TIPP

LIFE BALANCE COUNSELING, LLC

When emotions feel overwhelming

TIPP offers four body-based skills from dialectical behavior therapy (DBT). Use this handout when strong emotions leave you tense, overwhelmed, or too stirred up to think clearly. The aim is to lower the intensity enough to choose your next step.

Choose one skill. You do not need to do all four.



T

Temperature

Place a cool, damp cloth or a cool pack wrapped in a thin towel across your cheeks and around your eyes for 15-30 seconds. Keep your nose and mouth clear and breathe normally. Remove it sooner if uncomfortable.

Keep it cool, never painful. Do not put ice directly on skin.



I

Intense exercise

If medically safe for you, try 30-60 seconds of brisk walking, jogging in place, or energetic dancing. Choose an effort that raises your heart rate within your usual limits. Slow down, recover, and notice how you feel.

If vigorous movement is unsafe for you, choose another TIPP skill.



P

Paced breathing

Breathe in gently for about 4 seconds, then breathe out slowly for about 6 seconds. Repeat for 1-2 minutes. Keep your breath soft; there is no need to hold it or take very large breaths.

Adjust the count to your comfort. If dizzy, return to normal breathing.



P

Progressive muscle relaxation

Gently tense one muscle group for about 5 seconds, then release for 10 seconds. Move through hands, shoulders, face, and legs. Keep breathing; release as you breathe out. Notice the difference between tension and release.

Skip painful or injured areas. You can simply soften muscles instead.

After the intensity eases

Notice what shifted, even a little. Then choose one helpful next step: ask for support, use another coping skill, or return to the situation with more clarity.

Before you try: Check with your healthcare professional about cold-face techniques or vigorous exercise if you have a heart/circulation condition, fainting history, an eating disorder, or other medical concerns.

Adapted from DBT distress tolerance skills. Educational support; not a substitute for therapy or medical care.

Sources: VA MIRECC | Queensland Health | NHS Berkshire