Skills System:
Trauma-Informed Treatment for Individuals with ID

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Emotional Dysregulation
Linehan, 1993
DBT Perspective

Unbearable Discomfort
Lack of Effective Coping Skills
Slow Return to Baseline
Highly Reactive
Highly Sensitive

Behaviors that Function to Avoid Emotions
Cognitive Dysregulation
Linehan, 1993
DBT Perspective

Emotions Impact Thinking

Disorganization & Polarization

Increased Confusion

Clear Thinking

Avoiding---Fuzzy Picture
Cognitive Distortions
Behavioral Dysregulation
Linehan, 1993

DBT Perspective

5
Emotions Impact Behavioral Control

4
Behaviors are Attempts to Reduce Emotional Pain

3
Stronger Action Urges

2
Capacity for Effective Interactions

1
Behavior Function to Reach Goals - Strategic

0
Behaviors are Attempts to Reduce Emotional Pain
Implications/Results of Regulation Problems

As a result the individual:

• Lacks distress tolerance/emotion regulation skills (e.g. as a result of living in an invalidating environment and/or neurobiological impact of trauma)

• Difficulty “being in the moment” and accepting the moment “as it is; the moment is unbearable (“no skin” Linehan, 1993)

• Develops avoidance strategies due to inabilities; unable to make effective micro-transitions

• Escalation, reactivity & avoiding are intermittently reinforcement (reward & punishment) by the environment.

• Develop chains of maladaptive behavior; emotional dysregulation is a conditioned response (operant/respondent); maladaptive behaviors are desperate attempts to regulate emotions (behavioral dysregulation)

• Lacks skills to focusing and shifting attention- problem focused; has difficulty planning and executing goal directed behavior; “Emotion mind” reduces executive functioning and memory capacities (cognitive dysregulation)

• Internally: Oscillates between over and under experiencing of emotion leads to a lack of self-awareness, self-acceptance, self-value, and self-trust (self dysregulation)

• Externally: Oscillates between under-reliance and over-reliance on the environment (relationship dysregulation)
The Skills List

1. Clear Picture
2. On-Track Thinking
3. On-Track Action
4. Safety Plan
5. New-Me Activities
6. Problem Solving
7. Expressing Myself
8. Getting It Right
9. Relationship Care
All-the-Time Skills (0-5 emotions)

1. Clear Picture: Breathe; check surroundings; body check; label and rate emotions (0-5); notice thoughts; and notice urges

2. On-Track Thinking: Stop, step back & think about what I want; Check the urge; turn it to thumbs up, and make a skills plan

3. On-Track Action: Take an action that is a step to my goal, shift tracks, On-track Action Plan, acceptance, let go & move on

4. Safety Plan: Low, medium & high risk; thinking, talking & written; refocus, move & leave

5. New-Me Activities: Focus; feel good; distraction; fun

Calm Only Skills (0-3 emotions)

6. Problem Solving: Clear Picture of the problem; check all options; make plans A, B, & C.

7. Expressing Myself: Expressing Myself helps me to share what is inside of me with people and the world around me; what, why, how, when do I Express Myself

8. Getting It Right: Getting It Right helps me work with people to get what I want. Right mind; person; time/place; tone; words-SEALS- sugar, explain, ask, listen, seal the deal!

9. Relationship Care: Building relationships; balancing relationships; changing relationships

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How I Link my Skills

a. **FEELINGS RATING SCALE**

I use the 0-1-2-3-4-5 Feelings Rating Scale to rate how strong my feelings are. The Feelings Rating Scale helps me know what skills and how many skills I need to use in a situation.

b. **Categories of Skills**

- **All-the-Time**
  - #0-#5 Emotion
- **Calm Only**
  - #0-#3 Emotion

There are two Categories of Skills: All-the-Time skills and Calm Only skills. I can use All-the-Time skills at any level of emotion: 0-1-2-3-4-5. I can only use Calm Only skills when I am between a 0 and level 3 emotion.

c. **Recipe for Skills**

The Recipe for Skills helps me know how many skills I need to use in a situation. The Recipe tells me to add 1 skill to my level of emotion. So, if I am at a #3 sad, I need to use 4 skills.
Feelings Rating Scale - Handout 1

Overwhelming Feeling:
Harming myself, other, or property

FEELINGS RATING SCALE

Strong Feeling

Medium Feeling

Small Feeling

Tiny Feeling

No Feeling
Categories of Skills - Handout 1

Once I know my Level of Emotion (0-1-2-3-4-5),
I know what Category of Skills I can use:

1. Clear Picture
2. On-Track Thinking
3. On-Track Action
4. Safety Plan
5. New-Me Activities

#### All-The-Time Skills

#### 0-#5 Emotions

6. Problem Solving
7. Expressing Myself
8. Getting It Right
9. Relationship Care

#### Calm Only Skills

#### Only 0-#3 Emotions!
Recipe for Skills

Once we know our Level of Emotion (0-1-2-3-4-5), we use the Recipe for Skills to decide how many skills we need to DO WHAT WORKS in the situation. Skill Masters use EVEN MORE!!

Combine 1 skill for EVERY level of Feeling:

#0 Feeling = 1 Skill
#1 Feeling = 2 Skills
#2 Feeling = 3 Skills
#3 Feeling = 4 Skills
#4 Feeling = 5 Skills
#5 Feeling = 6 Skills
Focus 100% on the Clear Picture Do's

1. Breathe

2. Check my Surroundings

3. Body Check

4. Label & Rate my Emotions

5. Notice my Thoughts

6. Notice my Urges
2. On-Track Thinking - Handout 1

STOP
STOP, Step back, & Think about what I want

CHECK the Urge

HELPFUL
Helps me reach my goal

Not Helpful

TURN IT to Thumbs –Up Thinking

I allow Off-Track Thoughts and urges to pass

“I can do it!”

Make a Skill Plan:

I am at a: 0-1-2-3-4-5 emotion?

Can I use Calm Only skills?

How many skills?

What skills will help me reach my goal?

Take an On-Track Action
3. On-Track Action - Handout 7

Once we have used:
1. Clear Picture
2. On-Track Thinking
3. On-Track Action

We Shift Tracks to the other skills:

1. Clear Picture
2. On-Track Thinking
3. On-Track Action

All-the-Time Skills

4. Safety Plan
5. New-Me Activities

Calm Only Skills

6. Problem Solving
7. Expressing Myself
8. Getting It Right
9. Relationship Care
Assembling Adaptive Chains of Behavior
Emotional Dysregulation

Self-Regulation: Building in Micro-Transitions

CLEAR PICTURE
ON-TRACK THINKING
ON-TRACK ACTION
Managing Emotions

GOT SKILLS?

Level 4 Emotion

or
3. On-Track Action Plan

2. Shift Tracks

1. First Step to my Goal

4. Accept the Situation

5. Let It Pass & Move on

Reaching my Goals
4. Safety Plan

3 Levels of Risk

- LOW Risk
- MEDIUM Risk
- HIGH Risk

3 Types of Safety Plans

- Thinking Safety Plans
- Talking Safety Plans:
- Writing Safety Plans

3 Ways to Handle Risk

- Refocus on a New-Me Activity in LOW Risk Situations
- Move Away in MEDIUM Risk Situations
- Leave the Area in HIGH Risk Situations

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5. New-Me Activities

New-Me Activities help me to:

**FOCUS**
- Organizing
- Cleaning
- Counting
- Sorting
- Folding

**FEEL GOOD**
- I enjoy nature
- I listen to music
- I smell nice things
- I enjoy healthy food
- I do self-care

**DISTRACT Myself**

**Have FUN**
- I do sports
- I make crafts
- I dance
- I chat
- I hang out
- I go out
Problem solving is a Calm Only skill. I have to be at a 0-#3 emotion to do Problem Solving. I have to be focused so I can think things through to reach my goals.
7. Expressing Myself

What is Expressing Myself?
Expressing Myself is Communication

Why do I use Expressing Myself?
Balance myself, my relationships, and my life.

How do I use Expressing Myself?
Words vs. Body Language and Mindreading

When do I use Expressing Myself?
I Express Myself when I am at a 0-#3 emotion.

Calm Only Skill
Getting What I Want!

- Right Mind
- Right Words
  - Sugar - Be nice
  - Explain the Situation
  - Ask for what you want
  - Listen
  - Seal a Deal
- Right Person
- Right Time & Place
9. Relationship Care

Relationship Care is a Calm Only skill. This means that I can only use Relationship Care when I and the other person are at 0-#3 level of emotion. When either person is over a #3, he or she may not be thinking clearly enough to manage relationships well. I use Clear Picture and On-Track Thinking to build, balance, and change my relationships.

A. Building On-Track Relationships

With Myself

With Others

B. Balancing On-Track Relationships

2-Way Street

One-Way Street

C. Changing Off-Track Relationships

Finding Middle Ground

Step of Responsibility