

**Overview:
Reducing Vulnerability to Emotion Mind—
Building a Life Worth Living**

A way to remember these skills is to remember the term **ABC PLEASE**.

ACCUMULATE POSITIVE EMOTIONS

A

Short Term: Do pleasant things that are possible now.

Long Term: Make changes in your life so that positive events will happen more often in the future. Build a “life worth living.”

BUILD MASTERY

B

Do things that make you feel competent and effective to combat helplessness and hopelessness.

**COPE AHEAD OF TIME
WITH EMOTIONAL SITUATIONS**

C

Rehearse a plan ahead of time so that you are prepared to cope skillfully with emotional situations.

**PLEASE
TAKE CARE OF YOUR MIND
BY TAKING CARE OF YOUR BODY**

PLEASE

Treat Physical illness, balance Eating, avoid mood-Altering substances, balance Sleep, and get Exercise.



Accumulating Positive Emotions: Short Term

Accumulate positive emotions in the short term by doing these things.

BUILD POSITIVE EXPERIENCES NOW

- INCREASE PLEASANT EVENTS that lead to positive emotions.
- Do ONE THING each day from the Pleasant Events List.
(See *Emotion Regulation Handout 16.*)
- Practice opposite action; AVOID AVOIDING.
- BE MINDFUL of pleasant events (no multitasking).

BE MINDFUL OF POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

- FOCUS your attention on positive moments when they are happening.
No multitasking.
- REFOCUS your attention when your mind wanders to the negative.
- PARTICIPATE and ENGAGE fully in each experience.

BE UNMINDFUL OF WORRIES

Such as . . .

- When the positive experience will end.
- Whether you deserve this positive experience.
- How much more might be expected of you now.



Pleasant Events List

1. Working on my car
2. Planning a career
3. Getting out of (paying down) debt
4. Collecting things (baseball cards, coins, stamps, rocks, shells, etc.)
5. Going on vacation
6. Thinking how it will be when I finish school
7. Recycling old items
8. Going on a date
9. Relaxing
10. Going to or watching a movie
11. Jogging, walking
12. Thinking, "I have done a full day's work"
13. Listening to music
14. Thinking about past parties
15. Buying household gadgets
16. Lying in the sun
17. Planning a career change
18. Laughing
19. Thinking about past trips
20. Listening to other people
21. Reading magazines or newspapers
22. Engaging in hobbies (stamp collecting, model building, etc.)
23. Spending an evening with good friends
24. Planning a day's activities
25. Meeting new people
26. Remembering beautiful scenery
27. Saving money
28. Going home from work
29. Eating
30. Practicing karate, judo, yoga
31. Thinking about retirement
32. Repairing things around the house
33. Working on machinery (cars, boats, etc.)
34. Remembering the words and deeds of loving people
35. Wearing shocking clothes
36. Having quiet evenings
37. Taking care of my plants
38. Buying, selling stock
39. Going swimming
40. Doodling
41. Exercising
42. Collecting old things
43. Going to a party
44. Thinking about buying things
45. Playing golf
46. Playing soccer
47. Flying kites
48. Having discussions with friends
49. Having family get-togethers
50. Riding a bike or motorbike
51. Running track
52. Going camping
53. Singing around the house
54. Arranging flowers
55. Practicing religion (going to church, group praying, etc.)
56. Organizing tools
57. Going to the beach
58. Thinking, "I'm an OK person"
59. Having a day with nothing to do
60. Going to class reunions
61. Going skating, skateboarding, rollerblading
62. Going sailing or motorboating
63. Traveling or going on vacations
64. Painting
65. Doing something spontaneously
66. Doing needlepoint, crewel, etc.
67. Sleeping
68. Driving
69. Entertaining, giving parties
70. Going to clubs (garden clubs, Parents without Partners, etc.)
71. Thinking about getting married
72. Going hunting

(continued on next page)

Note. For adults or adolescents. Adapted from Linehan, M. M., Sharp, E., & Ivanoff, A. M. (1980, November). *The Adult Pleasant Events Schedule*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Association for Advancement of Behavior Therapy, New York. Adapted by permission of the authors.

From *DBT Skills Training Handouts and Worksheets, Second Edition* by Marsha M. Linehan. Copyright 2015 by Marsha M. Linehan. Permission to photocopy this handout is granted to purchasers of this book for personal use only (see copyright page for details).

EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 16

(p. 2 of 3)

73. Singing with groups
74. Flirting
75. Playing musical instruments
76. Doing arts and crafts
77. Making a gift for someone
78. Buying/downloading music
79. Watching boxing, wrestling
80. Planning parties
81. Cooking
82. Going hiking
83. Writing (books, poems, articles)
84. Sewing
85. Buying clothes
86. Going out to dinner
87. Working
88. Discussing books; going to a book club
89. Sightseeing
90. Getting a manicure/pedicure or facial
91. Going to the beauty parlor
92. Early morning coffee and newspaper
93. Playing tennis
94. Kissing
95. Watching my children (play)
96. Thinking, "I have a lot more going for me than most people"
97. Going to plays and concerts
98. Daydreaming
99. Planning to go (back) to school
100. Thinking about sex
101. Going for a drive
102. Refinishing furniture
103. Watching TV
104. Making lists of tasks
105. Walking in the woods (or at the waterfront)
106. Buying gifts
107. Completing a task
108. Going to a spectator sport (auto racing, horse racing)
109. Teaching
110. Photography
111. Going fishing
112. Thinking about pleasant events
113. Staying on a diet
114. Playing with animals
115. Flying a plane
116. Reading fiction
117. Acting
118. Being alone
119. Writing diary entries or letters
120. Cleaning
121. Reading nonfiction
122. Taking children places
123. Dancing
124. Weightlifting
125. Going on a picnic
126. Thinking, "I did that pretty well," after doing something
127. Meditating, yoga
128. Having lunch with a friend
129. Going to the mountains
130. Playing hockey
131. Working with clay or pottery
132. Glass blowing
133. Going skiing
134. Dressing up
135. Reflecting on how I've improved
136. Buying small things for myself (perfume, golf balls, etc.)
137. Talking on the phone
138. Going to museums
139. Thinking religious thoughts
140. Lighting candles
141. White-water canoeing/rafting
142. Going bowling
143. Doing woodworking
144. Fantasizing about the future
145. Taking ballet/tap-dancing classes
146. Debating
147. Sitting in a sidewalk café
148. Having an aquarium
149. Participating in "living history" events
150. Knitting
151. Doing crossword puzzles
152. Shooting pool
153. Getting a massage
154. Saying, "I love you"
155. Playing catch, taking batting practice
156. Shooting baskets
157. Seeing and/or showing photos
158. Thinking about my good qualities
159. Solving riddles mentally
160. Having a political discussion
161. Buying books

(continued on next page)

EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 16

(p. 3 of 3)

- 162. Taking a sauna or a steam bath
- 163. Checking out garage sales
- 164. Thinking about having a family
- 165. Thinking about happy moments in my childhood
- 166. Splurging
- 167. Going horseback riding
- 168. Doing something new
- 169. Working on jigsaw puzzles
- 170. Playing cards
- 171. Thinking, "I'm a person who can cope"
- 172. Taking a nap
- 173. Figuring out my favorite scent
- 174. Making a card and giving it to someone I care about
- 175. Instant-messaging/texting someone
- 176. Playing a board game (e.g., Monopoly, Life, Clue, Sorry)
- 177. Putting on my favorite piece of clothing
- 178. Making a smoothie and drinking it slowly
- 179. Putting on makeup
- 180. Thinking about a friend's good qualities
- 181. Completing something I feel great about
- 182. Surprising someone with a favor
- 183. Surfing the Internet
- 184. Playing video games
- 185. E-mailing friends
- 186. Going walking or sledding in a snowfall
- 187. Getting a haircut
- 188. Installing new software
- 189. Buying a CD or music on iTunes
- 190. Watching sports on TV
- 191. Taking care of my pets
- 192. Doing volunteer service
- 193. Watching stand-up comedy on YouTube
- 194. Working in my garden
- 195. Participating in a public performance (e.g., a flash mob)
- 196. Blogging
- 197. Fighting for a cause
- 198. Conducting experiments
- 199. Expressing my love to someone
- 200. Going on field trips, nature walks, exploring (hiking away from known routes, spelunking)
- 201. Gathering natural objects (wild foods or fruit, driftwood)
- 202. Going downtown or to a shopping mall
- 203. Going to a fair, carnival, circus, zoo, or amusement park
- 204. Going to the library
- 205. Joining or forming a band
- 206. Learning to do something new
- 207. Listening to the sounds of nature
- 208. Looking at the moon or stars
- 209. Outdoor work (cutting or chopping wood, farm work)
- 210. Playing organized sports (baseball, softball, football, Frisbee, handball, paddleball, squash, soccer, tennis, volleyball, etc.)
- 211. Playing in the sand, a stream, the grass; kicking leaves, pebbles, etc.
- 212. Protesting social, political, or environmental conditions
- 213. Reading cartoons or comics
- 214. Reading sacred works
- 215. Rearranging or redecorating my room or the house
- 216. Selling or trading something
- 217. Snowmobiling or riding a dune buggy/ATV
- 218. Social networking
- 219. Soaking in the bathtub
- 220. Learning or speaking a foreign language
- 221. Talking on the phone
- 222. Composing or arranging songs or music
- 223. Thrift store shopping
- 224. Using computers
- 225. Visiting people who are sick, shut in, or in trouble

Other: _____



Accumulating Positive Emotions: Long Term

Accumulate positive emotions in the long term to build a “life worth living.”

That is, make changes in your life so that positive events will occur in the future.

Step 1. Avoid avoiding.

Start now to do what is needed to build the life you want. If you are not sure about what to do, follow the steps below.

Step 2. Identify values that are important to you.

ASK: What values are really important to me in my life?

Examples: Be productive; be part of a group; treat others well; be physically fit.

Step 3. Identify one value to work on now.

ASK: What is really important to me, right now, to work on in my life?

Example: Be productive.

Step 4. Identify a few goals related to this value.

ASK: What specific goals can I work on that will make this value part of my life?

Examples: Get a job where I can do something useful.

Be more active keeping up with important tasks at home.

Find a volunteer job that will use skills I already have.

Step 5. Choose one goal to work on now.

Do pros and cons, if necessary, to select a goal to work on now.

Example: Get a job where I can do something useful.

Step 6. Identify small action steps toward your goal.

ASK: What small steps can I take to get to my goal?

Examples: Visit places and look for job openings on the Internet in my area.

Submit applications for jobs at places I want to work.

Write résumé.

Check out benefits at places I might want to work.

Step 7. Take one action step now.

Example: Go on Internet and check for jobs in my area.



Values and Priorities List

In my own Wise Mind, I believe it is important to:

A. Attend to relationships.

1. Repair old relationships.
 2. Reach out for new relationships.
 3. Work on current relationships.
 4. End destructive relationships.
- Other: _____

B. Be part of a group.

5. Have close and satisfying relationships with others.
 6. Feel a sense of belonging.
 7. Receive affection and love.
 8. Be involved and intimate with others; have and keep close friends.
 9. Have a family; stay close to and spend time with family members.
 10. Have people to do things with.
- Other: _____

C. Be powerful and able to influence others.

11. Have the authority to approve or disapprove of what people do, or to control how resources are used.
 12. Be a leader.
 13. Make a great deal of money.
 14. Be respected by others.
 15. Be seen by others as successful; become well known; obtain recognition and status.
 16. Compete successfully with others.
 17. Be popular and accepted.
- Other: _____

D. Achieve things in life.

18. Achieve significant goals; be involved in undertakings I believe are significant.
 19. Be productive.
 20. Work toward goals; work hard.
 21. Be ambitious.
- Other: _____

(continued on next page)

Adapted from Schwartz, S. H. (1992). Universals in the content and structure of values: Theory and empirical tests in 20 countries. In M. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 25, pp. 1–65). New York: Academic Press. Copyright 1992 by Academic Press. Adapted by permission of Elsevier B.V.

From *DBT Skills Training Handouts and Worksheets, Second Edition* by Marsha M. Linehan. Copyright 2015 by Marsha M. Linehan. Permission to photocopy this handout is granted to purchasers of this book for personal use only (see copyright page for details).

EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 18 (p. 2 of 3)

E. Live a life of pleasure and satisfaction.

22. Have a good time.

23. Seek fun and things that give pleasure.

24. Have free time.

25. Enjoy the work I do.

Other: _____

F. Keep life full of exciting events, relationships, and things.

26. Try new and different things in life.

27. Be daring and seek adventures.

28. Have an exciting life.

Other: _____

G. Behave respectfully.

29. Be humble and modest; do not draw attention to myself.

30. Follow traditions and customs; behave properly.

31. Do what I am told and follow rules.

32. Treat others well.

Other: _____

H. Be self-directed.

33. Follow my own path in life.

34. Be innovative, think of new ideas, and be creative.

35. Make my own decisions and be free.

36. Be independent; take care of myself and those I am responsible for.

37. Have freedom of thought and action; be able to act in terms of my own priorities.

Other: _____

I. Be a spiritual person.

38. Make room in life for spirituality; live life according to spiritual principles.

39. Practice a religion or faith.

40. Grow in understanding of myself, my personal calling, and life's real purpose.

41. Discern and do the will of God (or a higher power) and find lasting meaning in life.

Other: _____

J. Be secure.

42. Live in secure and safe surroundings.

43. Be physically healthy and fit.

44. Have a steady income that meets my own and my family's basic needs.

Other: _____

(continued on next page)

EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 18 (p. 3 of 3)

K. Recognize the universal good of all things.

- 45. Be fair, treat people equally, and provide equal opportunities.
- 46. Understand different people; be open-minded.
- 47. Care for nature and the environment.
- Other: _____

L. Contribute to the larger community.

- 48. Help people and those in need; care for others' well-being; improve society.
- 49. Be loyal to friends and devoted to close people; be committed to a group that shares my beliefs, values, and ethical principles.
- 50. Be committed to a cause or to a group that has a larger purpose beyond my own.
- 51. Make sacrifices for others.
- Other: _____

M. Work at self-development.

- 52. Develop a personal philosophy of life.
- 53. Learn and do challenging things that help me grow and mature as a human being.
- Other: _____

N. Have integrity.

- 54. Be honest, and acknowledge and stand up for my personal beliefs.
- 55. Be a responsible person; keep my word to others.
- 56. Be courageous in facing and living life.
- 57. Be a person who pays debts to others and repairs damage I have caused.
- 58. Be accepting of myself, others, and life as it is; live without resentment.
- Other: _____

- O. Other: _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



Build Mastery and Cope Ahead

Build Mastery

1. Plan on doing at least one thing each day to build a sense of accomplishment.

Example: _____

2. Plan for success, not failure.
 - Do something difficult, but possible.
3. Gradually increase the difficulty over time.
 - If the first task is too difficult, do something a little easier next time.
4. Look for a challenge.
 - If the task is too *easy*, try something a little harder next time.

Cope Ahead of Time with Difficult Situations

1. **Describe** the situation that is likely to prompt problem behavior.
 - Check the facts. Be specific in describing the situation.
 - Name the emotions and actions likely to interfere with using your skills.
2. **Decide** what coping or problem-solving skills you want to use in the situation.
 - Be specific. Write out in detail how you will cope with the situation and with your emotions and action urges.
3. **Imagine the situation** in your mind as vividly as possible.
 - Imagine yourself **IN** the situation **NOW**, not watching the situation.
4. **Rehearse in your mind coping effectively.**
 - Rehearse in your mind exactly what you can do to cope effectively.
 - Rehearse your actions, your thoughts, what you say, and how to say it.
 - Rehearse coping effectively with new problems that come up.
 - Rehearse coping effectively with your most feared catastrophe.
5. **Practice relaxation *after* rehearsing.**



Taking Care of Your Mind by Taking Care of Your Body

Remember these as **PLEASE** skills.

**P
L**

1. Treat Physical Illness.

Take care of your body. See a doctor when necessary. Take prescribed medication.

E

2. Balance Eating.

Don't eat too much or too little. Eat regularly and mindfully throughout the day. Stay away from foods that make you feel overly emotional.

A

3. Avoid Mood-Altering Substances.

Stay off illicit drugs, and use alcohol in moderation (if at all).

S

4. Balance Sleep.

Try to get 7–9 hours of sleep a night, or at least the amount of sleep that helps you feel good. Keep to a consistent sleep schedule, especially if you are having difficulty sleeping.

E

5. Get Exercise.

Do some sort of exercise every day. Try to build up to 20 minutes of daily exercise.

Nightmare Protocol, Step by Step

When Nightmares Keep You from Sleeping

1. Practice relaxation, pleasant imagery, and coping skills first, to be sure you are ready to work on changing your nightmares.

Do progressive relaxation, paced breathing, and/or Wise Mind exercises; listen to music or guided imagery; review the distress tolerance crisis survival skills.

2. Choose a recurring nightmare you would like to work on.

This will be your target nightmare. Select a nightmare you can manage now. Put off trauma nightmares until you are ready to work with them—or, if you target a trauma nightmare, skip Step 3.

3. Write down your target nightmare.

Include sensory descriptions (sights, smells, sounds, tastes, etc.). Also include any thoughts, feelings, and assumptions about yourself during the dream.

4. Choose a changed outcome for the nightmare.

The change should occur BEFORE anything traumatic or bad happens to you or others in the nightmare. Essentially, you want to come up with a change that will prevent the bad outcome of the usual nightmare from occurring. Write an ending that will give you a sense of peace when you wake up.

Note: Changes in the nightmare can be very unusual and out of the ordinary (e.g., you might become a person with superhuman powers who is able to escape to safety or fight off attackers). Changed outcomes can include changed thoughts, feelings, or assumptions about yourself.

5. Write down the full nightmare with the changes.

6. REHEARSE and RELAX each night before going to sleep.

Rehearse the *changed* nightmare by visualizing the entire dream with the changes each night, *before* practicing relaxation techniques.

7. REHEARSE and RELAX during the day.

Visualize the entire dream with the change, and practice relaxation as often as possible during the day.

Sleep Hygiene Protocol

When You Can't Sleep, What to Do Instead of Ruminating

TO INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF RESTFULNESS/SLEEP:

- 1. Develop and follow a consistent sleep schedule even on weekends.** Go to bed and get up at the same times each day, and avoid anything longer than a 10-minute nap during the day.
- 2. Do not use your bed in the daytime** for things like watching TV, talking on the phone, or reading.
- 3. Avoid** caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, heavy meals, and exercise late in the day before going to sleep.
- 4. When prepared to sleep, turn off the light, and keep the room quiet and the temperature comfortable and relatively cool.** Try an electric blanket if you are cold; putting your feet outside of the blanket or turning on a fan directed toward your bed if you are hot; or wearing a sleeping mask, using earplugs, or turning on a “white noise” machine if needed.
- 5. Give yourself half an hour to at most an hour to fall asleep.** If it doesn't work, evaluate whether you are calm, or anxious (even if only “background anxiety”), or ruminating.
- 6. DO NOT CATASTROPHIZE.** Remind yourself that you need rest, and aim for reverie (i.e., dreaminess) and resting your brain. Sell yourself on the idea that staying awake is not a catastrophe. Do not decide to give up on sleeping for the night and get up for the “day.”

IF YOU ARE CALM BUT WIDE AWAKE:

- 7. Get out of bed; go to another room and read a book** or do some other activity that will not wake you up further. As you begin to get tired and/or sleepy, go back to bed.
- 8. Try a light snack** (e.g., an apple).

IF YOU ARE ANXIOUS OR RUMINATING

- 9. Use the cold water TIP skill. Get right back in bed and do the paced breathing TIP skill.**
(See *Distress Tolerance Handout 6: TIP Skills: Changing Your Body Chemistry.*)
Remember, if you have any medical condition, get medical approval before using cold water.
- 10. Try the 9–0 meditation practice.** Breathe in deeply and breathe out slowly, saying in your mind the number 9. On the next breath out, say 8; then say 7; and so on until you breathe out saying 0. Then start over, but this time start with 8 (instead of 9) as you breathe out, followed by 7, and so on until you reach 0. Next start with 6 as you breathe out, and so on to 0. Then start with 5, then with 4, and so on until you have gone all the way down to starting with 1. (If you get lost, start over with the last number you remember.) Continue until you fall asleep.
- 11. Focus on the bodily sensation** of the rumination (rumination is often escape from difficult emotional sensations).
- 12. Reassure yourself** that worries in the middle of the night are just “middle-of-the-night-thinking,” and that in the morning you will think and feel differently.
- 13. Read an emotionally engrossing novel** for a few minutes until you feel somewhat tired. Then stop reading, close your eyes, and try to continue the novel in your head.
- 14. If rumination doesn't stop,** follow these guidelines: “If it's solvable, solve it. If it is insolvable, go deep into the worry all the way to the “catastrophe”—the very worst outcome you can imagine—and then imagine coping ahead with the catastrophe.”
(See *Emotion Regulation Handout 19: Build Mastery and Cope Ahead.*)

If nothing else works, with eyes closed, listen to public radio (BBC, NPR, etc.) at low volume (use headphones if necessary). Public radio is a good choice for this, because there is little fluctuation in voice tone or volume.

