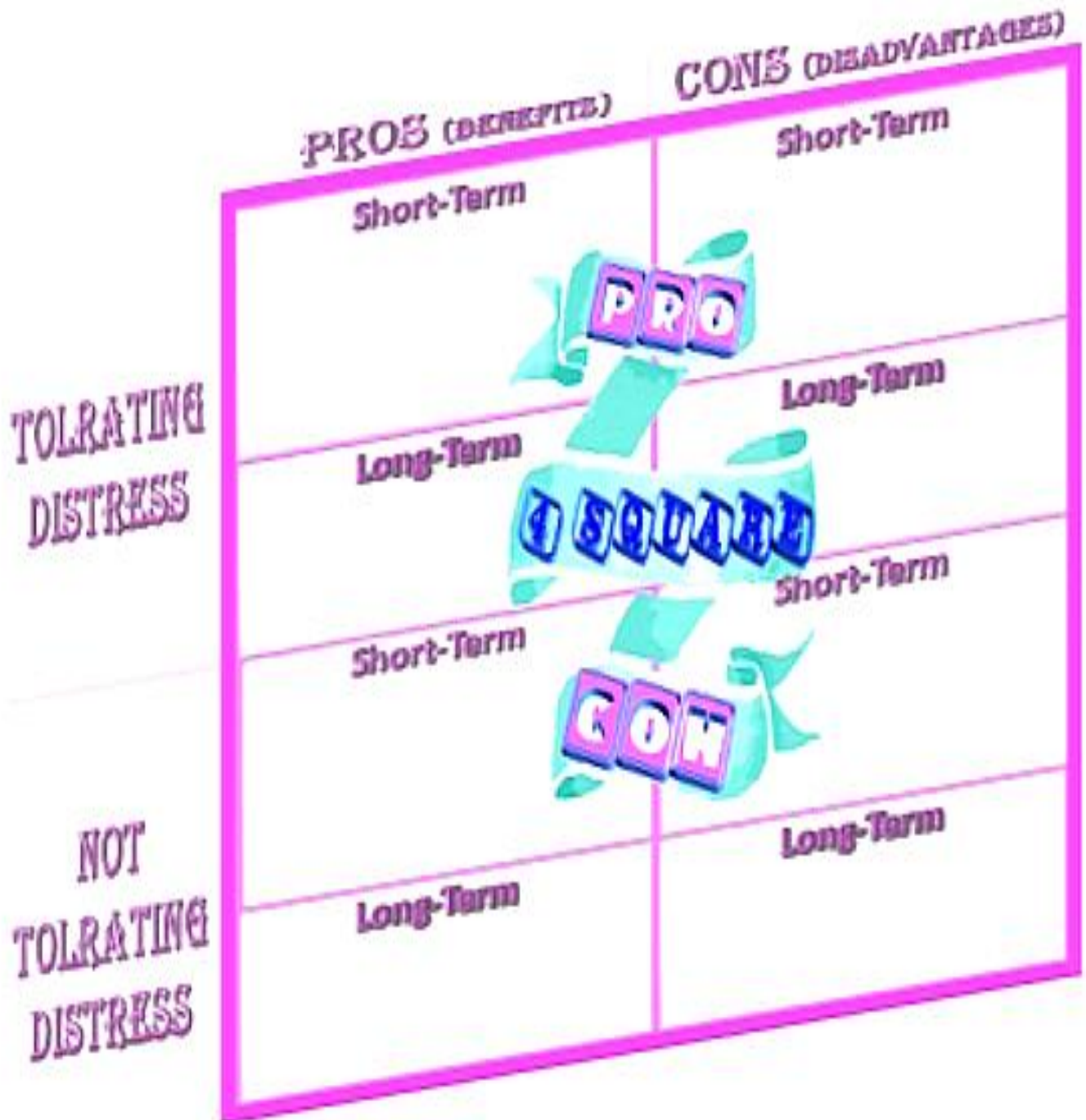


PRO/CON



of DISTRESS TOLERANCE

TO TOLERATE / TO NOT TOLERATE

As was discussed in our last lesson:

Distress is a part of life that all of us will face at some point in our lives. There is no way to avoid it. We all go through situations at some time or another where we have stressors that elicit upsetting emotions in which we are not able to take any effective action to ease the stress the stressor is causing.

People with distress intolerance believe that they are not able to fully experience uncomfortable, unpleasant, or aversive emotions or sensations. This perceived inability to tolerate distress often causes an extreme fear of experiencing those emotions considered to be intolerable or unbearable.

As a result of the fear that the emotions would overwhelm and be unmanageable, a person with distress intolerance will usually feel a frantic, desperate need to escape uncomfortable emotions. It is not the intensity of the unpleasant emotion itself that determines a person's level of distress intolerance, but rather how unmanageable and unbearable the emotion seems to the person experiencing it, and how strongly their desire is to avoid or escape it.

When we buy into the beliefs and thoughts associated with Distress Intolerance, we take an unpleasant emotion that we feel, and feed into it until it becomes an emotional experience that is highly distressing. These types of beliefs are called *catastrophizing (cognitive distortion)* in cognitive therapy, because we take an unpleasant emotion and add our thoughts and beliefs to it until it grows from something we dislike that is unpleasant into a full-blown catastrophe in our minds.

There is a big difference between a person disliking uncomfortable emotions - yet understanding and accepting that they are an inescapable part of life - and therefore learn to ride through them, and a person that experiences uncomfortable emotions as unbearable - with an overwhelming compulsion to make them go away.

A person's automatic reaction to distress is to do something to alleviate the suffering. This urge to respond with an impulsive behavior may even be extremely strong. Even though some of our impulses have seemed to "work" in the short-term - by giving us a temporary reduction of our distress, in the long-run they can actually make it worse. Responding to these impulsive urges are a very unhealthy way to deal with strong emotions.

If a person's natural urge is to do - *whatever it takes* - to reduce their current distress - even if only as a short-term solution, and responding to impulsive urges of this type is an unhealthy way to deal with distress - how do we get past that urge? How do we decide to respond to it in the most effective, helpful manner?

People use *pros and cons* on a daily basis, although in most cases it is on a subconscious level. Throughout the day we go through our invisible pros and cons on many different possible behavioral choices. Should we brush our teeth today - why or why not? Should we go to the bathroom right now - why or why not? If you think about some of these *pros/cons* we take for granted, we can see the behind the scenes reasoning for the mundane daily decisions we make.

We can expand this natural skill to include; *a conscious consideration of using and practicing this skill to weigh the pros/cons of tolerating the emotions when we are feeling distressed.*

4 SQUARE PROS/CONS

The goal of the *pros/cons exercise* is that by using this practice exercise - *it will help us to make informed decisions from a Wise Mind perspective.*

Utilizing this *skill* can help us to look at a situation from *every perspective we are able to identify* - along with making is easier for us to *visualize all possible outcomes* (depending on our choices made). The eventual intent of this process is to clarify that; *facing reality and tolerating distress leads to a brighter future than the future we would face through fighting against reality and choosing not to tolerate distress as it occurs.*

PROS OF NOT TOLERATING DISTRESS	CONS OF NOT TOLERATING DISTRESS
Escape from Distressing Emotions	We Don't Learn Ability to Tolerate Distress
Less Short-term Pain	Increase of Avoidance

Utilizing Pros/Cons to decide the cost and benefits of tolerating distress are a bit different than a typical Pro/Con list used to evaluate the pros and cons of doing something vs. not doing something.

Dialects of DBT teach that nothing is totally black and white. There can be good and bad in either of your choices; to tolerate distress or not to tolerate distress. With this Pro/Con exercise, we want to *evaluate them fully from every perspective.* Because there are both *pros in not tolerating distress* and *pros in tolerating distress*, we could choose to focus on the *pros of not tolerating* when they stand alone (with only the pros of tolerating to weigh in against).

PROS OF TOLERATING DISTRESS	PROS OF NOT TOLERATING DISTRESS
We Learn to Cope With Distress	Escape from Distressing Emotions
Decrease of Avoidance	Less Short-term Pain

When we lay our pro/con list out with *both* the *PROS/CONS of Tolerating Distress* **AND** the *PROS/CONS of Not Tolerating Distress*, we get a much better ideas of *which decision is wisest for us.* This exercise - laid out in a *FOUR SQUARE* - rather than the typical Two Square PROS/CONS, gives us a much clearer picture of how either decision will impact us.

	PROS (BENEFITS)	CONS (DISADVANTAGES)
TOLRATING DISTRESS		
NOT TOLRATING DISTRESS		

GOALS OF 4 SQUARE PROS/CONS

The Goal of completing a 4 Square Pros/Cons is to make a *Wise Mind* informed decision. Through creating written lists of all anticipated potential results of all possible choices offered to us, we are more able to use those lists to weigh which choice list is likely to be the most effective.

Having our Pros/Cons written out also makes it possible for us to return to our lists in order to rank the most helpful (*on a scale of 1-5 with 5 ranking the most important*) of the pros; While also being able to rank which of the cons are likely to be the most damaging (*on a scale of 1-5 with 5 ranking the most damaging*) if we make that choice. *A decision would then be made based on the total of the ranked numbers - not the total number of items in the list.*

Another benefit to putting your lists in writing is that you are then able to go back to your lists and rate whether the potential benefits and potential harms are likely to cause effects only on a short-term basis, or if the effects of your decisions are likely to have long-term ramifications.

BE PREPARED

The creation of our PROS/CONS list(s) should not be done while we are already in a crisis. Since the main goal of using the Pro/Con Skill is to make a *Wise Mind decision*, the best place to write out our lists is from a place of *Wise Mind* - or as close to that state of mind as possible. By making the list from a calmer, more balanced place, we are likely to be more honest with ourselves - *without being overly swayed by what we are feeling in a crisis.* Once our lists are fully created and defined, it is *extremely advisable to keep them where they are easily attainable at all times.* If we carry them with us at all times, they will be easy to access and reread if a related crisis arises.

The *“States of Mind Dialogue Work Sheet”* from *OUR Wise Mind Lesson* may be helpful in the compilation of your list, but it is not necessary in order to do this exercise. *If you do not have access to this worksheet, please just keep in mind while writing the lists; whether the advantage or disadvantage is directed more towards the emotions, the logic, or somewhere in between.*

This then raises the question.. *“How do we prepare ahead for something that has not yet happened?”* That can, in some cases be difficult - but in many similar situations we encounter, we tend to react with the same destructive behaviors in *predictable repetition.* We learn over time which behaviors are most likely to remove or reduce the feelings of distress (even if only for a few moments) - then return to those same *old tried and proved ineffective techniques* that we have used to help us survive in the past.

Without being exposed to a specific situation that will bring us to a point of distress, we all have a pretty good idea of some of the unhelpful reactions we tend to respond to different distresses with - that have caused us problems in the past. *Engaging in these problematic behaviors in an attempt to avoid distress is the definition of “NOT TOLERATING DISTRESS”.*

If we choose to *“Not Tolerate Distress”* - this means; *we are actually choosing to engage in some form of self-defeating behavior.* The behavior we would most likely choose will vary between people - and even vary within each individual - depending on the triggering distress involved. Just to name a few of the possible *“Not Tolerating Distress / Engaging in Problematic Behavior”* urges:

Binge Eating	Avoiding Social Situations	Suicidal Ideation	Attempting to Control
Using Drugs	Avoiding Fearful Things	Lashing Out	Escape Sleeping
Getting Drunk	Self-Harm	Reckless Behavior	AND MANY OTHERS

Do any of these cause you problems?

CRISIS BEHAVIORS

The first step in completing your *Pro/Con Worksheet* will be to figure out which behavior (reaction to a distress) is likely to cause you a problem. *It is not so much a matter of what situation is distressing us, but rather what unhelpful, destructive action we tend to take in an attempt to avoid feeling the distress.*

Let's look at a scenario which frequently causes people distress - *and could elicit a desire or urge to act in a way with the intention of escaping that distress:*

- **You have to deal with a belittling boss.**

This would be a case of a problem that you are unable to fix (*right now*) - especially if you have a family with needs that you are required to meet, and you don't have prospects of a replacement job (*right now*). You would have the stressors - (another person's/social expectations) that attempt to motivate an action - but that you cannot do anything about. If you are doing your best and are still met with belittling, this is likely to cause you some degree of distress. Often times when a person is put down by another, it is not because of something they did or didn't do - *but that is how that person who is ineffectively reacting to their own distress might interpret it; (as all their fault).* When this is the case, there is no way we can change anything to try to meet with their approval.

According to previous conditioning, we can predict how each of us - as individuals, will react to avoid the feeling of distress we could expect if the boss were to come up to us and say; ***"Are you really that stupid, Can't you do anything right?"***

A *problematic crisis behavioral* response to this - *for someone else*, would probably be different from the unhelpful response *that you*, in turn, would attempt in order to avoid your distress.

*That type of a put down could *trigger* a person to ***feel angry*** that someone would say something so untrue and cruel to you. If this is likely to be your ***triggered distressing emotion*** - what would your ***Crisis Reaction*** to that *anger* be?

*That type of put down could *trigger* a person to ***feel anxious***, and to wonder if perhaps their judgement is correct. If this is likely to be your ***triggered distressing emotion***, what would your ***Crisis Reaction*** to that *anxiety* be?

*That type of put down could *trigger* a person to ***feel depressed*** and think that things can never get better. If this is likely to be your ***triggered distressing emotion***, what would your ***Crisis Reaction*** to that *depression* be?

*That type of put down could *trigger* a person to ***feel fear*** - being *afraid* that if you can't please your boss, you could lose the job you need. If this is likely to be your ***triggered distressing emotion***, what would your ***Crisis Reaction*** to that *fear* be?

A few possible Crisis Reactions might be:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| * Lash Out | * Walk Out on the Job | * Get Drunk |
| * Become Passive Aggressive | * Binge Eat | * Self Harm |
| * Call off the Next Day | * Go on a Shopping Spree | * Get Angry at Someone Else |
| * Drive Recklessly | * Go Straight to Bed | * <i>(Fill In What You Might Do)</i> |

It is important to note; we are *not* looking for the *situation that caused the distress*, we are looking for *how we act on the distress we are feeling*. If we feel distress (*no matter the cause*) - if we engage in impulsive, damaging behaviors - we are ***Not Tolerating our Distress***. Instead of focusing on the situation - *it would be more helpful to consider how you react as a means of avoiding or escaping different distressing emotions.*

- When I am distressed and feeling angry I would most likely: _____
- When I am distressed and feeling anxious I would most likely: _____
- When I am distressed and feeling depressed I would most likely: _____
- When I am distressed and feeling afraid I would most likely: _____

It is the ***Problematic, Impulsive, Reactive Crisis Behavior*** that we are listing the ***PROS/CONS*** for. The question we must first ask ourselves is: ***If I choose to Not Tolerate Distress, the action I would be doing instead would be _____.***

PART 1: LISTS

Use WORKSHEET #1 Name the Emotion that could cause you enough stress to cause you a *Crisis Reaction* and the *Problem Behavior* you would desire or have the urge to do.

NOTE: *This page will be your scratch sheet to list every possible option you can think of. At this point, you do not need to consider if a possible option would have more effect short term or long term. The ranking of importance should also not be a consideration at this point. Just list everything you can think of for both the pros and the cons in both columns.*

TOLERATING DISTRESS

Distressing Emotion: _____	Escape Urge: _____
PROS (Benefits/Advantages)	CONS (Costs/Disadvantages)
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Turn your *“Tolerating Distress”* worksheet over or put it away - so you can’t lean on your answers from that list to create the next. If possible wait for a few minutes while your first list remains unseen before beginning your *“Not Tolerating Distress”* list. It can be surprising how different the answers to the two (*worded differently*) lists can be. This usually gives us additional options that we didn’t consider for the first list. *Through creating written lists of all anticipated potential results from both perspectives, it gives us a clearer picture of all possible choices offered to us.*

At the top of another page add the title: *“NOT TOLERATING DISTRESS”* - or you could even use the title of *“CHOSING TO DO THE PROBLEM BEHAVIOR”* - since they are *both* the same thing.

NOT TOLERATING DISTRESS

CHOSING TO DO THE PROBLEM BEHAVIOR

Distressing Emotion: _____	Give Into Urge: _____
PROS (Benefits/Advantages)	CONS (Costs/Disadvantages)
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

MAKE IT GENERIC

REMEMBER: It is important to note, we are not looking for the situation that caused the distress, we are looking for *how we act on the distress we are feeling*. If we feel distress (*no matter the cause*) - if we engage in impulsive, damaging behaviors, we are Not Tolerating our Distress. Instead of focusing on the situation - it would be more helpful to consider how you react as a *means of avoiding or escaping different distressing emotions*.

- When I am distressed and feeling angry I would most likely: _____
- When I am distressed and feeling anxious I would most likely: _____
- When I am distressed and feeling depressed I would most likely: _____
- When I am distressed and feeling afraid I would most likely: _____

Look over both of your lists and reword them if necessary - so that they are *not* situation specific - but can be used *generically* for the *distressing emotion and triggered urge*.

TOLERATING DISTRESS

Distressing Emotion: <u>Anger</u>	Escape Urge: <u>Lash Out In Defense</u>
PROS (Benefits/Advantages)	CONS (Costs/Disadvantages)
I will not cause a scene in my place of employment	I will not get to release my anger
Will not lose respect of higher-level supervisors others <i>who's respect matters to me</i>	I will have to get through just feeling the anger
I will not be risking my job over it <i>a secure position</i>	I won't feel the power of getting even
I will not be making a bad situation worse	I won't get to let others know how stupid I think my boss is <i>the belittler is</i>
I will not be an embarrassment to my family <i>someone not directly involved</i>	I won't get to defend myself while stronger with anger

See Example; Page 4

PART 2: RANK LISTED OPTIONS

Once you have listed every possible result that you can think of - (*both benefits and costs*), you will then carefully consider each of your lists.

On your "*Tolerating Distress*" worksheet: Carefully weigh each of your answers in your *Pros column*. Consider for each of them; *how important each one of these is to you*. On a scale of 1-5 with 5 being *the most helpful* of the *pros*, rate the *importance value* of each.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1) Not Really Important | 3) Somewhat Important | 5) Very Important |
| 2) Not Too Important | 4) Important | |

TOLERATING DISTRESS

Distressing Emotion: _____ Escape Urge: _____

PROS (Benefits/Advantages)	CONS (Costs/Disadvantages)
4	
1	
3	
2	
5	
(continue)	

See Example; Page 6

Add These Ratings: $4 + 1 + 3 + 2 + 5 = 15$

PART 2 (Continued)

On your *"Tolerating Distress"* worksheet: Carefully weigh each of your answers in your *Cons* column. Consider for each of them; *how important each one of these is to you*. On a scale of 1-5 with 5 being *the most damaging* of the *Cons*, rate the *importance value* of each.

TOLERATING DISTRESS

Distressing Emotion: _____ Escape Urge: _____

PROS (Benefits/Advantages)	CONS (Costs/Disadvantages)
	2
	3
	3
	1
	2
	(Continue)

See Example; Page 7

Add These Ratings: $2+3+3+1+2 = 11$

On your *"Not Tolerating Distress"* worksheet: Carefully weigh each of your answers in your *Pros* column. Consider for each of them; *how important each one of these is to you*. On a scale of 1-5 with 5 being *the most helpful* of the *Pros*, rate the *importance value* of each.

NOT TOLERATING DISTRESS

OR *CHOSING TO DO THE PROBLEM BEHAVIOR*

Distressing Emotion: _____ Give Into Urge: _____

PROS (Benefits/Advantages)	CONS (Costs/Disadvantages)
4	
1	
2	
2	
3	
1	
(Continue)	

See Example; Page 8

Add These Ratings: $4+1+2+2+3+1 = 13$

On your *"Not Tolerating Distress"* worksheet: Carefully weigh each of your answers in your *Cons* column. Consider for each of them; *how important each one of these is to you*. On a scale of 1-5 with 5 being *the most damaging* of the *Cons*, rate the *importance value* of each.

NOT TOLERATING DISTRESS

OR *CHOSING TO DO THE PROBLEM BEHAVIOR*

Distressing Emotion: _____ Give Into Urge: _____

PROS (Benefits/Advantages)	CONS (Costs/Disadvantages)
	1
	4
	2
	1
	2
	4
	(Continue)

See Example; Page 8

$1+4+2+1+2+4 = 14$

PART 2 (Continued)

Sum in Favor of Tolerating Distress

Add the totals from the “Tolerating Distress” worksheet *Pro list* to the totals from the “*Not Tolerating Distress*” worksheet *Con list*. Both of these are showing the value placed on the benefits of **TOLERATING DISTRESS**.

15 + 14 =
29

Sum in Favor of Tolerating Distress

Add the totals from the “Not Tolerating Distress” worksheet *Pro list* to the totals from the “Tolerating Distress worksheet” *Con list*. Both of these are showing the value placed on the benefits of **NOT TOLERATING DISTRESS**. (Following through with urge)

13 + 11 =
24

These totals alone should show us how much more we value learning the skills to tolerate distress - rather than acting out on a crisis behavior urge. If not convinced yet - the next part of the lesson will make it even clearer.

PART 3: TRANSFER AND ORGANIZE

On WORKSHEET #3 Fill in the lines for “Distressing Emotion” and “Escape Urge”.

DISTRESS TOLERANCE

Distressing Emotion: _____ Escape Urge: _____

PROS (Benefits) **CONS** (Disadvantages)

Next - we will *transfer our Pros/Cons from our worksheets over to our reminder sheet*. As we transfer each point, we want to *list them according to value rating with the most important points first*. Also, we want to *list each point, according to the time frame the results of our decisions will continue to affect us*. Some repercussions are short lived, while others can affect us for a long time to come. (See Example PDF pg. 11-12)

WORKSHEET #1 (Tolerating Distress Worksheet #1) and **WORKSHEET #2** (Not Tolerating Distress Worksheet #2) are shown on the left. Arrows indicate the transfer of information to **WORKSHEET #3** (Distress Tolerance Reminder Sheet) in the center. Worksheet #3 is a 2x2 grid with columns for 'To Tolerate Distress' and 'Not To Tolerate Distress', and rows for 'Long Term' and 'Short Term'. The grid is color-coded: purple for 'To Tolerate Distress' (Long Term), green for 'To Tolerate Distress' (Short Term), blue for 'Not To Tolerate Distress' (Long Term), and yellow for 'Not To Tolerate Distress' (Short Term). Arrows show the transfer of 'PROS' from Worksheet #1 to the purple and blue sections, and 'CONS' from Worksheet #2 to the green and yellow sections.

This will be the *completed production*. We want to attempt to make this sheet as neat as possible, since we are going to be carrying this with us everywhere we go - *as a reminder of my priorities* - should we face this type of distressing situation in the future.

PART 4: TOTALS

Once our Pros and Cons have been transferred over, the next step is to fill in the **sum totals** of our rating values at the bottom of the page. *This will give us the final ranking of importance to us.* First - fill in the totals found earlier for: “To Tolerate” (*Sum in Favor of Tolerating Distress*) and “Not To Tolerate” (*Sum in Favor of Not Tolerating Distress*).

TO TOLERATE RATING: _____ **NOT TO TOLERATE RATING** _____

We will then fill in our totals for our **Long-term consequences** and **Short-term consequences** - in favor of **Tolerating Distress**. (See Example pg. 13-14)

This is found by adding the totals from the “Tolerating Distress List” Pro LONG-TERM list to the totals from the “Not Tolerating Distress List” Con LONG-TERM list. Both of these are showing the value placed on the benefits of TOLERATING DISTRESS.

DISTRESS TOLERANCE	
Distressing Emotion: _____	Escape Urge: _____
PROS (benefits)	CONS (drawbacks)
Long Term _____	Long Term _____
To Tolerate Distress _____	To Tolerate Distress _____
Short Term _____	Short Term _____
Not To Tolerate Distress _____	Not To Tolerate Distress _____
Long Term _____	Long Term _____
To Tolerate Distress _____	To Tolerate Distress _____
Short Term _____	Short Term _____
Not To Tolerate Distress _____	Not To Tolerate Distress _____

TO TOLERATE RATING: _____ NOT TO TOLERATE RATING: _____

Long Term Consequences _____ Short Term Consequences _____

Skills To Use _____

And Adding the totals from the **Tolerating Distress List** Pro SHORT-TERM list to the totals from the “Not Tolerating Distress List” Con SHORT-TERM list. Both of these are showing the value placed on the benefits of TOLERATING DISTRESS.

DISTRESS TOLERANCE	
Distressing Emotion: _____	Escape Urge: _____
PROS (benefits)	CONS (drawbacks)
Long Term _____	Long Term _____
To Tolerate Distress _____	To Tolerate Distress _____
Short Term _____	Short Term _____
Not To Tolerate Distress _____	Not To Tolerate Distress _____
Long Term _____	Long Term _____
To Tolerate Distress _____	To Tolerate Distress _____
Short Term _____	Short Term _____
Not To Tolerate Distress _____	Not To Tolerate Distress _____

TO TOLERATE RATING: _____ NOT TO TOLERATE RATING: _____

Long Term Consequences _____ Short Term Consequences _____

Skills To Use _____

Enter Total on Long-Term Consequences

Enter Total on Short-Term Consequences

Long Term Consequences _____

Short Term Consequences _____

Next, we will fill in our **totals for our Long-term consequences** and **Short-term consequences** in favor of **NOT Tolerating Distress** by following through with the urge. (See Example PDF pg. 14)

This is found by adding the totals from the “Not Tolerating Distress List” Pro LONG-TERM list to the totals from the “Tolerating Distress List” Con LONG-TERM list. Both of these are showing the value placed on the benefits of NOT TOLERATING DISTRESS

DISTRESS TOLERANCE	
Distressing Emotion: _____	Escape Urge: _____
PROS (benefits)	CONS (drawbacks)
Long Term _____	Long Term _____
To Tolerate Distress _____	To Tolerate Distress _____
Short Term _____	Short Term _____
Not To Tolerate Distress _____	Not To Tolerate Distress _____
Long Term _____	Long Term _____
To Tolerate Distress _____	To Tolerate Distress _____
Short Term _____	Short Term _____
Not To Tolerate Distress _____	Not To Tolerate Distress _____

TO TOLERATE RATING: _____ NOT TO TOLERATE RATING: _____

Long Term Consequences _____ Short Term Consequences _____

Skills To Use _____

And adding the totals from the “Not Tolerating Distress List” Pro SHORT-TERM list to the totals from the “Tolerating Distress List” Con SHORT-TERM list. Both of these are showing the value I place on the benefits of NOT TOLERATING DISTRESS

DISTRESS TOLERANCE	
Distressing Emotion: _____	Escape Urge: _____
PROS (benefits)	CONS (drawbacks)
Long Term _____	Long Term _____
To Tolerate Distress _____	To Tolerate Distress _____
Short Term _____	Short Term _____
Not To Tolerate Distress _____	Not To Tolerate Distress _____
Long Term _____	Long Term _____
To Tolerate Distress _____	To Tolerate Distress _____
Short Term _____	Short Term _____
Not To Tolerate Distress _____	Not To Tolerate Distress _____

TO TOLERATE RATING: _____ NOT TO TOLERATE RATING: _____

Long Term Consequences _____ Short Term Consequences _____

Skills To Use _____

Enter Total on Long-Term Consequences

Enter Total on Short-Term Consequences

Long Term Consequences _____

Short Term Consequences _____

It is not uncommon to have an urge take action in an attempt to escape distress. For those of us who are *distress intolerant*, those urges can be so strong that we are sometimes willing to engage in self-destructive behavior - (possibly even self-harm behavior) in our attempt to stop feeling the upsetting, distressing emotions.

Filling out a *Distress Tolerance Pro/Con Reminder Sheet* while *not* in a crisis, can help us understand the consequences of our actions.. - *before we act*. Understanding the consequences *in advance* can help us make an *informed, effective, Wise Mind decision* when we are faced with a similar crisis. It is helpful to read and reread your reminder sheet over and over - *to firmly integrate your newly found enlightenment into your mind*. **Then make sure to keep it with you! Once a crisis hits, it is all too easy to forget everything learned - and even what is really important to us.**

It is advisable to complete one of these sheets for each of your distress escape urges.

It is important to remember that we are creatures of *free will*, and at times - even knowing the consequences of an action, will not detour us from still taking an unwise action. Evaluating the Pros/Cons for Short-term Consequences and Long-term Consequences should help convince the willfulness in us. **The only way we can choose to *Not Tolerate Distress*, is by choosing to do something that might make us feel better - *for the moment* (short-term) - but could create a lot more problems for us in the long run (long-term).**

While the choice is - and always will be ours; the objective of this skill is for us *to realize that tolerating distress and accepting reality leads to better outcomes*. It is intended to help us *understand the benefits of tolerating distress*.

Deciding to tolerate distress without further skills to do this may be close to impossible. This week - just concentrate on *creating a Reminder Sheet* - so that you have it as an *incentive* as the other distress tolerance skills become available. The remaining thing that will be added to your reminder sheet is to be filled in as you *learn and practice the upcoming skills* - as you *become aware of which skill is likely to be the most effective for your distressing emotion - and your escape urge*.

Skills To Use _____

It can be challenging while going through it - to focus on surviving and tolerating distress. Keep in mind what your goal is. Focus on your long-term dreams. ***Imagine how wonderful it will feel when you don't act impulsively and move a step towards achieving your goals!***

KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL!!

DISTRESS TOLERANCE PRO/CON HOMEWORK WORKSHEET

- 1) Which emotion did you do your reminder sheet for? _____
- 2) What target, crisis behavior urge did you address? _____
- 3) Not all specialists recommend anything beyond listing all points Pro/Con (4 Square); would you have been fully convinced if you had stopped at this step? _____
- 4) What were your final value ratings in favor of tolerating distress? _____
- 5) What were your final value ratings in favor of NOT tolerating distress (following the urge)? _____
- 6) Some specialists don't recommend going beyond this step; would you have been fully convinced if you had stopped at this step? _____

TO TOLERATE RATING:

Long Term Consequences _____
Short Term Consequences _____

- 7) Did you have more Long-term rated consequences or Short-term rated consequences in favor of tolerating distress? _____

NOT TO TOLERATE RATING

Long Term Consequences _____
Short Term Consequences _____

- 8) Did you have more Long-term rated consequences or Short-term rated consequences in favor of not tolerating distress? _____

- 9) What does this tell you about the importance of your long-term rated values? _____

- 10) How valuable do you see this final step in fully convincing you in the importance of choosing to tolerate distress? _____

- 11) Were you able to see how your generic PRO/CON could be applied to other situations targeting the same emotion and same urge? _____

- 12) What is a long-term goal that you will get one step closer to, by tolerating distress in the short-term? _____

- 13) What does "keeping your eye on the light at the end of the tunnel" mean to you? _____

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