WORKSHEET 79 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Bringing the body's intensity down (TIP)

Acting quickly on the body when emotion is extreme

AIM

Offer quick techniques that act on physiology when emotion is extreme: temperature (cold water on the face), brief intense exercise, slow breathing, muscle relaxation.

WHO IT IS FOR

Intense emotional crises, urges to act impulsively or dangerously.

DURATION

A few minutes, during the crisis; prior practice in session

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Check medical contraindications before suggesting cold or intense exercise (heart problems, eating disorders, pregnancy, etc.).
2. Introduce the four techniques and practise them in session when the person is calm.
3. Help them choose the one that works best and prepare what they need (a bowl of cold water, a place to move).
4. Remind them that the aim is to bring the intensity down so that other skills can be used afterwards.

POINTS TO WATCH

> Cold water on the face slows the heart rate: ask for a medical opinion if there are heart problems, treatments acting on the heart or an eating disorder. Never use cold for long or in a dangerous way.

REFERENCES

Linehan, M. M. (2015). DBT Skills Training Manual (2nd ed.). Guilford.

Linehan, M. M. (2015). DBT Skills Training Handouts and Worksheets (2nd ed.). Guilford.

PSYCHOLOGIST'S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 79 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

Bringing the body's intensity down

Best done with your psychologist

When an emotion is extreme, thinking becomes almost impossible. Acting on the body first can bring the intensity down within a few minutes. Practise when you are calm, and check with your psychologist or your doctor that these techniques are suitable for you.

1. Cold: cold water on your face (20 to 30 seconds), holding your breath a little. Not if you have heart problems.
2. Movement: a few minutes of intense effort (walking fast, stairs), if your health allows.
3. Slow breathing: breathing out for longer than you breathe in.
4. Releasing the muscles: tensing and letting go, from head to toe.

Situation	Technique used	Emotion before /10	Emotion after /10

Which technique helps me most to come down?

These exercises do not replace therapy. If you are in distress or having suicidal thoughts: 112 (European Union), 3114 (France) or the emergency number of the country where you live.

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