

Distress Tolerance Skills

Radical Acceptance

Radical acceptance is the process of learning how to accept unpleasant or unfavorable situations. The goal of radical acceptance is to be able to accept the things that you cannot change. Radical acceptance will reduce emotional reactions, stress, and interpersonal issues.

NOTE: It is important to be honest and self-reflective when practicing radical acceptance. Try to be as objective as possible, do not allow yourself to blame or exaggerate.

What is the upsetting situation? How did this upsetting situation occur? What effect did it have on you?

NOTE: Remember, you control your own behavior, but you cannot control the behavior of others.

How did your behavior contribute to the situation?

How did those around you contribute to the situation?

What did you have control over in this situation? What did you not have control over in this situation?

NOTE: The goal is to be responsive, not reactive. The difference between being responsive and reactive is the ability to mindfully think things through before acting. To be reactive is to act through emotions before giving yourself time to process the information given to you.

How did you react to the situation? How did your reaction affect your emotions?

NOTE: Others are easily turned off to reactive behavior and respond better to responsive behavior.

How did your reaction affect those around you?

NOTE: When we react on our first impulse our emotions and thoughts are negatively affected. Being mindful when dealing with upsetting information will reduce the emotional reactivity and negative thoughts. Allow the goal to be acceptance- you only have control over your own behavior.

How can you handle the next upsetting situation that will reduce the reactivity and emotional distress?