Understand an emotional response

DBT skills in individual counseling

Look at one event with curiosity. An emotion can make sense even when acting on its urge would create problems. Acceptance and change can both be part of your response.

Example: I felt hurt when plans changed and wanted to withdraw. I can acknowledge the hurt and ask one clear question about rescheduling.

1. The event I observed

Separate what happened from what I guessed it meant.

2. My emotion and any body signals

Use my own words. More than one feeling can be present.

3. What made this moment harder

Stress, tiredness, pain, unmet needs, or something in the environment.

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4. My urge or action and its effects

What did it offer right away? What happened, or might happen, later?

5. A response that fits the facts and my goals

Address a real problem, seek protection or support, or choose a different action when the urge is unhelpful.

6. One support or adjustment to practice

What can I make easier before a similar moment? What will I review with my counselor?

Do not treat a real threat, abuse, discrimination, or a health concern as just a thinking error. Work with your counselor on safety and practical support. You do not need to force a different feeling.

Educational practice, not a complete treatment plan