

DISTRESS TOLERANCE HANDOUT 3

Crisis Survival Strategies

CHANGING BODY CHEMISTRY:

(To reduce extreme emotion mind QUICKLY)

Remember these as the “TIP” skills

T

TIP the **TEMPERATURE** of your face:

USE ICE WATER TO CALM YOURSELF DOWN FAST

By changing your autonomic nervous system

- Put your face in a bowl of ICE WATER (30 seconds),
 - OR splash ICE WATER on your face,
 - OR hold gel ICE pack (or zip-lock ICE WATER) on your face.

**ice water slows the heart rate. DO NOT immerse in ice water if you have a heart condition of any sort.*

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INTENSELY EXERCISE

to calm down a body revved up by emotion

- Engage in intense exercise, if only for a short while
- Expend your body’s stored-up physical energy by Running, walking fast, jumping, playing basketball, weight lifting, etc.

P

PACE YOUR BREATHING BY SLOWING IT DOWN

- Slow pace of inhaling and exhaling *way down*
(on average 5 to 7 breath cycles per minute)
- Breathe deeply from the abdomen
- Breathe more slowly *out* than when breathing *in*
(for example: inhale 4 seconds, exhale 8 seconds)

PROGRESSIVELY RELAX YOUR MUSCLES

- Starting with your hands, moving to your forearms, upper arms, shoulders, neck, forehead, eyes, cheeks & lips, tongue & jaw, chest upper back, stomach, buttocks, thighs, calves, ankles, feet
- TENSE (5 seconds, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way), then let go, RELAXING each muscle (all the way). (see *Distress Tolerance Handout 4*)
- NOTICE the tension. NOTICE the difference when relaxed.