emotion Mind

A way to remember these skills is to remember the term

"PLEASE MASTER"

Treat Physical Illness

Take care of your body. See a doctor when necessary. Take prescribed medications.

Balance Eating

Don't eat too much or too little. Stay away from foods that impact you in a negative way.

Avoid Mood-Altering
Drugs

Stay *OFF* nonprescribed drugs, including alcohol. Stay *ON* prescribed medications.

Balance Sleep

Try to get the amount of sleep that helps you feel good. Keep to a sleep program if you are having difficulty sleeping.

Get Exercise

Do some sort of exercise every day; try to build up to 20 minutes of vigorous exercise.

Build Mastery

Try to do one thing a day to make yourself feel competent and in control.

Suggestions for Good Sleep

1. **Sleep only as much as you need** to feel refreshed during the following day. Restricting your time in bed helps to deepen your sleep. Excessively long times in bed lead to fragmented and shallow sleep. Get up at your regular time the next day, no matter how little you slept.
2. **Get up at the same time each day, 7 days a week.** A regular wake time in the morning leads to regular times of sleep onset, and helps to set your "biological clock".
3. **Exercise regularly.** Schedule exercise times so that they do not occur within three hours of when you intend to go to bed. Exercise makes it easier to get to sleep and to sleep deeply.
4. **Make sure your bedroom is comfortable: at a good temperature and free from light and noise.**
5. **Eat regular meals and do not go to bed hungry.** A light snack at bedtime (especially carbohydrates) may help sleep, but avoid greasy or "heavy" foods.
6. **Avoid excessive liquids in the evening.**
7. **Cut down on all caffeine products.** Caffeinated beverages and foods (coffee, tea, cola, chocolate) can cause difficulty falling asleep, awakenings during the night, and shallow sleep. Even caffeine early in the day can disrupt nighttime sleep.
8. **Avoid alcohol, especially in the evening.**
9. **Smoking may disturb sleep. Nicotine is a stimulant.** Try not to smoke during the night when you have trouble falling asleep.
10. **Don't take your problems to bed.** Plan some time earlier in the evening for working on your problems or planning the next day's activities. Worrying may interfere with initiating sleep and produce shallow sleep.
11. **Train yourself to use the bedroom only for sleeping.** This will help condition your brain to see bed as the place for sleeping. No not read, watch TV, or eat in bed.
12. **Do not TRY to fall asleep.** This only makes the problem worse. Instead, turn on the light, leave the bedroom, and do something different like reading a book. Don't engage in stimulating activity. Return to bed only when you are sleepy.
13. **Put the clock under the bed or turn it so that you can't see it.** Clock watching may lead to frustration, anger, and worry, which interfere with sleep.
14. **Avoid naps.** Staying awake during the day helps you to fall asleep at night.

STEPS FOR INCREASING PLEASANT EMOTIONS

Build Positive Experiences

Short Term: Do pleasant things that are possible NOW.

- ❖ Make your own list of joyful experiences that you can have every day (get ideas from the PLEASANT EVENTS LIST). Do at least one or two of these experiences MINDFULLY each day and record on your diary card.

Long Term: Make changes in your life so that positive events will occur more often. Build a "life worth living."

- ❖ **WORK TOWARD GOALS: ACCUMULATE POSITIVES.**

Make a list of positive events you want.

List small steps you can take that will move you toward your goals.

Take the first step.

- ❖ **ATTEND TO RELATIONSHIPS**

Repair old relationships.

Reach out for new relationships.

Work on current relationships.

- ❖ **AVOID AVOIDING.** Avoid giving up.

Be Mindful of Positive Experiences

- ❖ **FOCUS** attention on positive events that happen (even very small ones)!
- ❖ **REFOCUS** when your mind wanders to future worries, past regrets, current distractions and other thoughts while you **PARTICIPATE** mindfully in the joyful experience.
- ❖ Make a list of things that interrupt enjoyment for you and be prepared to **TURN** the **MIND** when these things appear.

Be Unmindful of Worries

DISTRACT from:

- ❖ Thinking about when the positive experience **WILL END**.
- ❖ Thinking about whether you deserve this positive experience.
- ❖ Thinking about how much more might be **EXPECTED** of you now.

PLEASANT EVENTS LIST

Circle the numbers of the activities below that you consider enjoyable, relaxing, or fun. Add your own personal preferences on the following page. Practice at least one or two of these mindfully each day.

1. Meditating.
2. Making plans for the future.
3. Finishing something.
4. Talking with a friend.
5. Browsing through a catalogue.
6. Watching TV.
7. Sitting/Lying in the sun.
8. Listening to others.
9. Drawing.
10. Playing an instrument.
11. Looking outside.
12. People watching.
13. Watching a movie.
14. Meeting a friend.
15. Repairing something.
16. Memory of the words of loving people.
17. Wearing nice clothes.
18. Taking care of plants.
19. Going to a party.
20. Thinking about buying things.
21. Praying.
22. Thinking "I'm a good person."
23. Writing a letter.
24. Cooking.
25. Sleeping.
26. Fixing your hair and makeup.
27. Daydreaming.
28. Making a list of tasks/goals.
29. Watching sports.
30. Thinking about pleasant events.
31. Writing in a diary.
32. Reading a letter.
33. Discussing books.
34. Having lunch with a friend.
35. Solving riddles/puzzles.
36. Looking at/showing photos.
37. Learning to play a new card game.
38. Reflecting on how I've improved.
39. Thinking I can cope.
40. Taking a warm bath.
41. Paying bills.
42. Playing a game.
43. Remembering good times.
44. Relaxing.
45. Reading a book.
46. Laughing out loud.
47. Painting.
48. Singing.
49. Remembering beautiful scenery.
50. Watching the birds.
51. Eating.
52. Gardening.
53. Thinking about retirement.
54. Doodling.
55. Exercising.
56. Having a quiet evening.
57. Arranging flowers.
58. Drinking a favorite beverage.
59. Going on a picnic.
60. Losing weight.
61. A day with nothing to do.
62. Buying clothes.
63. Going to the beauty parlor.
64. Making a gift for someone.
65. Having your picture taken.
66. Listening to music.
67. Taking a walk.
68. Playing sports.
69. Acting.
70. Dancing.
71. Cleaning.
72. Being alone.
73. Playing cards.
74. Having a political discussion.
75. Shooting Pool.
76. Learning to play a new game.
77. Talking on the phone.
78. Helping a friend cope.

PLEASANT EVENTS LIST (CONT.)

Add your own joyful experiences here



Insert Practice Sheet #4

ER 20

Adapted from the work of Marsha Linehan
Pati Anderson, MC, LPC, PLLC 2/07

OPPOSITE ACTION

Changing Emotions by Acting Opposite to the Current Emotion

FEAR

- ★ Do what you are afraid of doing...OVER AND OVER AND OVER
- ★ APPROACH events, places, tasks, activities, people you are afraid of
- ★ Do things to give yourself a sense of CONTROL and MASTERY
- ★ When overwhelmed, make a list of small steps or tasks you can do, then do the first thing on the list

GUILT OR SHAME

When Guilt or Shame is Justified (Emotion fits your wise mind values)

- ★ Repair the transgression
 - Say you're sorry. APOLOGIZE
 - MAKE THINGS BETTER; do something nice for person you offended (or for someone else if that is not possible)
 - COMMIT to avoiding that mistake in the future
 - ACCEPT the consequences gracefully
 - Then LET IT GO

When Guilt or Shame is Unjustified (Emotion does not fit your wise mind values)

- ★ Do what makes you feel guilty or ashamed OVER AND OVER AND OVER
- ★ APPROACH, don't avoid

SADNESS OR DEPRESSION

- ★ Get ACTIVE. APPROACH, don't avoid
- ★ Do things that make you feel COMPETENT AND SELF-CONFIDENT

ANGER

- ★ Gently AVOID person you are angry with rather than attacking. (Avoid thinking about him or her rather than ruminating)
- ★ Do something NICE rather than mean or attacking
- ★ Imagine SYMPATHY AND EMPATHY for other person rather than blame

ER PRACTICE SHEET # 5

Steps to Opposite Action

1. Choose an emotion that you want to change or reduce. What is the emotion?
2. What is the action urge of the emotion?
3. Do you want to reduce this emotion?
4. If yes, then what is the opposite action?
5. Do the opposite action! Remember to **DO IT ALL THE WAY**. What are the results? What do you notice about your thoughts, behaviors, emotions, physical reactions, and impact on others?

	BEFORE	AFTER
Thoughts?		
Behaviors?		
Emotions?		
Physical Reactions?		
Impact on others?		

MYTHS WE LIVE BY

Interpretations

"MYTHS" are stories that we come to believe, simply because they have been a part of our lives or our thinking for so long. We often don't ever question them. We just assume that they are real. Our thoughts can be like myths, "stories" that are so deep a part of how we live, that we no longer notice them. Myth thoughts may not be something that we would admit to believing if someone asked us about them, but we believe them in our emotion mind, and in our hearts, anyway.

These myths of thinking may come from our families, friends, or culture; we have myths about almost everything in our lives. Most people have myths about emotions that cause them to react in ways that are not always helpful. The key is to know what your own myths are, what usually "triggers" them in your mind, and how you can keep them from controlling your behavior when that behavior would hurt you.

- ★ Each person's myths are unique; however, there are some fairly common myths. Some myths about emotions are listed on the following page. Circle the number of the myths that feel true to you and write down any other myths that come to mind. (You might believe them in reasonable mind, emotion mind, or both. They might even FEEL like wise mind.)
- ★ Once you've identified your own myths, Think: "How does believing this get in the way of my being able to have emotions, feel emotions, or regulate emotions?"
- ★ Then, see if you can come up with Strength-Building Self-Statements that can help you fight those myths. Write this statement on the line below the myth. It might be helpful to put them on note cards and carry them with you to use when you find that a myth has arisen that is charging up emotion mind and getting in the way of you being interpersonally effective. (See the page 13 for examples of strength-building self-statements.)

PRACTICE SHEET # 6

MYTHS ABOUT MY EMOTIONS

1. There is a right way to feel in every situation.

2. Letting others know that I am feeling bad is a weakness.

3. Uncomfortable feelings are bad and destructive.

4. Being emotional means being out of control.

5. All painful emotions are a result of a bad attitude.

6. If others don't approve of how I am feeling, I obviously shouldn't feel the way I do.

7. Other people are the best judge of how I am feeling.

8. Painful emotions are not really important and should be ignored.

Can you think of any other myths?

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

STRENGTH BUILDING SELF-STATEMENTS

Once you've identified your own common myths, these statements can help you challenge them. It might be helpful to put them on note cards and carry them with you to use when you find that a myth has arisen and is charging up emotion mind.

1. What's the worst that can happen? And based on my **experience**, and **NOT** on my emotions, how likely is that to happen?
2. Feelings are sometimes painful, but are time-limited.
3. It will get easier each time I practice.
4. My success is measured by taking skillful action, not by whether I was anxious when I did it.
5. I'm not going to let a lapse get in my way. I'm going to continue making progress toward my goal.
6. **Feeling** I can't do it is **NOT** the same as **not** being able to do it. Stick to the plan.
7. Good job—I'm staying in the situation, even though it's hard.
8. I'm going to make it.
9. It's a sign of strength to ask for help in an effective way.
10. Knowing when to ask for coaching is a skill in itself.
11. I am a unique person and I have unique reactions. Only I can determine how I should feel in any given situation.
12. My feelings are not right or wrong, they just simply **ARE**.
13. A FEELING OF CERTAINTY IS NOT THE SAME AS THE TRUTH.
14. My painful emotions happen for a reason and are an important source of information and direction for me.
15. Urges are a natural part of emotions and of being human. Having an urge (even a strong urge) does not mean that I have to **DO** anything at all.

Can you think of other Strength Building Self-Statements?

16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____