

DBT STOP Skill Worksheet

Pause, observe and choose an effective response

What STOP means

S - Stop. Pause before acting. **T - Take a step back.** Create physical or mental space. **O - Observe.** Notice facts, thoughts, feelings, body sensations and action urges. **P - Proceed mindfully.** Choose the next action that supports your goals and safety.

When to use STOP

Use STOP when emotional intensity is rising and you are at risk of reacting impulsively. STOP is commonly taught as a DBT crisis-survival or distress-tolerance skill. The goal is not to erase emotion; it is to interrupt automatic behaviour long enough to choose an effective response.

- ☐ An argument is escalating
- ☐ You feel an urge to send, post or say something immediately
- ☐ You want to leave, attack, use a substance or shut down
- ☐ You notice panic, rage, shame or overwhelm taking control

Practise the four steps

S - STOP: What will you pause? What behaviour do you need to interrupt?

T - TAKE A STEP BACK: How can you create space safely? Examples: breathe slowly, put the phone down, sit, ask for a brief pause or move to a safer place.

O - OBSERVE: Write only what you can notice. Separate facts from interpretations. Include emotion, intensity (0-100), body sensations, thoughts and action urges.

P - PROCEED MINDFULLY: What is your goal? Which next action is most likely to help rather than make the situation worse?

One-minute practice plan

Trigger I expect	My STOP cue	Safe step-back action	Effective next step

After-action review

What changed after I paused? What helped? What will I adjust next time?

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: DBT teaches mindfulness and crisis-survival skills to reduce impulsive reactions and support effective behaviour. This is an original practice worksheet, not an official DBT Skills Training handout. Conceptual references: Linehan, *DBT Skills Training Manual* (2nd ed.); Behavioral Tech Institute; Dorset HealthCare NHS DBT overview.