



### Step 3: Choose the opposite action

| Emotion and common urge                                     | Possible opposite action when facts do not support the urge                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Fear - escape or avoid                                      | Approach gradually, stay present, use confident posture and take one safe step toward the situation.                 |
| Anger - attack or retaliate                                 | Step back, soften voice and posture, practise understanding, or act with measured kindness while keeping boundaries. |
| Shame - hide or withdraw                                    | Make appropriate eye contact, share with a safe person, participate and hold an open posture.                        |
| Sadness - become inactive                                   | Increase purposeful activity, connect with others, move the body and complete one manageable task.                   |
| Unjustified guilt - apologise repeatedly or punish yourself | Stop apologising for what was not wrong, participate openly and treat yourself fairly.                               |

**My opposite action plan: What will I do with my face, posture, voice, attention and behaviour?**

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| Before intensity | After intensity | Did I act opposite all the way? | What did I learn? |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| 0-100            | 0-100           |                                 |                   |

#### Use this worksheet safely

This worksheet is for education and skills practice. It is not a substitute for assessment, diagnosis, crisis care or individual treatment. If there is immediate danger, risk of self-harm or risk to another person, use local emergency or crisis services and contact a qualified professional.

**Research basis:** Opposite Action is a DBT emotion-regulation strategy. Emotion-regulation research also distinguishes adaptive strategies such as reappraisal and active coping from patterns such as avoidance, rumination and suppression. Conceptual references: Linehan, *DBT Skills Training Manual* (2nd ed.); MFT NHS emotional regulation guidance; Trudel-Fitzgerald et al. (2024), coping and emotion regulation review.