The STOP Skill and Crisis Check

For the moments when an urge is strong and acting on it would make things worse.

Is this a crisis?

- ☐ Very stressful
- ☐ Short term
- ☐ Pressure to act right now

Use crisis survival skills when:

- The pain is intense and can't be fixed fast
- Acting on the urge would make it worse
- Emotions are about to take over
- I'm overwhelmed but things must get done

Not for: everyday problems, fixing my whole life, or building a life worth living.

S

Stop

Freeze. Don't move, speak or send anything yet. The urge is not an order.

T

Take a step back

Step away from the situation, even for a minute. Take one slow breath.

O

Observe

Notice what's happening inside you and around you. Facts, feelings, urges, other people.

P

Proceed mindfully

Ask Wise Mind: which action will make this better, and which will make it worse?

Then choose a crisis survival skill

Pros and cons
Acting on the urge vs riding it out

TIPP
Cold water, intense exercise, paced breathing, paired relaxation

ACCEPTS
Distract until the wave passes

Self-soothe
Comfort each of the five senses

IMPROVE
Make this moment a little more bearable

Reach out
Call someone on my plan, or 988

My distress now: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

When my distress is above ____ / 10, I use STOP and a crisis skill first.

My first move after STOP: _____

Original layout by Lotus & Tulip, inspired by the DBT crisis survival skills. A practice tool, not a substitute for care.

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ACCEPTS and Self-Soothe Menu

Fill in your own ideas before a crisis, so you don't have to think of them during one.

Distract with ACCEPTS

A — Activities
e.g. walk, clean one drawer, a game, a show
My idea: _____

C — Contributing
e.g. help someone, send a kind text
My idea: _____

C — Comparisons
e.g. a time I got through something like this
My idea: _____

E — Emotions (different)
e.g. a comedy, upbeat music, funny videos
My idea: _____

P — Pushing away
e.g. put it on a shelf until a set time
My idea: _____

T — Thoughts
e.g. count, a puzzle, song lyrics in my head
My idea: _____

S — Sensations
e.g. ice in hand, a cold shower, a stress ball
My idea: _____

Self-soothe with the five senses

S — See	H — Hear	S — Smell	T — Taste	T — Touch
candle, photos, sky	calm playlist, rain	lotion, coffee, soap	tea, mint, one slow bite	blanket, pet, warm shower
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

IMPROVE the moment

- **I** — Imagery
- **M** — Meaning
- **P** — Prayer or Wise Mind
- **R** — Relaxing actions
- **O** — One thing at a time
- **V** — Brief vacation
- **E** — Encouragement

A calm place I can picture: _____

One thing I can do fully, right now: _____

My encouraging words (e.g. "I can stand this. It will pass."): _____

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My Crisis Survival Plan

Write this when you are calm. Read it when the urge hits. Keep a photo of it on your phone.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 My warning signs

Thoughts, feelings, body, situations

_____

_____

2 Pros and cons

The urge I'm facing: _____

	Pros	Cons
Acting on the urge		
Riding it out, not acting		

3 My crisis skills, in order

Start with STOP

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Tick the ones I'll try:

- ☐ Cold water
- ☐ Fast walk
- ☐ Self-soothe
- ☐ Paced breathing
- ☐ ACCEPTS
- ☐ IMPROVE

4 People I can reach

Name and number

_____ _____

_____ _____

5 Make my space safer

What I can put away or ask someone to hold

_____

If you might act on thoughts of suicide or self harm, crisis skills are not enough on their own. In the US, call or text 988 any time (988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline), text HOME to 741741 (Crisis Text Line), or call 911 if you are in immediate danger.

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