

STOPP

A mindful practice to defuse intense emotions and thoughts in the moment

Stop!

Interrupt your thoughts with the command 'stop!'

Just pause for a moment.

Say it to yourself, out loud or in your head as soon as you notice your mind and/or body is reacting to a trigger.



Take a Breath

Take slow deep breaths.

In through the nose - hold it - out through the mouth.

Observe

Notice your thoughts, feelings, physical sensations.

- What am I thinking about?
- Where is my focus of attention?
- What am I reacting to?
- What am I feeling in my body?



Pull Back - Put in some Perspective

What's the bigger picture? Take a helicopter view.

Is there another way of looking at this situation?

What advice would I give to a friend? What would they say to me right now?

How important is this right now? What about in 6 months time?



Practise what works - then Proceed

What is the BEST thing to do right now?

What is the most helpful thing for me, others, the situation?

Do I have to act now? Could I wait and see...

Where can I focus my attention right now?

What other skills can I use?



HOW TO USE STOPP



Stop!

Say it to yourself, in your head, as soon as you notice your mind and/or your body is reacting to a trigger.

Stop! helps to put in the space between the stimulus (the trigger, whatever we are reacting to) and our response.

The earlier you use STOPP, the easier and more effective it will be.

Take a Breath

Breathing a little deeper and slower will calm down and reduce the physical reaction of emotion/adrenaline.

In through the nose, out through our mouth - the brain's reset mechanism.

Focusing on our breathing means we are not so focused on the thoughts and feelings of the distress, so that our minds can start to clear and we can think more logically and rationally.

Observe

We can notice the thoughts going through our mind, we can notice what we feel in our body, and we can notice the urge to react in an impulsive way. We can notice the vicious cycle of anxiety, sadness or anger (etc).

Noticing helps us to defuse from those thoughts and feelings and therefore reduce their power and control.

Pull Back - Put in some Perspective

The thought challenging of CBT. Thinking differently.

Don't believe everything you think! Thoughts are thoughts - NOT statements of fact.

When we step back emotionally from a situation, and start to see the bigger picture, it reduces those distressing beliefs. We can do this by asking ourselves questions.

Practise what works - then Proceed

This is the behavioural change of CBT. Doing things differently.

Rather than reacting impulsively with unhelpful consequences, we can CHOOSE our more helpful and positive response.

Shift our focus of attention.