

3X3X3 Coping Plan:

"Distress Tolerance" is a term used to describe how you get through a hard situation without making it worse. The idea is to survive the feelings or the stress. You don't have to make it better (although most of us want that). You just have to get through it and survive it. Most coping skills help us do that. However, sometimes our emotions overwhelm us or are really strong. When we feel this way, sometimes having a coping plan ahead of time can help us.

One important thing is to keep this plan simple. If it's really complex, it's too hard and chances are that you won't do it or it won't work. So, we want to only have a few things on it. Second, it works best if you do it ahead of time. When you're in the middle of feeling anxious, afraid, sad, or angry, you may not want to think about things to do, or you may not feel able to think clearly. It's a lot easier to do something if you already know what to do.

An easy way to develop a plan that will last approximately ½ hour (27 minutes, to be precise) is to use a 3X3X3 plan. The idea here is to plan to use 3 different things, 3 different times, for at least 3 minutes each. You can do these for longer, but you want it to be something that will last at least 3 minutes.

It helps if you can think of three kinds of things you like to do. For example, watch TV, play a game, or listen to music. Then, you want to come up with three different things to do that are in these categories. Let me show you an example:

<u>Category A: TV/Video</u>	<u>Category B: Games</u>	<u>Category C: Music</u>
Watch a TV show	Play a board game	Listen to a podcast
Watch the news	Play a video game	Listen to a happy playlist
Watch YouTube	Do puzzles	Listen to rock or hip-hop

Make sure that you have what you need in order to carry out your plan. For example, if your plan includes watching YouTube, make sure you have access to the internet where you plan on watching. Plan to do things that are both distracting and engaging.

The idea is that you want to be able to generate three items in three categories. When you're ready to use your plan, you want to do each item for at least 3 minutes each. You can do each one longer, but you want it to last at least three minutes. This will give you

close to ½ hour of active coping, which is enough time for the intensity of urges or emotions to come down a little.

3X3X3 Grid: Pick out three categories, then ideas from three categories, and put them in each box. If you think you'll need it, print out or make a second grid for a second plan. Make sure that you have what you need in order to carry out your plan. For example, if your plan includes watching YouTube, make sure you have access to the internet where you plan on watching. When you use the plan, go across the row, rather than down the column. This gives your brain something new to focus on when you switch coping skills, and keeps you distracted longer.

Category A: _____ Item:	Category B: _____ Item:	Category C: _____ Item:
Category A: _____ Item:	Category B: _____ Item:	Category C: _____ Item:
Category A: _____ Item:	Category B: _____ Item:	Category C: _____ Item: