

Harm Reduction Psychotherapy Toolkit



Evidence-Based Practices to Help People Change Their
Relationship with Drugs

Jennifer Fernández, PhD | *San Francisco, CA* | drfernandez@poweroveraddiction.com
Justin Castello, PhD | *Berkeley, CA* | jcastello@berkeley.edu

Outline

1. Mindfulness
2. Acceptance & Commitment Therapy
3. Attachment theory
4. Dialectical Behavioral Therapy
5. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

References and slides at <https://jenniferfernandezphd.com/hrc2018>

Mindfulness for Recovery

- Changes our relationship to thoughts ⁴⁸
- Decreases depression, anxiety, and stress ¹⁷
- Increases quality of life and physical functioning ¹⁷
- Reduces drug cue reactivity and increases natural reward responses ¹³
- Mindfulness Based Relapse Prevention reduced risk of relapse by 54% and risk of heavy drinking by 59% after 12 months ³
- Mindfulness Based Interventions reduce consumption of alcohol, cocaine, amphetamines, marijuana, cigarettes, and opiates ⁵

Self-compassion and Shame

- Self-compassion associated with increased life satisfaction and decreased depression, anxiety, stress and emotional avoidance ^{34, 35}
- Those with higher self-compassion at lower risk for having a SUD ⁷
- Reduce daily cigarette smoking faster than self-monitoring alone ¹
- Consists of three elements: Self-kindness, Common Humanity, and Mindfulness ³⁶

Self-compassion and Shame

- Associated with significant levels of substance misuse, disordered eating, depression, social anxiety, psychosis, and PTSD ^{16, 18, 54}
- Traumatic shame memories that are central to personal identity/life story can result in SC and compassion from others being seen as frightening and aversive. ³²
- Occurs at a greater rate among those with SUDs, can induce substance use, and can predict relapse of AA participants ^{6, 8, 33, 53}
- Linked to poorer social functioning and dropping out of and delays in seeking substance use treatment ^{23, 40, 45}

Self-compassion Tribe



10 Self-Compassion Affirmations

- I accept myself as I am.
- I am enough.
- I am worthy of compassion.
- I forgive myself and allow myself to feel inner peace.
- I allow myself to make mistakes and to learn from those mistakes.
- I let go of the old and make room for the new.
- Today I will treat myself with kindness.
- Like any human being, I have strengths and weaknesses, and that's OK.
- I'm healing through self-compassion.
- I give myself the gift of unconditional love.

daringtolivefully.com

Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT)

- Encourages noticing/experiencing challenging feelings more fully (instead of a focus on reducing/eliminating them), while decreasing learned connections to behaviors/actions (through Cognitive Defusion) ³⁰
- Results in greater tx involvement/adherence, continuous tx gains, and better substance use outcomes ³⁰
- Research analysis found small-medium favoring of ACT for treatment outcomes of SUDs, compared to TAU ²⁵
- Shown to be effective SUD tx for variety of substances including opiates, cannabis, alcohol, and nicotine ^{14, 15, 21, 41, 51}

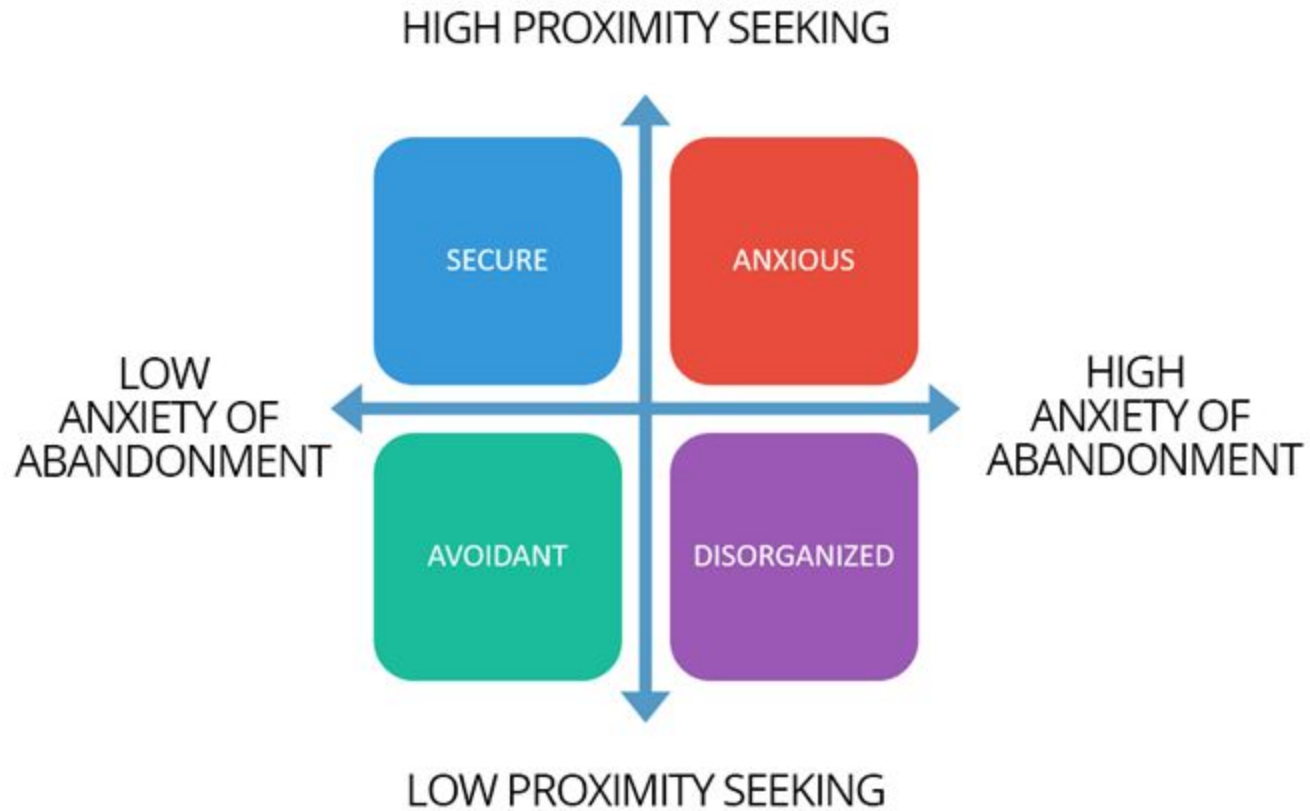
Values Journaling Exercise

- Type of sibling/parent you want to be? How you want to interact with family?
- Type of friend you want to be? What it means to be a good friend? Why is friendship important to you?
- What your ideal relationship like? Kind of partner do you want to be?
- Type of activities you enjoy? Why you enjoy them?
- How you can make the world a better place? Which community activities (volunteering, voting, recycling) are important to you and why?
- Why is faith, spirituality, or meaning important to you?
- Why you take care of yourself? How you take care of yourself?
- Why is learning important to you? Skills you'd like to learn?
- What you value about your career? Type of work you like to do?



Attachment Theory & Addiction

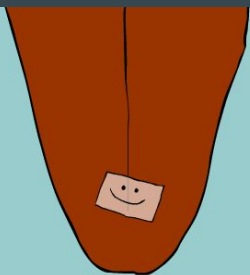
- problems with self-regulation, interpersonal functioning ³⁹
- relationship with drug becomes complex compensatory mechanism ³⁹
- impaired white matter linked to negative affectivity and insecure attachment ⁵²
- People with SUDs found to have insecure attachment styles ⁴³



THE ORIGINAL
PICKUP LINE



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY
benKling.tumblr.com



I'D TAKE YOU
ORALLY

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY
benKling.tumblr.com

HEY BABY,
WANT TO GO
BACK TO MY
SHROOM?



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY
benKling.tumblr.com

YOU GIVE ME PINS
AND NEEDLES



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY
benKling.tumblr.com

YOU CRACK
ME UP



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY
benKling.tumblr.com

I'D BE A METH
WITHOUT YOU



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY
benKling.tumblr.com

LIFE WITH YOU
IS ECSTASY



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY
benKling.tumblr.com

WEED GO WELL
TOGETHER



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY
benKling.tumblr.com

Evaluating Our Relationship to Drugs

What kind of partner is the drug to you?

When and how is this partner there for you?

Which relationships from the past or present are similar?

Attachment
Style

Needs

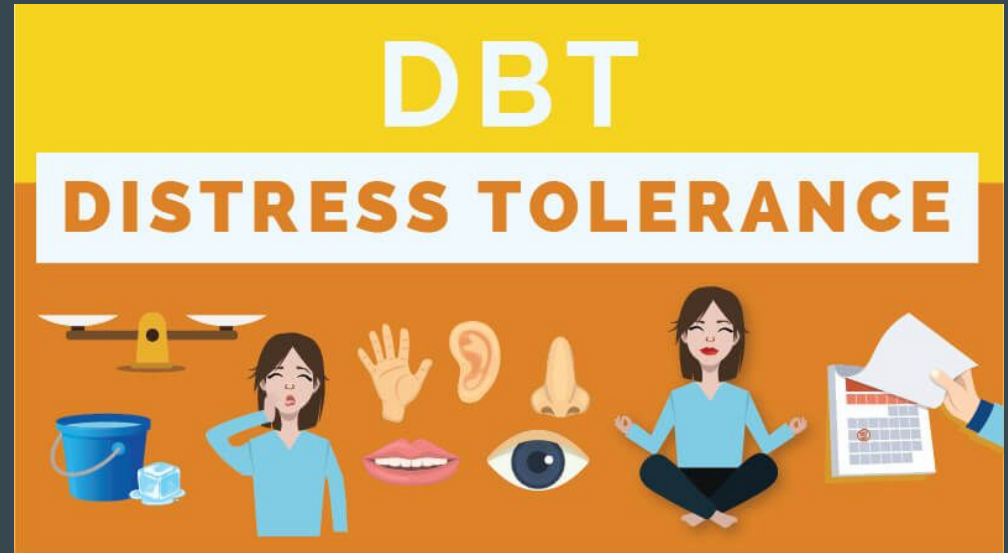
Values
Honored or
Violated

Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT)

- Most empirically sound and utilized Borderline Personality Disorder/BPD tx ⁴⁷
- Successfully modified for SUDs, disordered eating, PTSD, and depression ^{2, 10, 19, 20, 22, 26, 27, 31, 42, 46, 49}
- Structure utilizes four major concepts: Skills Training Group, Individual Psychotherapy, Telephone Coaching, and Consultation Team ¹²
- Modifications for SUDs include: “dialectical moderation or abstinence,” encouraging change, if relapse occurs change is still possible and progress was still made, non-judgmental mindfulness, distress tolerance, and emotion regulation skills that help develop/maintain long term goals ⁵⁰
- Can be used with other compulsive behaviors (porn, sex, gambling, etc) ⁵⁰

Distress Tolerance Skills

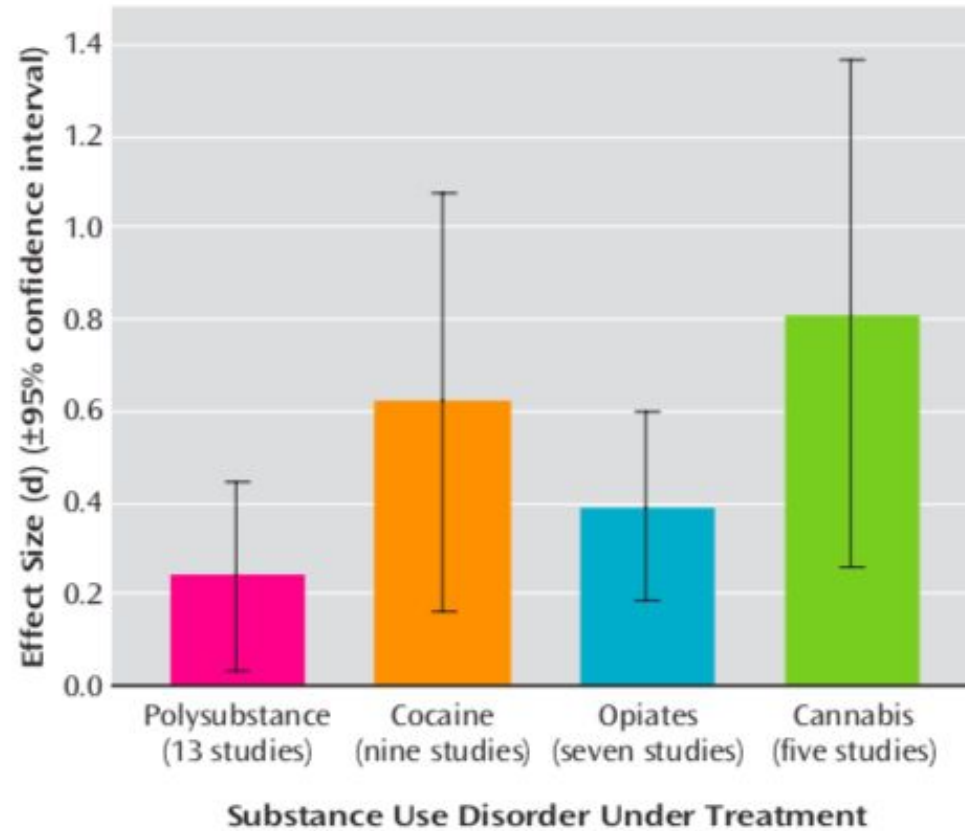
- Radical acceptance, curiosity
- Self-soothe with senses
- TIPP: Temperature, Intense exercise, Paced breathing, and Paired muscle relaxation
- Distract with intense sensations (hold ice cubes, snap rubber band, polar plunge)
- Pro/Con List (Decisional Balance)
- Have clients keep pain/anger/stress log



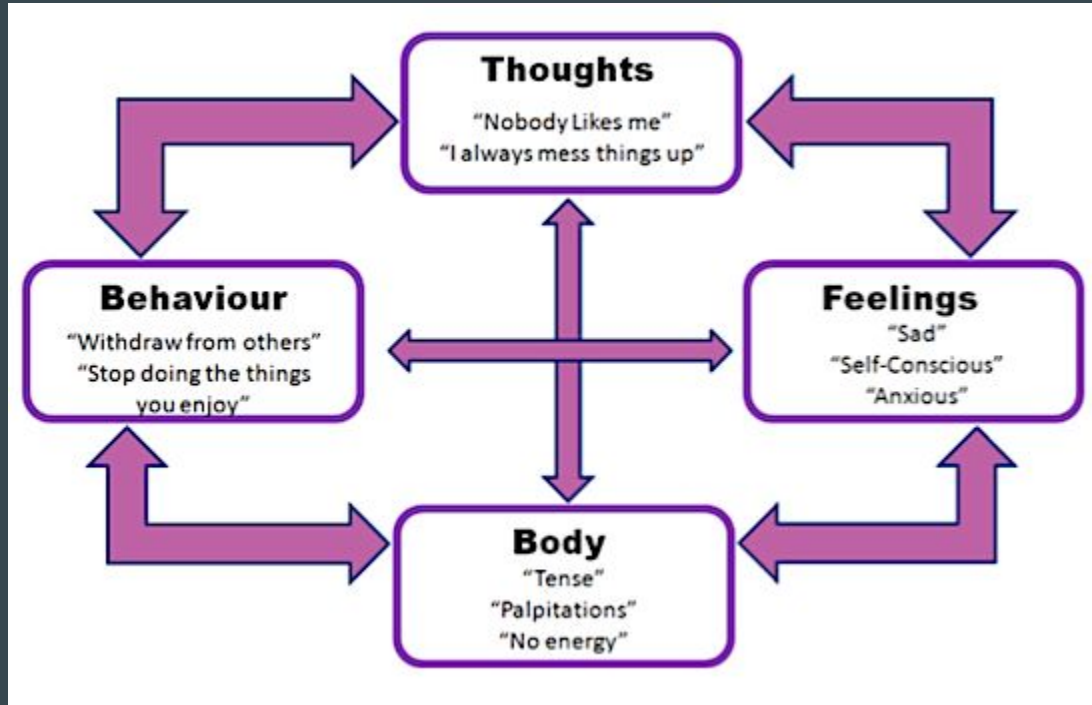
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

- Lessens abstinence violation effect ²⁴
- More effective than TAU when combined ⁴
- Increases impulse control and improves attention and motivation ⁹
- Key to alternatives in high risk situations ³⁸

FIGURE 1. Mean Effect Sizes Across Substance Use Disorders Under Treatment



Thoughts ↔ Feelings



Don't Believe Everything You Think

Magnification



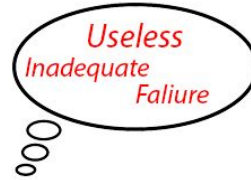
"Making a mountain out of a molehill" - blowing things out of proportion.

Arbitrary inference



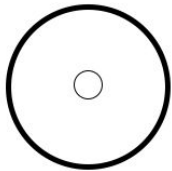
Drawing conclusions when there is little or no evidence

Minimisation



Downplaying the importance of a positive thought, emotion or event.

Overgeneralisation



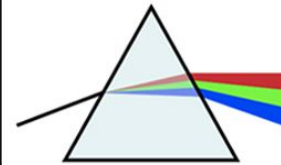
Making sweeping conclusions based on a single event.

Personalisation

"this is my fault"

Attributing personal responsibility for events which aren't under a person's control.

Selective abstraction



Drawing conclusions on the basis of just one of many elements of a situation.

Distorted Thinking

Date	Distorted Thoughts about My Relationship with Drugs
10/1	<i>My relationship to drugs isn't harmful.</i>
10/2	<i>My addiction only affects me.</i>
10/3	<i>I'll never be able to change my relationship with drugs.</i>
10/4	<i>I should be able to change my behavior on my own.</i>
10/5	<i>If I don't use, I won't be able to shake this awful feeling.</i>
10/6	<i>If I stop using, I won't be able to access my creativity.</i>
10/7	<i>I won't have any fun if I don't take a little K before clubbing.</i>

Reality Testing

Distorted Thought	Reality
<i>My relationship to drugs isn't harmful.</i>	<i>When I drink too much I feel hungover.</i>
<i>My addiction only affects me.</i>	<i>My partner says I get verbally abusive when I drink too much.</i>
<i>I'll never be able to change my relationship with drugs.</i>	<i>I don't blackout from drinking as often.</i>
<i>I should be able to change my behavior on my own.</i>	<i>Talking to friends about my addiction helps me feel less alone with it.</i>
<i>If I don't use, I won't be able to shake this uncomfortable feeling.</i>	<i>I can surf the emotion.</i>
<i>If I stop using, I won't be able to access my creativity.</i>	<i>I can sign up for a class to enhance my skills.</i>
<i>I won't have any fun if I don't take a little K before clubbing.</i>	<i>Dancing, flirting, and sharing the experience with my friends feels good.</i>

Next Level

Look for themes about self, others, the world, & the future

Common Maladaptive Core Beliefs	Healthy Core Beliefs
<i>I'm unloveable.</i>	<i>I'm just as worthy as others.</i>
<i>Others can't be trusted.</i>	<i>I'm a good person.</i>
<i>I must be perfect to be accepted.</i>	<i>The world is a complicated place. I trust myself to navigate it wisely.</i>
<i>I'm a failure.</i>	<i>I'm enough.</i>
<i>I'll always be broken.</i>	<i>I strive to do my best.</i>
<i>My needs are too much.</i>	<i>Mistakes are human.</i>

Closing

- What will you take with you?
- What will you leave behind?