

Distress Tolerance



**Supporting Children and Young
People Emotionally to Diffuse
Crisis Situations**

Presented by: Craig Northrop & Michelle Tendy



Distress Tolerance skills are...



- Putting up with, rather than changing or getting rid of, an unwanted situation.
- Ways of “just getting through” stressful situations without making anything worse
- Means to bear pain skillfully

Distress Tolerance



Crisis Survival Skills

Wise Mind ACCEPTS

Self-Soothe

IMPROVE the Moment

TIPP

Reality Acceptance Skills

Radical Acceptance

Turning the Mind

Willingness & Willfulness

Distract with Wise Mind ACCEPTS



- **Activities**
 - Do something
- **Contributing**
 - Contribute to someone
- **Comparisons**
 - Compare yourself to those less fortunate or to a time when you were feeling worse
- **Emotions**
 - Create different emotions
- **Pushing Away**
 - Push the painful situation out of your mind temporarily
- **Thoughts**
 - Replace your thoughts.
- **Sensations**
 - Intensify other sensations



Self-Soothe with Six Senses



Vision - Go to your favorite place and take in all the sights; look at a photo album; zone out to a poster/picture; notice colors in a sunset; people watch.

Hearing - Listen to your favorite music and play it over and over again; pay attention to sounds in nature (birds, rain, thunder, traffic, sounds around you); play an instrument or sing; listen to a sound machine.

Smell - Put on your favorite lotion; use a scented aftershave or body wash; make cookies or popcorn; smell freshly brewed coffee; use essential oils; go to the park and “smell the roses.”

Self-Soothe with Six Senses



Taste - Eat some of your favorite foods; drink your favorite non alcoholic beverage; have your favorite flavor of ice cream; really notice the food you eat; eat one thing mindfully; don't overdo it!

Touch - Take a bath or shower; pet your dog or cat; get a massage; brush your hair; hug or be hugged; put a cold cloth on your head; change into your most comfortable clothes.

Movement - Rock yourself gently; stretch; go for a run; do yoga; exercise; dance!

IMPROVE the Moment



- **Imagery-** visualize a relaxing, comforting, or confidence-boosting scene in your mind
- **Meaning-** find or create some purpose, meaning, or value in the pain. Make lemonade out of lemons.
- **Prayer-** open your heart to a supreme being, greater wisdom, or your own Wise Mind
- **Relaxation-** tense & relax each large muscle group, stretch, take a bath, or get a massage
- **One thing in the moment-** focus on what you are doing right now
- **Vacation-** give yourself a short break
- **Encouragement-** cheerlead yourself



**TIPP your body
chemistry
with:**

Temperature

Intense exercise

Paced breathing

Progressive
muscle
relaxation

**TIPP SKILLS FOR MANAGING
INTENSE EMOTIONS**

Five Solutions to a Problem



1. Figure out how to solve the problem.
2. Change how you feel about the problem.
3. Accept it.
4. Stay miserable (no skill use)
5. Make things worse (act on impulsive urges)



Why Bother Accepting Reality?



- Rejecting reality does not change reality
- Changing reality requires first accepting reality
- Fighting reality will only increase your suffering and keep you stuck in painful emotions (unhappiness, sadness, anger, bitterness, shame)

Accepting reality helps...

- Reduce suffering
- Cope with problems effectively
- Figure out what to do next

Radical Acceptance



- Accepting the things you cannot change
- RADICAL=complete & total accepting in mind, heart, body
- ACCEPTANCE=seeing reality for what it is, even if you don't like it
- To acknowledge, recognize, endure, not give up or give in
- When you stop fighting reality, throwing tantrums

It is
what
it is.

Acceptance is NOT...

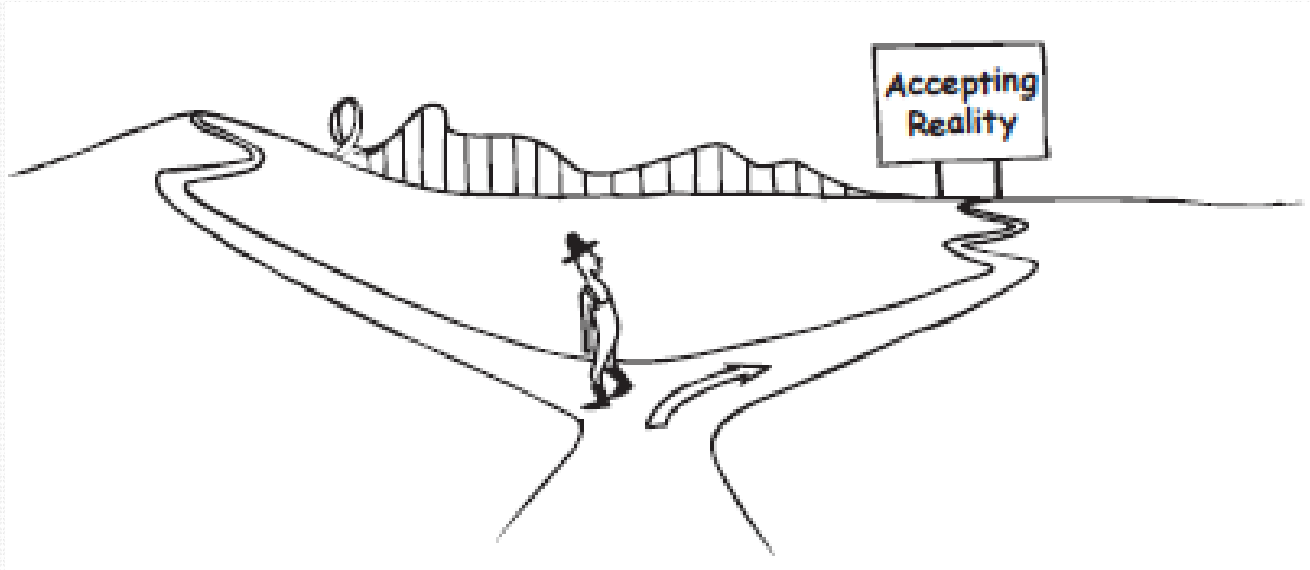


- Agreeing with what happened
- Liking what happened
- Forgiving others for hurting you
- Giving up or “waving the white flag”

Turning the Mind



- **ACCEPTANCE** is a choice. It is like coming to a “fork in the road.” You may have to turn your mind toward the **ACCEPTANCE** road and away from the **REJECTING Reality Road**.

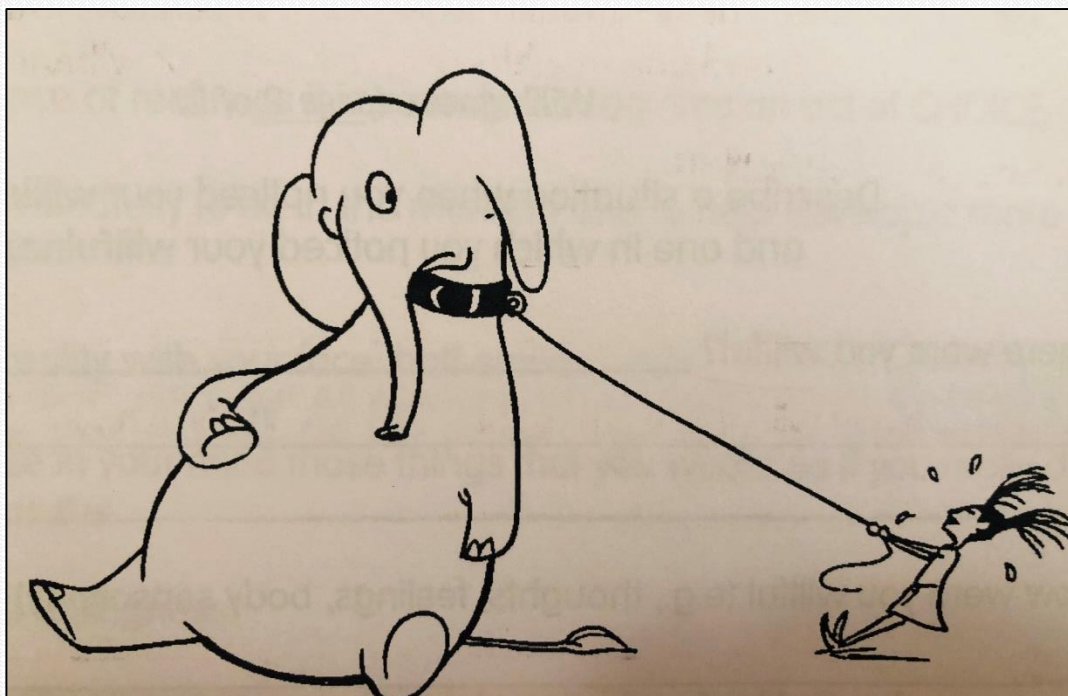


Turning the Mind



- Notice when you are fighting the way things are:
“This isn’t fair”, “Why me?”
- Make an inner commitment to ACCEPT
- You may have to “turn your mind” over & over
- Beliefs & Emotions may get in the way

Willfulness



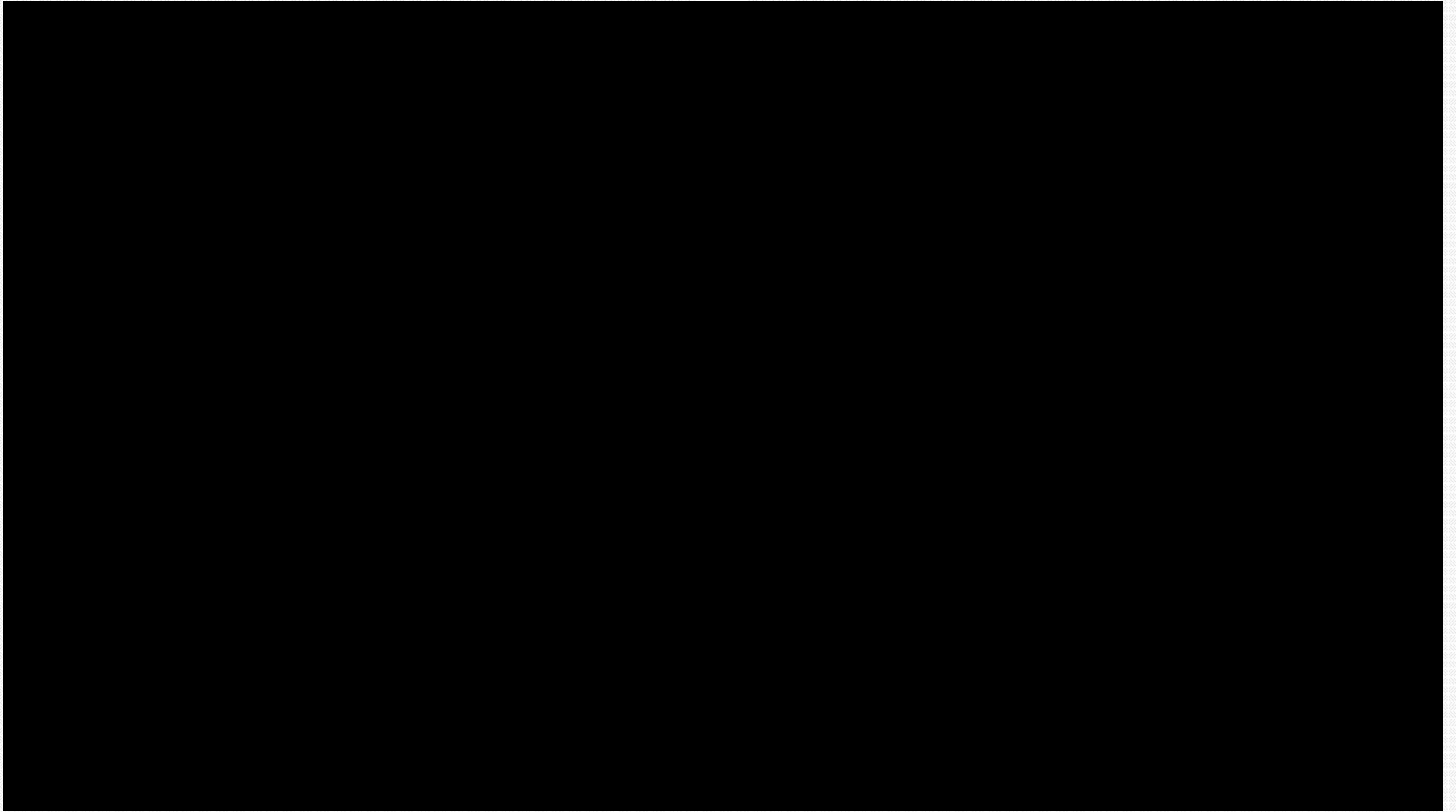
Willfulness vs. Willingness



Willfulness is:

- Refusing to tolerate a situation or giving up.
- Trying to change a situation that cannot be changed, or refusing to change something that must be changed.
- Is the “terrible twos” – “no...no...no...”
- Is the opposite of doing what works.

Willingness: Curse of the Black Pearl



Willfulness vs. Willingness



Willingness is:

- Allowing the world to be what it is and participating fully
- Doing what is needed- no more, no less. It is being effective.
- Listening carefully to your Wise Mind and deciding what to do.
- When willfulness doesn't budge, ask: "What is the threat?"

Ways to Practice Accepting Reality



1. Notice that you are fighting reality
2. Breathe mindfully
3. Accept reality with your body: half-smile & willing hands
4. Rehearse in your mind
5. Practice willingness
6. Turn your mind



Crisis Survival Kit



- Create a kit for home and work that includes items to use in moments of distress
- Similar to a fire drill
- Goal: ride the wave of emotions (then problem-solve) rather than acting on emotional urges



DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 2

Crisis Survival Skills Overview

Skills for tolerating painful events and emotions when you can't make things better right away and you don't want to make things worse!

Distract with "Wise Mind ACCEPTS"

Activities
Contributing
Comparisons
Emotions
Pushing Away
Thoughts
Sensations

SELF-SOOTHE with Six Senses

Vision
Hearing
Smell
Taste
Touch
Movement

IMPROVE the Moment

Imagery
Meaning
Prayer
Relaxation
One thing in the moment
Vacation
Encouragement

PROS AND CONS

TIPP

Temperature
Intense exercise
Paced breathing
Progressively relaxing your muscles

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Thank you!

Parent support group is January 18th (6:30-7:30)

The next parent training is **January 25th on Crisis Coregulation & Life Space Interview (LSI)**