

# Distress Tolerance Skills

## Radical Acceptance

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Sometimes you'll run into a problem that's simply out of your control. It can be easy to think "This isn't fair" or "I shouldn't have this problem", even though those ways of thinking only make the pain worse.

*Radical acceptance* refers to a healthier way of thinking during these situations. Instead of focusing on how you would like something to be different, you will recognize and accept the problem or situation as it is. Remember, accepting is not the same as liking or condoning something.

Learning to accept the problems that are out of your control will lead to less anxiety, anger, and sadness when dealing with them.

Situation	
You find out that you were not selected for a job where you felt that you were the best candidate.	
Typical Thinking	Radical Acceptance
"This isn't fair—I did everything right! I was the best one there. They can't do this to me."	"It's frustrating that I didn't get the job, but I accept that they felt someone else would be a better fit."

## Self-Soothe with Senses

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Find a pleasurable way to engage each of your five senses. Doing so will help to soothe your negative emotions.

Vision	Go for a walk somewhere nice and pay attention to the sights.
Hearing	Listen to something enjoyable such as music or nature.
Touch	Take a warm bath or get a massage.
Taste	Have a small treat—it doesn't have to be a full meal.
Smell	Find some flowers or spray a perfume or cologne you like.

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## Distraction (A.C.C.E.P.T.S.)

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Negative feelings will usually pass, or at least lessen in intensity over time. It can be valuable to distract yourself until the emotions subside. The acronym “A.C.C.E.P.T.S.” serves as a reminder of this idea.

Activities	Engage in activities that require thought and concentration. This could be a hobby, a project, work, or school.
Contributing	Focus on someone or something other than yourself. You can volunteer, do a good deed, or do anything else that will contribute to a cause or person.
Comparisons	Look at your situation in comparison to something worse. Remember a time you were in more pain, or when someone else was going through something more difficult.
Emotions	Do something that will create a competing emotion. Feeling sad? Watch a funny movie. Feeling nervous? Listen to soothing music.
Pushing Away	Do away with negative thoughts by pushing them out of your mind. Imagine writing your problem on a piece of paper, crumpling it up, and throwing it away. Refuse to think about the situation until a better time.
Thoughts	When your emotions take over, try to focus on your thoughts. Count to 10, recite a poem in your head, or read a book.
Sensations	Find safe physical sensations to distract you from intense negative emotions. Wear a rubber band and snap it on your wrist, hold an ice cube in your hand, or eat something sour like a lime.