

CWSH 6: Client handout Tips for increasing emotional stability

(Some of the material in this handout is adapted from Linehan, M. 1993b, *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder*, New York: Guildford Press:ch. 9.)

Practise being mindful in daily life:

- focus your attention on what you are doing, be aware and in the present, rather than ruminating on negative thoughts
- for a few minutes each day, practise focusing your attention on your breath going in out of your nostrils, and letting go of any thoughts that float into your mind. You can, for example, put them on a leaf or in a balloon or bubble, and let them float away. Don't judge these thoughts; just gently acknowledge them and let them go.

Be mindful of your emotions:

- stand back and observe the emotion without judging it
- notice the emotion come and go, like a wave. Notice the experience of the emotion: physical sensations, images, thoughts, smells, sounds, colours, or temperature associated with the emotion
- just let the emotion be as it is. Don't do anything to it
- be aware that you are not your emotion. Think of times when you have felt different emotions from this one
- Don't automatically act on your emotion. Decide whether to act or not.

Understand the context of your emotion:

- what triggers the emotion
- how interpretations, beliefs, and thoughts influence the emotion
- how the emotion is expressed (words, acts, or facial expression)
- the after-effects of the emotion.

Look after yourself:

- get enough sleep but not too much
- get some exercise
- eat enough, but not too much, and stick to food that helps you feel healthy, calm, and in control
- deal with physical illnesses
- cut down or stop alcohol and other drug use.

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(continued)**

Do things that make you feel good:

- make a list of activities that give you pleasure, and a list of activities that give you a sense of achievement.
- do at least one from each list each day.

Have good relationships:

- look after relationships: maintain them and fix problems that arise
- form new relationships.

Focus on positive experiences rather than on worries:

- focus on positive experiences, and if your thoughts wander to the negative, bring them back to the positive
- Let go of thoughts that undermine positive experiences, by not focusing on them, or by putting them onto a leaf or into a balloon or bubble and letting them float away.