

Supporting your child to manage emotions



Emotional development



Age	Typical Developmental Stage
5-8	Begin recognising emotions Minimal expressive language Heavy co-regulation needs May experience emotional outbursts
9-11	Begin reflecting on own emotional experience Begin understanding their own impact on others Can mask emotions Less co-regulation needs, more autonomy needs
12-16	Transitional phase Even more autonomy needs – reliance shifts from parent to peer Relational difficulties – impacting emotional experience Hormones prevalent – impacting emotional experience
17-21	Developed awareness of noticing and experiencing multiple emotions Better understanding of self and exploring identity Navigating the world and the expectations of others Potential increased general anxiety



WHY CO-REGULATION IS IMPORTANT

The regulated adult uses their calm nervous system to help regulate the child or young person, by using their body, tone, pitch of voice and breathing to anchor the child or young person to feel safe and calm down.

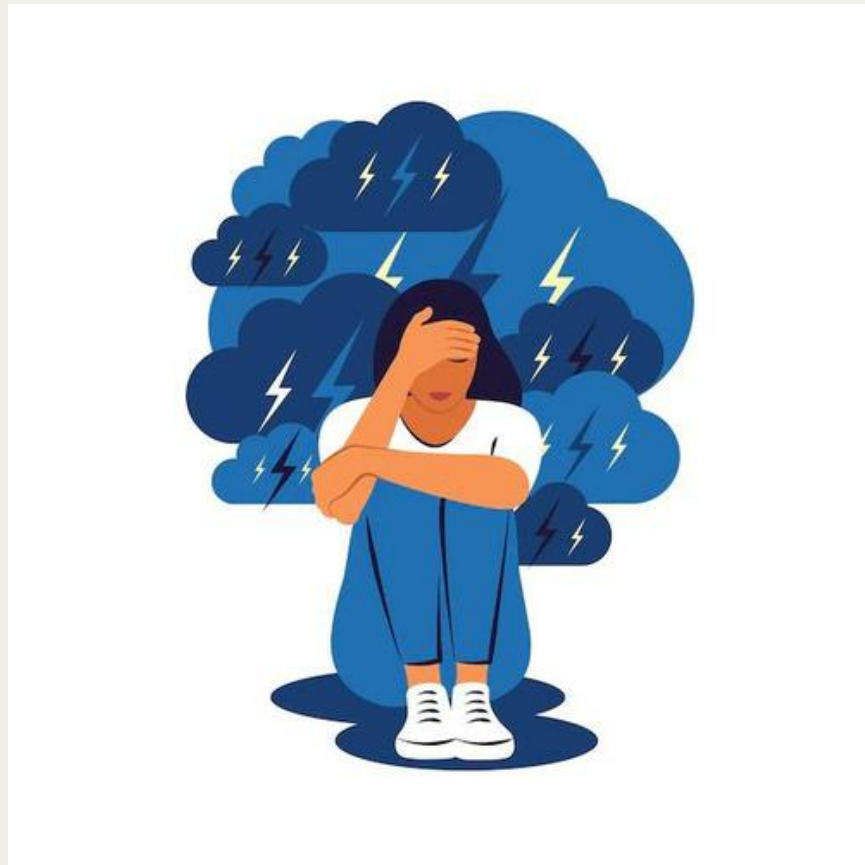


What is Distress Tolerance?

- Distress tolerance can be defined as the ability to **sit with our pain**
- Pain is part of life and can never be avoided entirely
- Therefore, our goal should be to learn to cope with distress rather than to avoid it



Why is Distress Tolerance Important?

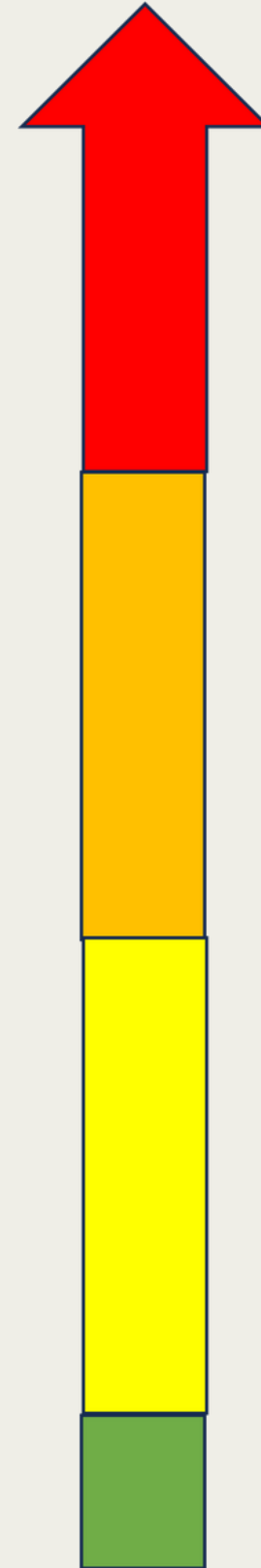


- Distress tolerance skills are important so that people can **process** their thoughts, feelings and experiences
- If people don't have these skills, they may try and cope with their pain by using maladaptive coping mechanisms like avoidance, self-harm, binge eating etc.

Distress Tolerance Skills



Distress Scale



TIPP

ACCEPTS/ distraction

Self-soothe

STOP

Breathe!

Ride the wave



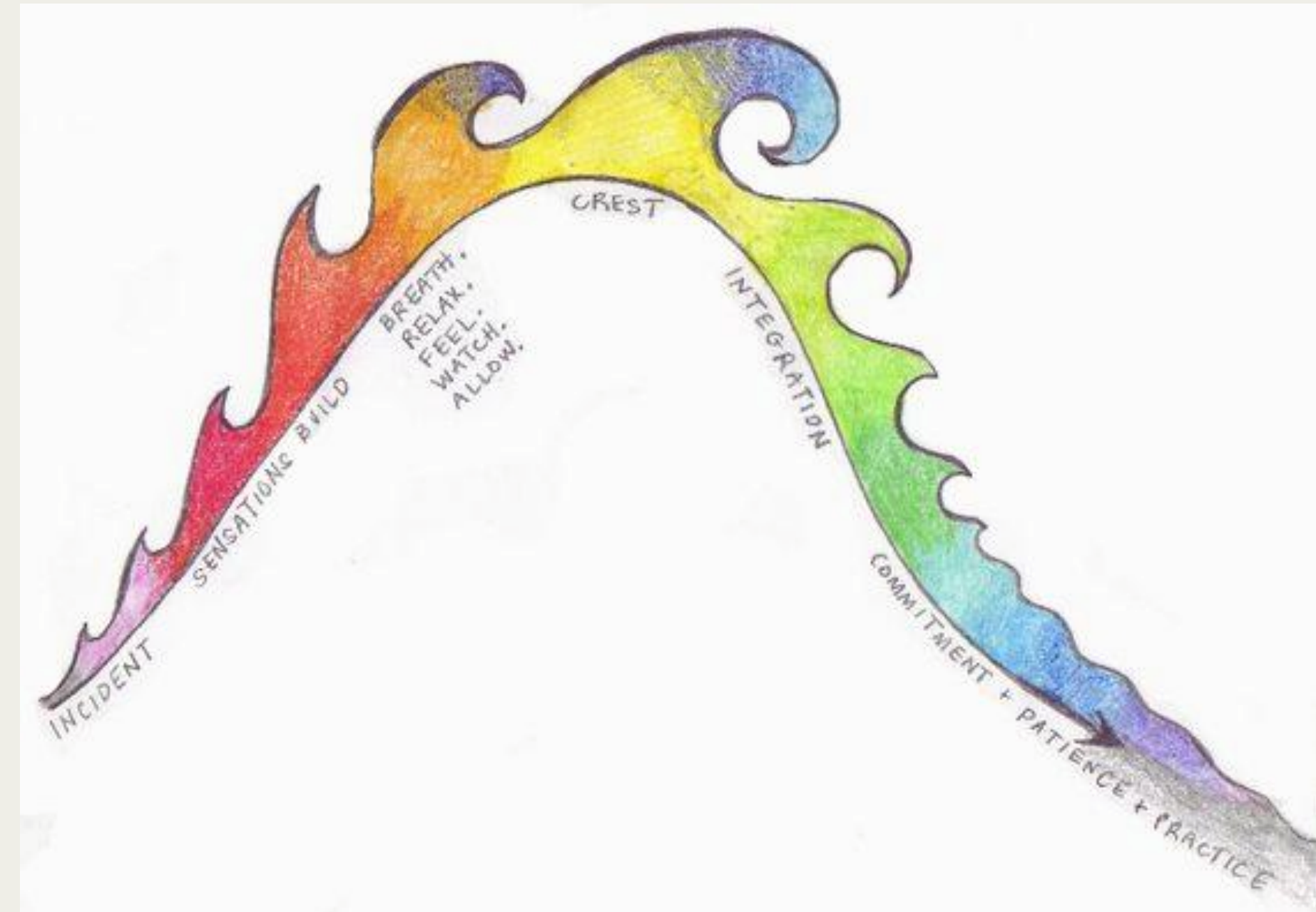
Ride the Wave

When to use: in moments of intense, overwhelming emotions, such as anger, sadness, frustration.

Purpose of technique: helps build emotional resilience; teaches that strong emotions are temporary; encourages the understanding of emotions.

Activity: *Visualising the Wave*

- Imagine the emotion as a wave
- Riding the wave: experience it without actions
- Await calm: recognise the emotion will pass



Learning to Breathe: a technique for smaller children

When to use: help children manage stress and calm down through controlled breathing

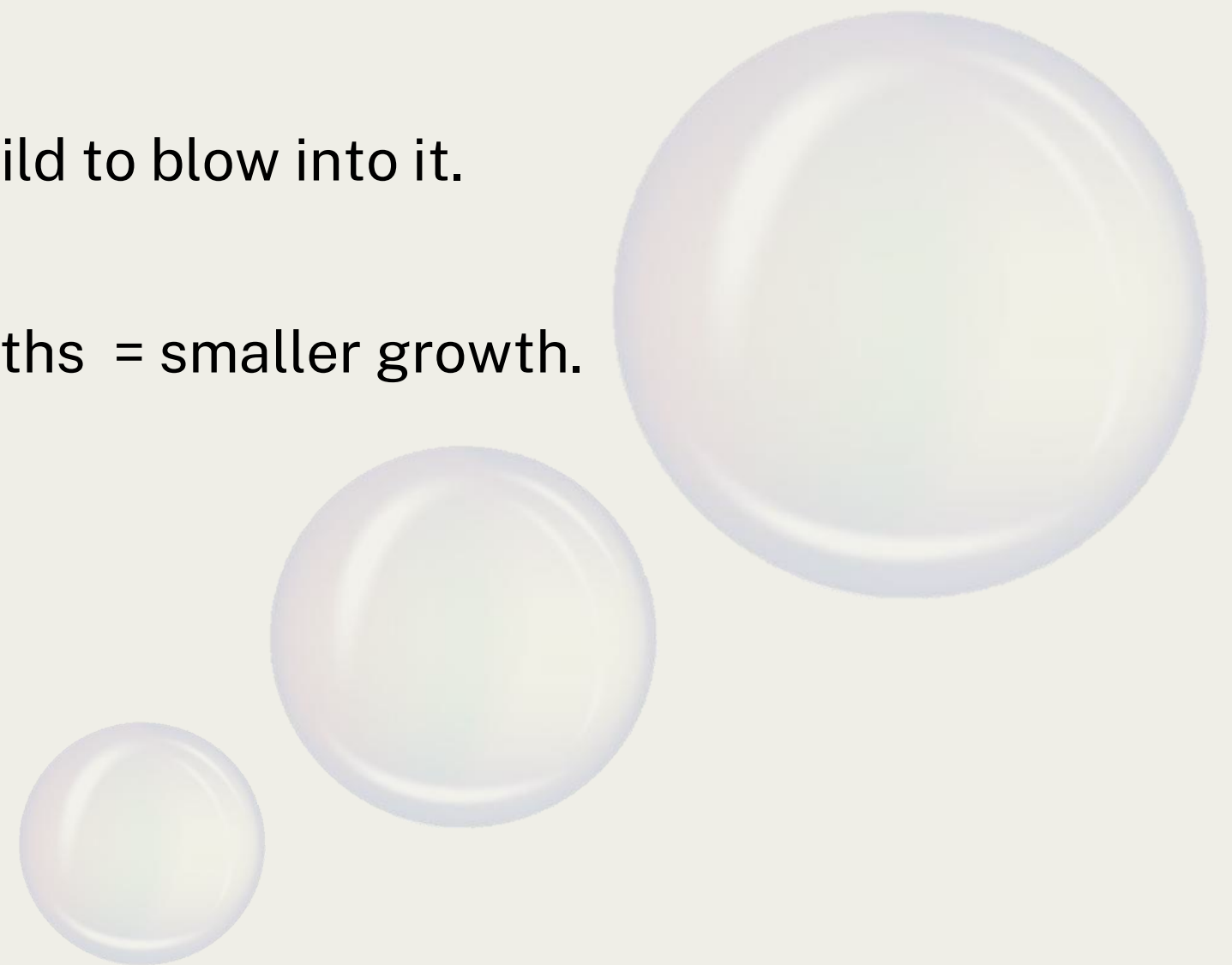


Engage: Form an imaginary bubble with your hands and ask child to blow into it.

Guide: Slow, deep breaths = bubble grows // Quick, small breaths = smaller growth.

Calm: Expand bubble as child calms down.

Conclude: “Pop” and blow away the bubble to signal end.





DBT Distress tolerance: STOP SKILL

Adapted from "DBT skills training handouts and worksheet"
by Marsha Linehan.



1. STOP.

Don't react. Don't move.

Your emotion may want you to act without thinking.
Remember, stay in control.



2. TAKE A STEP BACK.

Take a step back from the situation you are in.
Take a deep breath.
Don't act in an impulsive way because of your
emotions.



3. OBSERVE.

What are your feelings?
What are your thoughts?
What are others saying or doing?



4. PROCEED MINDFULLY.

Be aware. Think about the situation, your feelings
and the feelings of others.
Think about your goals.
What consequences would your actions have? Would
they improve or worsen the situation?

The STOP technique

When to use: to stop problematic behaviours immediately. Helps children not act on their emotions.

How it works: interrupts the automatic emotional response, allowing time for rational thinking to guide actions.

Tips: practice regularly to make it a natural response; reflect on the outcome of using this technique to reinforce its benefits.

Self-Soothe

SELF-SOOTHING

Self-soothing is a quick and effective way to reduce the intensity of negative emotions.

Sight
Low lighting
Soothing colors
Sleeping masks
Coloring books

Touch
Soft things
Cuddle things
Massage
Hot/cold shower
Heated/weighted blanket

Sound
Calming noise
ASMR videos
Nature sounds
Guided meditations
Binaural beats

Smell
Aromatherapy
Fresh air
Candles/incense
Comforting smells

Taste
Strong flavors
Warm drinks
Eat slowly
Nostalgic flavors

When to use: to calm/ ground

How it works: uses the five senses to reattune to the present moment

Ideas:

Self-soothe corner
Sensory calm-down jars

TIPP



TEMPERATURE

Change your body temperature. Splash your face with cold water, hold an ice cube, let car AC blow on your face, take a cold shower



INTENSE EXERCISE

Do intense exercise to match your intense emotion. Sprint to the end of the street, do jumping jacks, push ups, intense dancing



PACED BREATHING

Try Box Breathing: Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold it for 4 seconds, breathe out 4, and hold 4. Start again, and continue until you feel more calm.



PAIRED MUSCLE RELAXATION

Focus on 1 muscle group at a time. Tighten your muscles as much as possible for 5 seconds. Then

When to use TIPP: in extreme emotional arousal (anxiety, anger etc.)

How it works: quickly changes our body's physiology by bringing us from an emotionally heightened state back to a baseline where we can think more clearly and make better decisions.

Radical Acceptance

- Radical acceptance is a conscious effort to **acknowledge** and **accept** situations as they are
- This is instead of ignoring, avoiding or wishing the situation were different
- With radical acceptance, it is possible to **let go** of feelings of regret, anger and bitterness and move forward



Understanding your feelings in supporting others



Helpless or Isolated

Scared or Concerned

Tired or Sad

Shocked or Overwhelmed

Angry or Resentful

Guilty

Confused

