

Actions for the heat of the moment: brief introduction to distress tolerance skills

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Darrow 2024 Distress Tolerance Skills Echo

Wavefront
Program



Disclosures

- No one involved in the planning or presentation of this activity has any relevant financial relationships with a commercial interest to disclose.
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Learning Objectives

- Identify elements of evidence-based interventions for self-harm
- Practice and model how to talk to youth about crisis behaviors
- Practice and teach 2 distress tolerance skills

Definitions

- Suicidal behaviors
 - Thoughts - aka "**ideation**," thinking about or considering suicide
 - Active (planning) vs. Passive
 - Action - "**attempt**," non-fatal, self-directed, potentially injurious behavior with intent to die
- Nonsuicidal self-injury
 - Intentional destruction of one's own body tissues without suicidal intent
 - For purposes not socially sanctioned

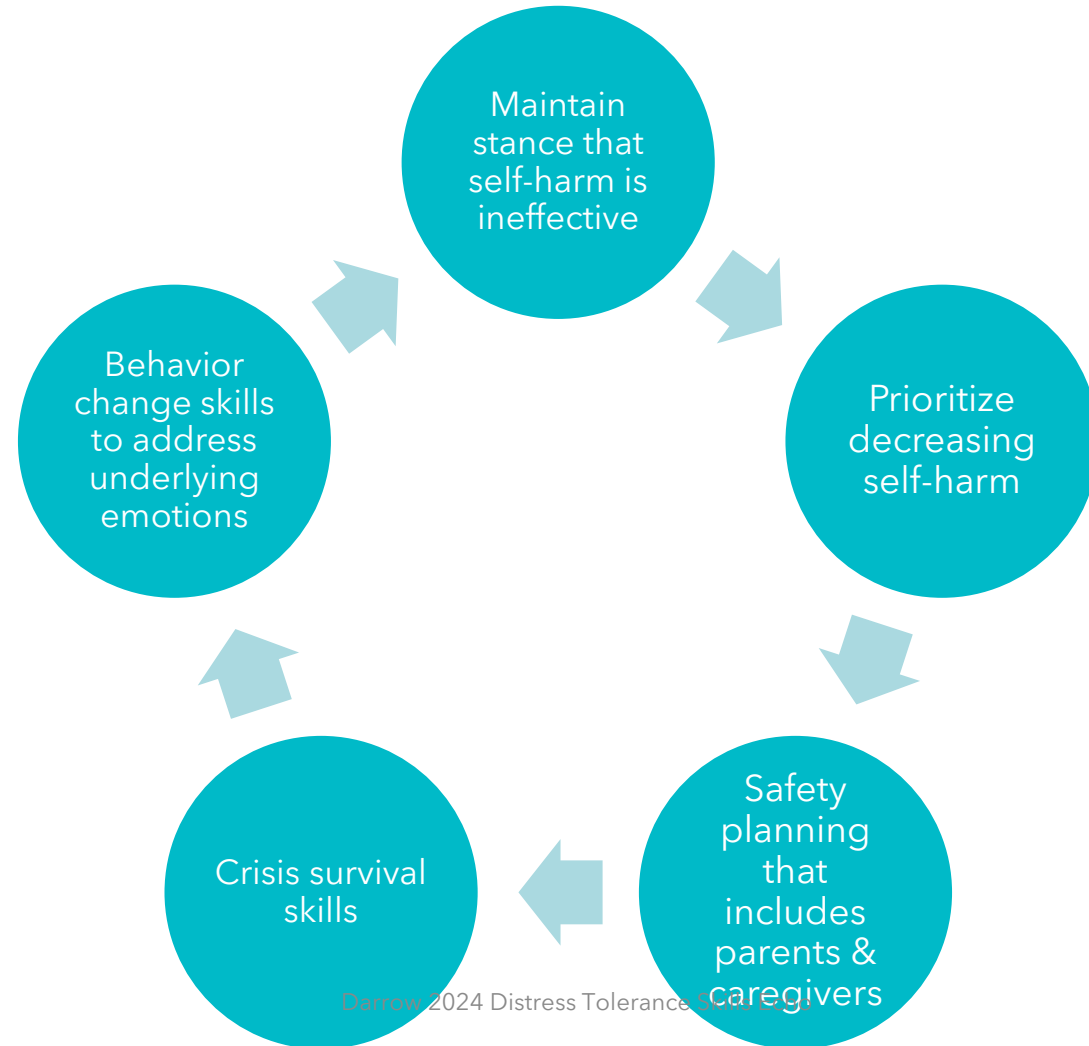
Common Myths

- Asking directly about suicide will make someone suicidal
- If someone says they are thinking about suicide they HAVE to be hospitalized
- Self-injury that doesn't require medical attention is not something to worry about
- Its impossible to make an environment safe, there are always other ways to hurt oneself
- Suicidal behavior and self-harm is just a cry for help/way to get attention/way to get out of doing something
- Self-injury is common/trendy...all the teens do it.
- This is just a phase, they'll grow out of it.

Some Suicide Statistics

- Suicide is 2nd leading cause of death for teens and young adults
- ~20% of youth think about suicide
- ~20% of youth engage in NSSI
- Only 4-8% of youth attempt suicide
 - Higher in youth with known mental health problems (24-33%)
- Our ability to predict who is at risk of suicide is limited AND the strongest predictors are:
 - Nonsuicidal self-injury
 - Thinking about suicide
 - Past suicide attempts

Elements of evidence-based interventions



How to talk about crisis behaviors

- Be direct
- Maintain that self-harm is not effective
- Assert that you are asking about these behaviors/working on safety plans as a way to help
- Don't argue
- Validate emotions

ABC's of Promoting Safety

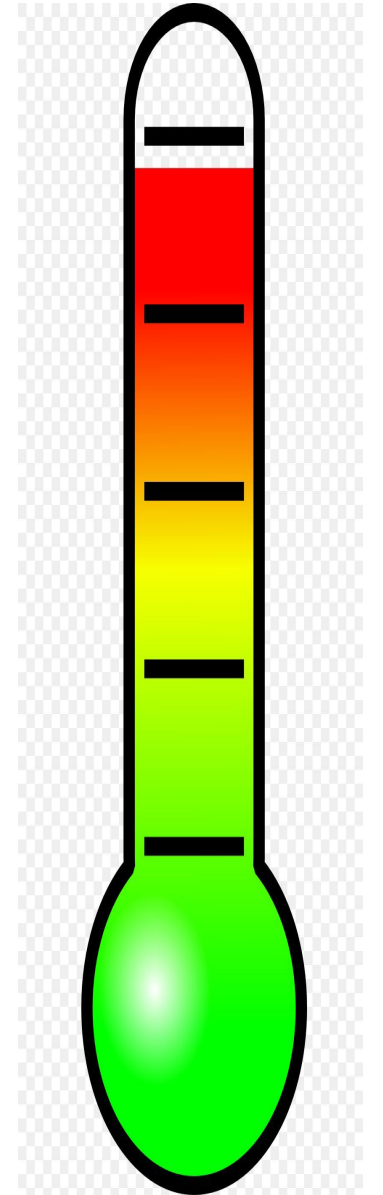
- Antecedents
 - Means reduction
 - Reminders for skillful behavior
- Behavior
 - Distress Tolerance
 - Differential reinforcement of alternative behaviors
- Consequences
 - Decrease reinforcement of ineffective behaviors
 - Increase reinforcement of safety-promoting behaviors

A model of emotion



Crisis Survival Skills

- AKA "distress tolerance" skills
- Distracting away from crisis
- Not the time to problem solve



Distress Tolerance Skills

- A.K.A Crisis survival skills
- Helpful in a crisis AND can't be the only skills to use





The Essential DT skill

- **S**top
- **T**ake a step back
- **O**bserve
- **P**roceed mindfully

Distract with “ACCEPTS”

Activities

Contribute

Compare

Emotions

Push Away

Thoughts

Sensations

Bonus skill: TIPP

- **TIPP your body chemistry with...**

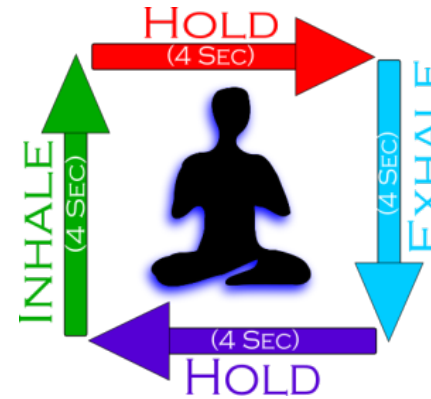
- **T**emperature



- **I**ntense Exercise



- **P**aced Breathing



- **P**rogressive Muscle Relaxation

