

# [Free Sample] 15 Fun Activities For DBT Groups

Hello There!

My name is Sean. Thanks for downloading this mini-guide on DBT Activities for Groups - I hope you find it useful 😊

I've broken it into the main DBT Modules:

[Mindfulness](#)

[Distress Tolerance](#)

[Emotion Regulation](#)

[Interpersonal Effectiveness](#)

And I've thrown in some [Integration](#) for good measure!

This guide is just a **sample** of what's available throughout the website. You'll find loads more activities here: <https://www.mentalhealthness.com/therapy-activities/dbt-activities/>

Additionally, I recommend you take a look at the FULL guide here:

<https://www.mentalhealthness.com/dbt-activities-ebook/>

This is a much more **full-featured eBook** with a list of 22 Activities based on the DBT modules, and it only costs \$9.99.

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**Mindfulness: Focuses on improving an individual's ability to accept and be present in the current moment. It is the foundational module that supports the other skills, emphasizing non-judgmental observation of thoughts, feelings, and surroundings.**

## **Grape Exercise**

This is all about eating a grape but doing it mindfully. You really take your time to look at it, feel its texture, smell it, and then slowly eat it, noticing every little aspect of the taste and sensation. It's a way to practice being fully present and engaged in a simple activity. This is up there as one of my favourite mindfulness exercises. Mindful eating all the way.

- **Introduction:** Begin by explaining the purpose of the grape exercise: to cultivate mindfulness through focusing on the experience of eating a single grape with full attention.
- **Distribute Grapes:** Hand out a grape to each group member, asking them to hold off on eating it until instructed.
- **Observation:** Instruct members to observe the grape, noting its color, texture, and any other visible characteristics.
- **Touch:** Encourage members to feel the grape between their fingers, paying attention to its texture, weight, and any sensations in their fingers and palms.
- **Smell:** Ask the group to bring the grape close to their nose and inhale, noticing any smells and how it affects their senses.

- **Taste:** Instruct members to place the grape in their mouth but not to chew it immediately. Instead, focus on how it feels on the tongue, the flavors that emerge, and the urge to chew.

## Mindful Listening to Music

This activity is all about immersing yourself in music with your full attention, focusing on different elements such as melody, instruments, or rhythm. The goal is to experience the music fully without getting lost in thoughts or judgments, which can enhance your present-moment awareness.

- **Selection:** Choose a piece of music, ideally something the group hasn't heard, to encourage fresh attention.
- **Comfort:** Ensure everyone is seated comfortably, suggesting they close their eyes to minimize distractions.
- **Initiation:** Start playing the music, inviting the group to focus solely on the auditory experience.
- **Observation:** Encourage noticing the melody, different instruments, and any emotions the music evokes.
- **Mindful Return:** If thoughts wander, guide the group to gently return their attention to the music.
- **Reflection:** After listening, allow a moment for the group to reflect on the experience and any feelings it brought up.
- **Sharing:** Open the floor for group members to share their experiences and any insights gained.

## Five Senses Exercise

Focus on each of your five senses one at a time, tuning into the immediate environment around you. Put your phone on silent!

- **Introduction:** Explain the purpose of engaging all five senses to heighten present-moment awareness.
- **Sight:** Begin with sight, asking the group to notice colors, movements, or details in their surroundings.
- **Sound:** Shift focus to sounds, both near and far, observing without judgment.
- **Touch:** Encourage awareness of tactile sensations, like the feel of clothing or the air on skin.
- **Smell:** Guide attention to any odors or fragrances, noticing how each smell affects them.
- **Taste:** If possible, include a taste element, such as a piece of fruit, noticing the flavors and textures.
- **Reflection:** End with a group discussion on the experience, sharing observations and feelings elicited by the exercise.

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# Fun Distress Tolerance Activities

**Distress Tolerance:** Aims to equip individuals with skills to tolerate and survive crisis situations without resorting to self-destructive behavior. It includes techniques for managing and withstanding intense emotions without reacting impulsively.

## Temperature Change

This activity uses temperature shifts, like holding an ice cube or feeling warm water, to pull your focus from overwhelming emotions to the physical sensation at hand. Keeping a bucket of ice water with you at all times is going to be tough though! One of the best distress tolerance skills IMO.

- **Introduction:** Explain the impact of temperature changes on emotional regulation.
- **Preparation:** Ready ice packs, cold water, or warm compresses.
- **Guidance:** Demonstrate how to safely apply the temperature change.
- **Experience:** Participants try the temperature change, noting its immediate effects.
- **Observation:** Encourage noticing any shifts in emotional intensity.
- **Discussion:** Share experiences and discuss the technique's effectiveness.
- **Reflection:** Reflect on incorporating this strategy into daily stress management routines.



## Intense Exercise

An instant mood lifter, engaging in intense physical activity, like a quick jog or some jumping jacks, can help shift your emotional state. Perfect for those moments when you feel too pent up and need an immediate outlet for your energy.

- **Introduction:** Highlight how physical exertion can influence emotional well-being.
- **Preparation:** Choose a suitable space for the exercise, ensuring safety.
- **Guidance:** Lead a short, intense workout session, adaptable to participants' fitness levels.
- **Experience:** Participants engage in the exercise, focusing on the physical sensations.
- **Observation:** Encourage awareness of changes in stress or emotional intensity post-exercise.
- **Discussion:** Share and discuss the exercise's impact on emotional state.
- **Reflection:** Talk about how to integrate physical activity into routines for emotional regulation.

## Paced Breathing

Slowing down your breath can have a surprisingly calming effect on your entire nervous system. By consciously taking slow, deep breaths, you're signaling your body to relax and telling your mind it's time to dial down the stress. This one is great as it really focuses you.

- **Introduction:** Explain the physiological effects of slow, deep breathing on the nervous system.
- **Preparation:** Get comfortable and set a peaceful atmosphere, possibly dimming lights.
- **Guidance:** Demonstrate how to breathe deeply, focusing on elongating the breath.
- **Experience:** Participants practice paced breathing, paying attention to each inhalation and exhalation.
- **Observation:** Note any shifts in mental or physical state during the exercise.
- **Discussion:** Discuss experiences and the technique's effectiveness in reducing distress.
- **Reflection:** Encourage incorporating paced breathing into daily stress management practices.

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# Fun Emotional Regulation Activities

**Emotion Regulation:** Teaches strategies for managing and changing intense emotions that are causing problems in a person's life. It includes understanding emotions, reducing emotional vulnerability, and increasing positive emotional experiences.

## Emotion Pictionary

This is a fun game in dbt group therapy where you draw emotions on a board and others guess what you're illustrating. You can just use pen and paper and steal a few ideas from actual Pictionary 😊

- **Gather Materials:** Collect drawing supplies and prepare a visible drawing area.
- **Prepare Emotions:** Write various emotions on slips of paper and place them in a draw container.
- **Draw & Guess:** Participants draw an emotion from the container and then illustrate it without words, while others guess.
- **Reflect:** After each round, discuss the emotions depicted and the different ways people interpret and express feelings.
- **Rotate:** Ensure everyone gets a turn to draw and guess, fostering group engagement.
- **Insight Share:** Conclude with a group discussion on what was learned about emotional diversity and expression.
- **Encourage Practice:** Suggest members practice recognizing and expressing emotions outside the group setting.

## Gratitude Mapping

Here, you create a collective or individual map filled with notes or symbols of what everyone's grateful for.

- **Introduce Concept:** Explain the idea of gratitude mapping and its benefits.
- **Supply Materials:** Provide large paper or board and markers, stickers, or other creative materials.
- **Initial Mapping:** Have each participant add at least one thing they're grateful for to the map.
- **Weekly Additions:** Set aside time each week to add new items to the gratitude map.
- **Personal Reflection:** Encourage personal reflection on new graticudes to add.
- **Group Discussion:** Regularly discuss as a group the growing map and feelings it evokes.
- **Display Proudly:** Keep the map in a common area as a constant reminder of collective and individual graticudes.

## Mood Tracking

Using charts or apps, you keep a daily log of your mood fluctuations and what might be triggering them. You can start during the therapy sessions and carry this on later.

- **Choose Method:** Decide whether to use paper charts or a digital app for mood tracking.
- **Daily Logging:** Encourage participants to log their mood at least once a day, noting any specific events or thoughts that may have influenced it.
- **Identify Patterns:** After a few weeks, review the logs to identify any patterns or common triggers.
- **Share Insights:** In group sessions, share general findings or insights gained from mood tracking (maintaining privacy on specifics).
- **Problem-Solve:** Use identified patterns to discuss strategies for managing triggers or enhancing mood stability.
- **Encourage Consistency:** Highlight the importance of regular logging for accurate mood tracking.
- **Reflect on Progress:** Periodically reflect on any changes or improvements in emotional regulation as a result of mood tracking.

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# Fun Interpersonal Effectiveness Activities

**Interpersonal Effectiveness:** Focuses on increasing interpersonal skills to help individuals navigate relationships more effectively. It includes skills for asking for what one needs, saying no, and coping with interpersonal conflict in a way that maintains respect for self and others.

## Assertiveness Role-Playing

Enact scenarios that require assertiveness, giving everyone a chance to practice expressing their needs and boundaries clearly and respectfully. I enjoy this in group therapy settings in dialectical behavior therapy (dbt).

- **Set the Scene:** Begin by explaining the value of assertiveness in healthy communication.
- **Choose Scenarios:** Provide a variety of everyday situations where assertiveness might be needed.
- **Role Play:** Divide the group into pairs or small teams to act out the scenarios.
- **Group Feedback:** After each role-play, allow the group to offer constructive feedback.
- **Discuss Feelings:** Encourage participants to share how they felt being assertive in their role.
- **Swap Roles:** Give participants the chance to experience different roles and scenarios.
- **Reflect:** Wrap up by reflecting on how these assertiveness practices can be applied in real life.



## Effective Communication Workshop

Break down the components of effective communication and practice in pairs. This will definitely help with your interpersonal skills and if you've been diagnosed with borderline personality disorder. Effectively being able to communicate is one of the best skills taught.

- **Introduce Principles:** Start with an overview of effective communication skills, like active listening and clear expression.
- **Demonstration:** Show examples of effective vs. ineffective communication through role-play.
- **Practice Sessions:** Pair participants to practice specific communication techniques.
- **Use Prompts:** Provide conversation prompts to guide the practice sessions.
- **Feedback Loop:** Encourage pairs to give each other feedback on their communication style.
- **Group Discussion:** Share experiences and insights from the exercises with the whole group.
- **Apply Skills:** Conclude by discussing how to apply these communication skills in daily interactions.

## Boundary Setting Exercises

Discuss and practice setting healthy boundaries in various contexts. Now you'll be able to tell your family to stay away from your donuts 😊

- **Define Boundaries:** Begin by defining what boundaries are and why they're important.
- **Identify Personal Boundaries:** Have participants reflect on and list their own personal boundaries.
- **Scenario Role-Play:** Create role-play scenarios that challenge these boundaries.
- **Group Feedback:** After role-playing, discuss as a group the feelings and outcomes of asserting boundaries.
- **Strategies for Setting Boundaries:** Share and discuss strategies for effectively setting and maintaining boundaries.
- **Personal Plan:** Encourage participants to create a personal plan for setting boundaries in their lives.
- **Reflect and Share:** Invite participants to share their thoughts on how setting boundaries might impact their relationships and self-esteem.

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## Fun Integrating Activities

These are a few other activities that you can practice to reinforce the other skills you've been learning.

### DBT House Building

This activity gets everyone to draw a 'house' that represents their life, using various rooms to symbolize different aspects of their DBT skills and personal experiences.

- **Introduction:** Discuss the metaphor of a house for personal growth and DBT skills integration.
- **Preparation:** Provide drawing materials and outline the key components each 'house' should include.
- **Guidance:** Encourage creativity and personal expression in designing their DBT house.
- **Experience:** Participants draw their houses, reflecting on how each part of DBT has impacted their lives.
- **Observation:** Foster a nonjudgmental environment for participants to share and explore their drawings.
- **Discussion:** Facilitate a group discussion on the insights and emotions the activity brought up.
- **Reflection:** Encourage reflection on how this exercise helped integrate their DBT learning.

## Mindful Hand Washing

Turning a simple act of hand washing into a mindful practice can transform it into a moment of calm and presence. It's about focusing on the sensations of the water, the soap's texture and scent, and the movements of your hands. I like this as one of the coping skills I go back to regularly.

- **Introduction:** Highlight the potential of routine activities for mindfulness practice.
- **Preparation:** Ensure a comfortable setting with access to a sink, soap, and towels.
- **Guidance:** Lead participants through the process, emphasizing awareness of each sensation.
- **Experience:** Everyone practices mindful hand washing, paying close attention to the experience.
- **Observation:** Note any changes in mood or stress levels from beginning to end.
- **Discussion:** Share observations and reflections on turning routine tasks into mindful moments.
- **Reflection:** Encourage incorporating mindful practices into daily routines for ongoing stress management.

## Gratitude Journaling

Keeping a gratitude journal encourages a focus on the positive aspects of life, fostering an attitude of appreciation and significantly boosting mental well-being. To be honest, I've not practiced this one too much but it's definitely something I want to work on.

- **Introduction:** Discuss the benefits of focusing on gratitude for emotional health.
- **Preparation:** Provide journals or paper and pens for participants to use.
- **Guidance:** Offer prompts to get started, such as “Today, I am grateful for...”
- **Experience:** Participants spend some time writing in their gratitude journals.
- **Observation:** Encourage participants to notice any shifts in their outlook or mood.
- **Discussion:** Invite participants to share, if they're comfortable, some of what they wrote.
- **Reflection:** Discuss ways to make gratitude journaling a regular part of their routine.

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