

Managing My Emotions

My Progress

- What steps have you taken toward your goals this week?
- How were you able to achieve the steps?
- If not, what got in your way? How will you overcome that barrier?

Let's Discuss

- How often do you act on intense emotions that you later regret?
- How have overwhelming emotions affected your life and relationships?
- What have you done in the past when you felt overwhelming emotions?
- What would you like to change about how you manage your emotions?



Tasha's Story

“For most of my life, I’ve been told I come off as ‘mean and unfriendly’ because of my temper. When I was a kid, I used to feel angry at my parents for relying on me to help raise my younger siblings, and would yell at them. Now I am often angry at my partner — little things lead to long shouting matches. When I feel angry at someone, I have a hard time holding it in. Learning distress tolerance skills, like TIPP, has given me tools to use when I feel really upset, which means I don’t have as many arguments in my work or personal relationships.”

— Tasha, an adult with Borderline Personality Disorder

Good to Know

- ➔ **Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)** is an evidence-based approach based on the idea that we can learn to create a “life worth living” by learning and practicing skills that help us better manage our emotions, thoughts and behaviors.
- ➔ DBT was developed for people who **experience their emotions intensely**, but can be helpful for many.
- ➔ “Dialectics” is at the core of DBT, which means **two things that seem to be opposite can both be true at the same time**. For example, we can feel both fear and courage at the same time.
- ➔ Distress tolerance is one of the four categories of skills in DBT, and is focused on **helping us learn to survive and tolerate extreme emotions** when we experience challenging situations.



Short Meeting Guide Video Tutorial

My Experiences

Once Tasha understood how frequently she experienced intense emotions like anger, and how anger often negatively affected her relationships, she was open to learning new strategies. Your turn: Use the space below to reflect on how intense emotions show up in your life.

Describe a recent situation when you acted on intense feelings.	Ex: When I thought my friend was talking about me behind my back, I got really upset and yelled at them.
How has your expression of your emotions affected your relationships?	Ex: My sister says I am 'too emotional' and doesn't want to spend time with me.
How have you coped with intense emotions in the past?	Ex: Talk to a friend, yell, take deep breaths, withdraw, exercise, break things, take a pause, listen to music...

Tasha found that learning the distress tolerance skill called TIPP gave her more tools in her toolbox to use when she felt upset and overwhelmed.

Let's Practice: TIPP Distress Tolerance Skill

The key to remembering to use a distress tolerance skill when we experience an intense emotion is to learn and practice the skill ahead of time. A helpful distress tolerance skill in DBT called TIPP (T-Temperature, I-Intense exercise, P-Paced breathing and P-Progressive muscle relaxation) is a set of four strategies to reduce extreme emotion quickly. Use the steps below to learn and practice this skill:

- 1. Think of some warning signs** you experience prior to your intense emotion. How will you recognize that you need to practice this distress tolerance skill? Talk about these with your worker about your ideas.
- 2. Learn about TIPP!**
 - a. Tip the temperature** (put your face in a bowl or sink of cold water — ice packs work too — and hold your breath for 30 seconds).
 - b. Intense physical activity** for a short time will calm down your body by using some of your body's energy that is currently pent-up (do jumping jacks for 1 minute, or shake your limbs to help expend some energy. Shaking your arms and/or legs can also be done in a seated position).
 - c. Paced breathing** involves breathing slowly with longer exhales than inhales (for example, 4 second inhales, 6 second exhales).
 - d. Paired muscle relaxation** involves tensing certain muscle groups on the inhale of the breath, and relax-

ing those muscles on the exhale (breathe in and tense all the muscles in your body. Hold your breath for 5 seconds. Then release your breath, and all the muscles in your body).

- 3. Watch your worker demonstrate** these skills — especially paced breathing and paired muscle relaxation, then try them together.
- 4. Modify the TIPP skill to suit your needs.** For example, you can lift a weighted object over your head several times while in the seated position to raise your heartrate.
- 5. Talk with your worker about which strategies of TIPP you would like to try,** and discuss concrete strategies you can see applying this in your life (is there a stairway in your apartment building you could climb? Do you have a weighted object handy? A bowl you have at home big enough to fill with ice water? A video online you like to guide you in paired muscle relaxation?).

Next Steps

- What did you find helpful about our meeting today?
- What would you like to do for your next step with this information?
- Practice one of these strategies of TIPP in my daily life.
- I'd like to do something else _____.