

STOP Skill



The first Distress Tolerance skill in DBT is STOP.

Here's what the acronym stands for:

Stop
Take a step back
Observe
Proceed mindfully

LET'S BREAK IT DOWN STEP BY STEP

STOP:

When you find yourself in a crisis, your first step is to stop reacting. Your emotions may be spiraling, and acting on them may make things worse. Tell yourself to freeze while you follow the rest of the steps. This will help you control your emotions, instead of the other way around.

TAKE A STEP BACK:

You can do this in your head, or you can physically step away from the situation. Take a few deep breaths to center yourself.

OBSERVE:

Pay attention to what is actually happening. What are the people around you doing? What are you thinking? What are you feeling, both emotionally and physically? When you observe the entire situation instead of just your initial reaction to it, you can act in a more effective way.

PROCEED MINDFULLY:

For this step, you want to get into Wise Mind. What does this situation require? Consider the thoughts and feelings of both yourself and the other people in the situation. Think through the consequences of various responses, and proceed with awareness.