



# Tolerating a bad situation with distraction

Tolerating discomfort means using distraction to get through a crisis without making a bad situation worse.

Sometimes just surviving a bad situation without making it worse is the best outcome. We can't problem solve to make it better, but we can 'get through it' or 'stick it out'. When we are overwhelmed by emotions, often our first impulse or reaction makes everything worse. Annoying!

If we feel someone has disrespected us, we might fight back. If we feel someone is unfairly accusing us, we might run away. Resisting the impulse to react in unhelpful ways means we might get through the crisis without making it worse. The more often you stick it out, the more skilled and confident you will become in managing strong emotions.

There are many ways that we can make a crisis worse. These include verbally or physically attacking someone, using drugs or alcohol, buying stuff you don't need and can't afford, binge eating, harming yourself, running away or giving up.

We only need two strategies to get through a crisis - **distraction** and **self-comfort**. Self-comfort uses your 5 senses to reassure and calm yourself while distraction involves deliberately turning your attention away from the crisis. Distracting ourselves can help us avoid acting impulsively and making things worse. It is important to build skills in both strategies.

### DISTRACT YOURSELF IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:



**Distract with thoughts:** fill your mind with other things so there is no room for what is distressing you.



**Distract with emotions:** focus on uplifting or inspiring or funny things to shift your distress.



**Distract with body signals:** Move your body slowly (stretch or squeeze and release your muscles) or really fast (rock, fidget, or bounce).



**Distract with support:** Get support from your friends, worker or family.

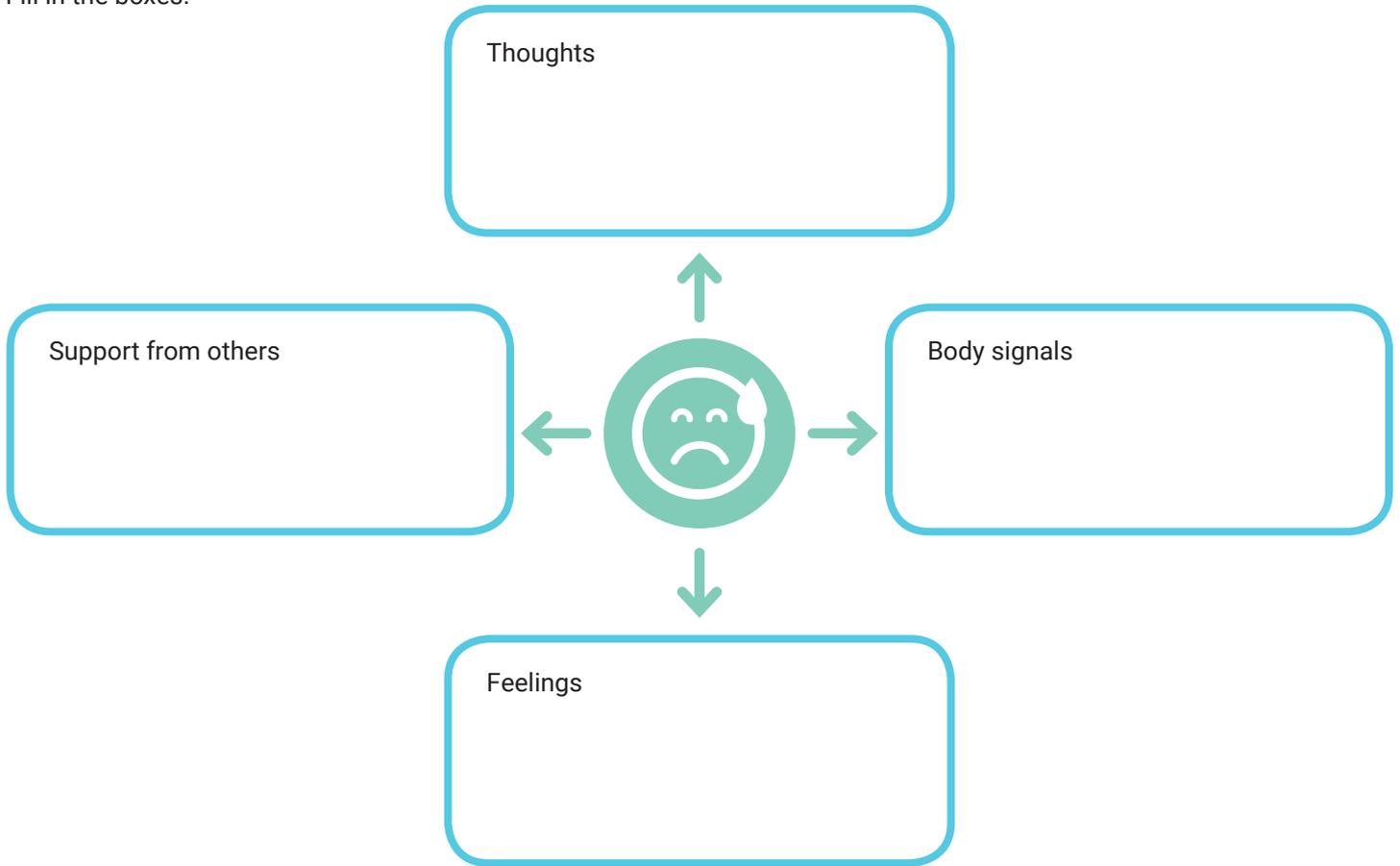


**Take a selfie of yourself when you feel the worst. When you feel better and the crisis is over, look at your selfie and study your facial expression. Use it to remind yourself that even the worst emotions eventually pass.**



## MY DISTRACTION PLAN

Think of as many ways as you can to distract yourself using thoughts, feelings, body signals and support from others. Fill in the boxes.



## A-Z OF DISTRACTION

If you are stuck, look at this list for tips:

A – Attend to your surroundings	J – Just focus on getting through the next 5 minutes	S – Sing lyrics to a song
B – Bounce on your toes	K – Keep breathing calm breaths	T – Talk to a friend or worker
C – Count windows, cars, clouds...	L – Laugh at YouTube	U – Utter a coping thought
D – Draw or colour in	M – Make lists of your favourite things	V – change your Venue – from outside to inside
E – Exhale and say “it will pass”	N – Name your emotions	W – Watch an inspirational video
F – Film yourself making faces	O – Observe your breath	X – eXercise vigorously
G – Get perspective – compare yourself to someone in a worse situation	P – Put your face in ice water or hold ice	Y – “You can get through this”
H – Hang out with calm people	Q – squeeze and release your muscles	Z – Zone out on a video, movie or game
I – Imagine a safe or happy place	R – Run on the spot	

Commit to your distraction strategies. Take a photo of this page and save it on your phone so you have your Distraction Plan ready for when bad things happen.



## PRACTICE & REFLECT

Look out for opportunities to practice your Distraction Plan this week. Tick it off in the calendar when you notice that you have used your plan.

MON      TUE      WED      THUR      FRI      SAT      SUN

○      ○      ○      ○      ○      ○      ○