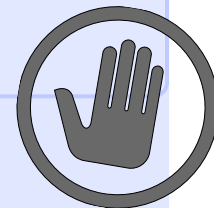


# DBT STOP Skill for Addiction

The STOP skill is a distress tolerance technique from Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) that helps you manage impulsive behaviors and emotions, which are common challenges for individuals struggling with addiction. Use this worksheet to guide you through the STOP steps when you feel overwhelmed, distracted, or triggered.

## S - Stop

When you notice that you are feeling overwhelmed or about to react impulsively, just STOP. Pause immediately.



- Questions to Ask:
- What situation triggered my intense emotions?
  - How do I feel right now?
  - What impulsive reaction am I trying to prevent?

## T - Take a Step Back

Physically and mentally take a step back from the situation. This could mean leaving the room, taking a deep breath, or simply pausing your actions and thoughts.

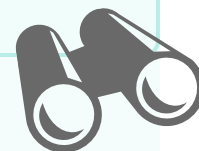


- Questions to Ask:
- How can I create a brief moment of distance from my current situation?
  - What helps me feel more grounded?

- Actions to Try:
- Take a few deep breaths.
  - Count to 10 slowly.
  - Excuse yourself from the situation momentarily.

## O - Observe

Observe what is happening inside and around you without judgment. Pay attention to your thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations, as well as what others are doing and saying.



- Questions to Ask:
- What am I feeling emotionally?
  - What physical sensations am I noticing?
  - What thoughts are going through my mind?
  - What is happening around me?

- Things to Observe:
- Emotions you are experiencing.
  - What others are saying or doing.
  - Heart rate, breathing, muscle tension.
  - Thoughts running through your mind.

## P - Proceed Mindfully

After you've taken a moment to stop, step back, and observe, proceed mindfully. Make a conscious choice about how to respond rather than reacting impulsively.



- Questions to Ask:
- What is the most effective way to handle this situation?
  - How can I respond in a way that aligns with my goals and values?
  - What can I do to take care of myself in this moment?

- Actions to Try:
- Think about your goals and values.
  - Choose a response that aligns with your long-term well-being.
  - Communicate calmly and assertively if necessary.



## PART 1: Identify an Impulsive Situation & Apply the STOP Skill

Think of a recent situation where you acted impulsively. Let's use the STOP skill to handle a similar situation in the future.

**What Happened?** Describe the situation in detail:

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**Stop:** What can you do to pause before reacting to your impulse?

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**Take a Step Back:** What can you do to create distance from the impulse?

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**Observe:** What are you feeling, thinking, or sensing in the moment?

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**Proceed Mindfully:** How can you respond in a way that aligns with your values and goals?

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## PART 2: Reflect on Your Impulses

Use the following questions to reflect on your impulses and practice using the STOP skill:

What changes do you notice in your body, emotions, or thoughts when you feel especially impulsive?

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What reminders can you set up to help you remember to use the STOP skill?

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What challenges did you face in using the STOP skill, and how can you improve next time?

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# Additional Resources to Support Your Mental Health Journey

It can be hard to know where to begin looking for support in your mental health journey. Getting a referral from a primary care physician is a reliable first step. Also, sometimes family and friends have experienced similar issues and have professionals they would recommend. The experts at ChoosingTherapy.com are here to help as well, with resources we have reviewed and recommend. Our [strict editorial standards](#) ensure our reviews are fair, honest, thorough, and based on firsthand experience.

## You Can Trust ChoosingTherapy.com



**300+**  
Companies Reviewed



**2,350+**  
Hours of Firsthand Experience



**1,150+**  
Data Points Analyzed



### [Best Online Therapy](#)

Online therapy is a convenient way to connect with a licensed therapist to address mental health issues, reduce unhealthy behaviors, develop effective coping skills, and get more satisfaction out of life. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.

### [Best Online Psychiatry](#)

Online psychiatry providers enable patients to consult with licensed psychiatrists and other mental health professionals. They can evaluate, diagnose, and prescribe medication to help manage mental health issues. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.



### [Best Mental Health Apps](#)

Apps can be great way to monitor mood, track sleep, journal, and practice healthy coping skills like mindfulness and meditation. There are apps specifically designed to help people reduce the symptoms of depression, anxiety, ADHD, chronic stress, and burnout.

### [Therapist Directory](#)

When you're looking for a mental health provider with a very particular skill set, level of experience, or personality type, a therapist directory can be very helpful. Using the filters, you can refine your search until you find a therapist who feels like a perfect fit.

