

'STOP' – Distress Tolerance

Sometimes it is not possible to make things better right away. So, it is helpful to develop skills to handle strong emotions and tolerate painful events.

The acronym STOP can help you manage difficult situations:

- **Stop** – Stop! Don't just react – freeze. You may be about to act without thinking.
- **Take a step back** – Take a deep breath and step back from the situation. Don't let how you feel make you act impulsively.
- **Observe** – Become aware of how you feel physically and mindfully and your environment. What is the situation? What are you thinking? What are you feeling? What are others saying and doing?
- **Proceed mindfully** – Move forward and act mindfully. Consider what actions will make things better or worse.

Now, think back to a recent situation where a difficult situation confronted you and you either didn't know how to react or overreacted:

What was the situation?

Consider each of the points within STOP:

Did you Stop? If not, what did you do?

Did you take a step back? If not, what did you do?

Did you observe? If not, what did you do?

Did you proceed mindfully? If not, what did you do?

Remembering to **STOP** can be a valuable way of avoiding an emotional response that worsens the situation and leads to subsequent feelings of regret.

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