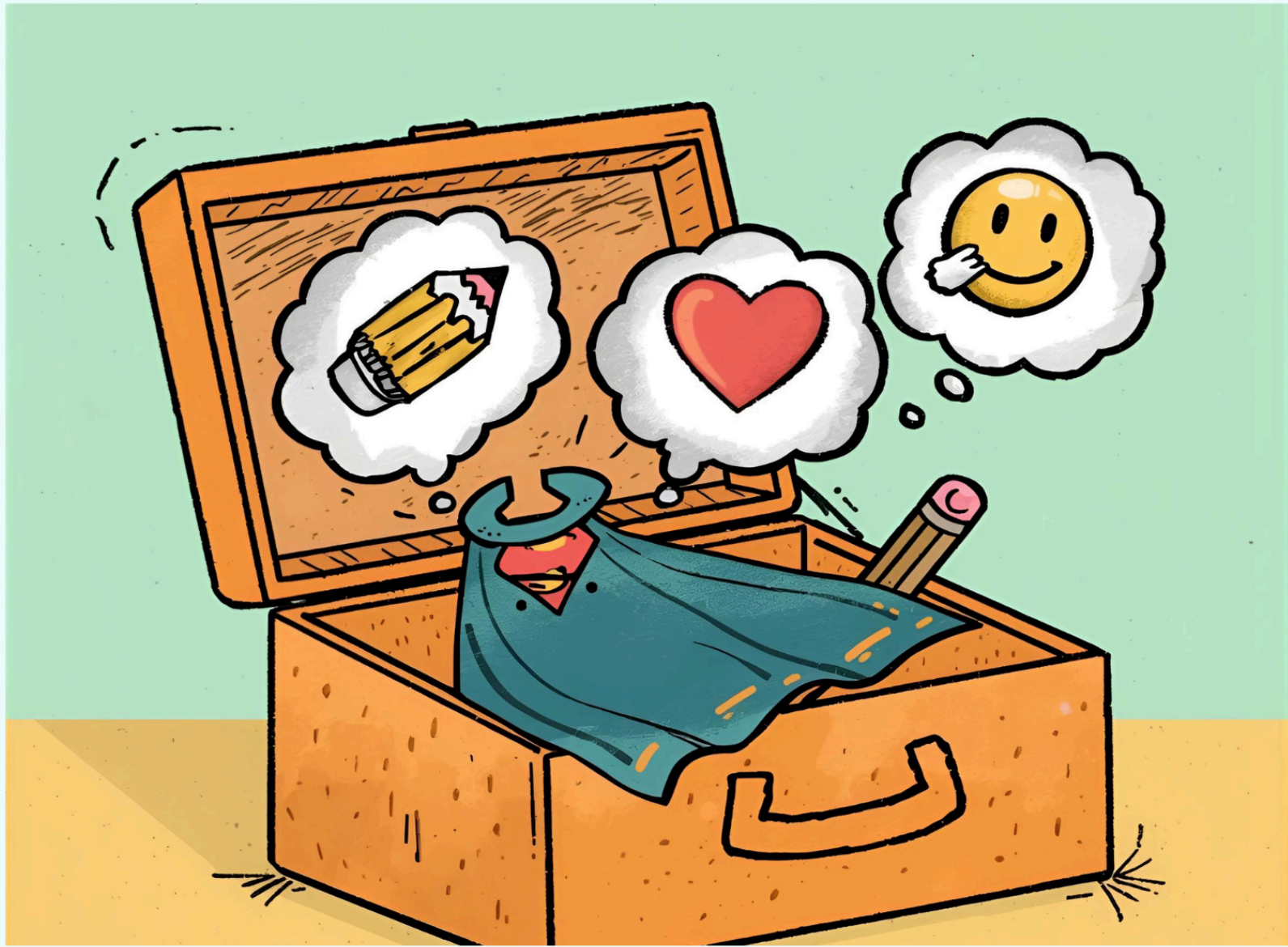


DBT Skills for Kids - Activity Pack

Printable Tools to Build Confidence, Calm,
and Communication



Companion to the DBT Skills Workbook for Kids

Distress Tolerance Tools

Sometimes big feelings can feel too big — like a storm that hits before you're ready. Distress Tolerance Tools help you ride out tough moments safely instead of acting on impulse or giving up.

These worksheets teach kids how to **pause, calm their body, and make thoughtful choices** when emotions run high. Whether it's cooling down, distracting with healthy activities, or using your five senses to find comfort, each page offers practical ways to get through hard moments with confidence.

Remember: You don't have to make big problems disappear — you just have to make them manageable. With practice, these tools become your emotional “first aid kit,” ready whenever you need them most.

Parent Tip:

When your child is upset, resist the urge to fix the problem right away. Instead, guide them through using their distress tolerance tools — like deep breathing, taking a break, or naming what they see and feel. Practicing these skills *before* a crisis helps them remember what to do when big emotions show up.

Kid Challenge:

This week, pick one distress tolerance tool to practice every day — even when you're feeling okay. The more you use it, the stronger your calm superpower becomes!

Table of Tools: Distress Tolerance Skills

These tools help you calm strong emotions and stay in control — even when things feel overwhelming. Try each one and notice which work best for you!

Skill	What It Helps You Do
 STOP Skill	Pause before reacting and make mindful choices.
 TIPP Skills	Calm your body fast with physical techniques like breathing and temperature change.
 Self-Soothing with the 5 Senses	Use sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell to relax and ground yourself.
 Distract with ACCEPTS	Shift your focus in healthy ways when feelings are too strong.
 IMPROVE the Moment	Make a tough moment better using imagination, relaxation, and encouragement.
 Pros and Cons	Think through your choices before reacting.
 My Self-Soothing Toolbox	Create your own comfort kit filled with calming items and ideas.
 My Safe Place	Picture or draw a peaceful place where you feel calm and protected.
 My Safe Sound	Identify or imagine sounds that make you feel relaxed and safe (like waves, birds, or quiet music).

 **Tip:** Try one or two tools each week. Everyone's different — your favorite calming skills might surprise you!

STOP Skill Practice Sheet

When to Use It:

When your feelings are getting big and you're about to do or say something you might regret — this skill helps you *pause* before reacting.

How to Practice the STOP Skill:

1. S – Stop 🖐️

Freeze for a moment. Don't move, speak, or act. Just pause.

Example: "I want to yell, but I'm going to stop first."

2. T – Take a Breath 🧘

Breathe in slowly through your nose and out through your mouth. Feel your shoulders relax.

Example: "I can feel my body starting to calm down."

3. O – Observe 👁️

Notice what's happening — around you and inside you.

- What do you see and hear?
- What are you feeling in your body?
- What thoughts are you having?

4. P – Proceed Mindfully 🧑

Choose what to do next that will actually *help* the situation, not make it worse.

Example: “I’ll walk away for a minute and come back when I’m calm.”

 Worksheet Activity:

Think of a time you felt upset or frustrated. Write or draw what happened and how you could use the STOP steps next time.

Step	What I Did (or Could Do Next Time)
S – Stop	_____
T – Take a Breath	_____
O – Observe	_____
P – Proceed Mindfully	_____

 Parent Tip:

When emotions run high, remind your child to “Use your STOP skill!” and model it yourself. It’s one of the simplest and most powerful DBT tools for kids — and grown-ups too.

TIPP Skills Worksheet

Instructions: Cool Down Fast with TIPP Skills

When your emotions feel too big for talking or thinking, your body needs help first.

TIPP skills are fast-acting strategies that change your body's temperature, movement, and breathing to help you calm down quickly.

Each letter in **TIPP** stands for a tool you can use:

T – Temperature Change

Cool your body to calm your mind.

- Splash cold water on your face.
- Hold a cool washcloth on your neck or wrists.
- Take a few deep breaths of cool air outside.
 *Tip:* Changing your temperature even for 30 seconds helps your body switch out of “fight or flight.”

I – Intense Exercise

Move your body to release built-up energy.

- Run in place, do jumping jacks, or dance to your favorite song.
- Keep going until you feel your heart beating faster, then slow down and take a deep breath.
 *Tip:* Exercise helps use up stress hormones that make you feel “on edge.”

P – Paced Breathing

Slow down your breathing to slow down your feelings.

- Breathe in for **4 seconds**, hold for **1**, breathe out for **6**.
- Try to make your exhale longer than your inhale.

💡 *Tip:* Put your hand on your stomach to feel your breath moving in and out.

💪 P – Paired Muscle Relaxation

Tense and relax your muscles to release stress.

- Make tight fists for 5 seconds, then let them go and notice how they feel.
- Try this with your shoulders, legs, or even your face.

💡 *Tip:* When your body relaxes, your brain gets the message that you're safe.

🧠 Worksheet Activity: My TIPP Plan

Try each TIPP skill and fill in your favorites below.

Skill	What Works Best for Me	When I Can Use It
Temperature	_____	_____
Intense Exercise	_____	_____
Paced Breathing	_____	_____
Paired Muscle Relaxation	_____	_____

💡 Parent Tip:

Practice these skills when your child is calm so they'll remember them during tough moments. You can even turn it into a "Cool Down Challenge" — see how many TIPP skills they can use in 5 minutes!

Self-Soothing with the Five Senses

Instructions: Comfort Yourself with Your Senses

When you feel upset or stressed, your senses can help you calm down.



This worksheet helps you discover comforting sights, sounds, smells, textures, and tastes that make you feel safe and peaceful.

You can build your very own *Self-Soothing Toolbox*!

Sight

Things I like to look at when I need calm:

 Sunsets, candles, stars, favorite photos, art, or bright colors.

My ideas:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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Sound

Sounds that make me feel peaceful:

 Music, rain, birds, ocean waves, white noise, or someone's voice.

My ideas:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Touch

Things that feel good to touch:

 Soft blankets, stuffed animals, warm baths, pets, or smooth stones.

My ideas:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Smell

Scents that make me feel cozy or happy:

 Fresh air, lavender, cookies baking, shampoo, or clean laundry.

My ideas:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Taste

Flavors that comfort me:

 Mint, warm cocoa, fruit, tea, or crunchy snacks.

My ideas:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



 **My Favorite Self-Soothing Combo:**

When I'm upset, I can...

 *Example:* "Wrap up in my fuzzy blanket, listen to soft music, and sip warm cocoa."

Parent Tip:

Encourage your child to create a real *Self-Soothing Box* using these ideas — include small items like fidget toys, calming scents, or favorite photos. Having their sensory tools nearby makes it easier to practice emotional regulation before big feelings take over.



Distract with ACCEPTS Worksheet



Distract with ACCEPTS



Instructions: Healthy Distractions When Feelings Are Too Big

Sometimes emotions feel *too strong* to handle right away — and that's okay!

You can use your **ACCEPTS tools** to take a short break until your feelings calm down. Each letter stands for a different way to distract yourself in a *healthy, safe* way.

A Activities

Do something fun or productive to shift your focus.



Ideas: Draw, dance, play a game, read a book, or build something.

My plan:

1. _____
2. _____

C Contributing

Help someone else — it feels good and gives your mind a break.



Ideas: Write a kind note, help a friend, walk the dog, or clean up.

My plan:

1. _____
2. _____

C Comparisons

Think of times you've been through hard things and made it through.

 Ideas: "This is hard, but I've handled tough things before."

My thought:

E Emotions

Change your mood by doing something that creates a different feeling.

 Ideas: Watch a funny video, listen to happy music, look at cute animals.

My plan:

P Pushing Away

Take a break from the problem for a little while.

 Ideas: Imagine putting the problem in a box, or tell yourself, "I'll think about this later."

My plan:

T Thoughts

Keep your brain busy with something else.

 Ideas: Do a puzzle, count backward from 100, or list your favorite songs.

My plan:

S Sensations

Use your senses to focus on something strong or new.

 Ideas: Hold an ice cube, jump up and down, splash cold water on your face.

My plan:

Kid Tip:

Pick one ACCEPTS skill to try when you notice your anger or stress starting to grow.

The goal isn't to avoid feelings — it's to give yourself time to cool down so you can handle them wisely.

Parent Tip:

Print or post this chart somewhere visible (like the fridge or classroom wall).

Encourage your child to circle or highlight their favorite distraction strategies and keep a few backup ideas ready for tough days.



IMPROVE the Moment Worksheet



Instructions: Finding Calm When Times Feel Tough

When things feel hard, you can't always fix them right away — but you *can* make the moment a little better.

Each letter in **IMPROVE** stands for a way to take care of yourself until the storm passes.

I Imagery

Use your imagination to picture something peaceful.



Example: “I’m lying on a soft cloud” or “I’m floating in the ocean.”

My calm image:

M Meaning

Think about what you can learn or how you can grow from this moment.



Example: “This helps me practice patience” or “I’m learning to stay calm.”

My takeaway:

P Prayer / Positivity

Talk to something greater than yourself, or say a hopeful message.

🙏 Example: “Please help me stay calm,” or “I believe things will get better.”

My positive words:

R Relaxation

Do something that helps your body and mind relax.

🌿 Example: Deep breathing, stretching, coloring, or lying in a quiet spot.

My relaxation idea:

O One Thing in the Moment

Focus on *just one thing* you can see, feel, or do right now.

👁️ Example: “I’m going to notice five things that are blue in this room.”

My focus:

✓ Vacation (Mini-Break)

Take a short break — even a pretend one — to reset your mind.

🌴 Example: “Close my eyes and imagine I’m at the beach for one minute.”

My mini-vacation:

💬 Encouragement

Say something kind to yourself, the way you’d talk to a friend.

💬 Example: “You’re doing your best,” or “You can get through this.”

My encouraging words:

💡 Tip for Kids:

When you feel upset, pick *one or two letters* from IMPROVE to try. Even tiny actions — like deep breathing or kind words — can change how you feel.

👤 Parent Tip:

Encourage your child to decorate this page with doodles or color icons for each IMPROVE tool they’ve tried. It helps them remember that they *always* have options when things get hard.



Pros and Cons Worksheet

Instructions: Think Before You Act

When big feelings show up, your brain might want to react *right away*.
This worksheet helps you pause and think through what could happen —
so you can make the best choice for you. 💪

Step 1: What's Going On?

Describe what's happening or what made you upset.

Step 2: Two Choices

Think about what you *could* do next:

Choice 1: React without using coping skills (example: yell, walk away mad)

Choice 2: Use coping skills (example: take a break, breathe, talk it out)

 React Without Coping Skills

 Use My Coping Skills

PROS (What feels good right away?)

PROS (What's good about using them?)

CONS (What could go wrong later?)

CONS (What might be hard at first?)

Step 3: What Did You Learn?

After you calm down, write about how your choice worked out.

How did it feel? What might you try next time?



Tip for Kids:

When you feel stuck between what you *want to do* and what's *best to do*, grab this worksheet. It helps your Wise Mind take the lead instead of your Angry Mind.



Parent Tip:

Use this together after a tricky moment. Talk about how both choices have consequences — but one choice helps your child build strength and trust in themselves over time.



Self-Soothe Toolbox Page

Instructions: Build Your Toolbox for Tough Days

When life feels stressful or emotions start to bubble up, it helps to have a “toolbox” ready — full of things that make you feel calm, safe, and strong.

This worksheet helps you *design your own* Self-Soothe Toolbox. You can draw it, write it, or even imagine it in your mind.

Step 1: Picture Your Toolbox

Close your eyes for a moment and imagine a special box or backpack filled with comfort.

What does it look like?

Where do you keep it?

What color is it?

Draw it here:



Step 2: Fill Your Toolbox

Think about what helps you calm down or feel grounded. These can be real things you already have — or things you wish you had.



What Helps Me Feel Calm

Examples to Get You Started

Something to Touch

Stress ball, soft blanket, fidget toy

Something to Hear

Favorite playlist, ocean sounds, quiet space

Something to See

Nature photo, glitter jar, funny drawing

Something to Smell

Lavender lotion, candle, fresh air

Something to Taste

Mint gum, cold water, fruit snack



Add your own ideas below!

Step 3: Name Your Toolbox

Give your toolbox a special name — something that makes you smile.

“My Chill Kit” • “Calm Down Box” • “Peace Pack” • “Feel-Better Box”

My Toolbox Name: _____



Tip:

When you start to feel overwhelmed, choose *one* tool from your box and use it for at least 2 minutes. Notice how your body starts to calm down.



Parent Tip:

Encourage your child to make this activity hands-on — decorate a real box, bag, or basket

with their chosen comfort items. Having physical reminders nearby helps kids use DBT skills naturally in real moments of distress.



“My Safe Place” Drawing Page



Instructions: Picture Your Calm Place

When things feel hard, it helps to *imagine a place where you feel completely safe, calm, and peaceful.*

This might be a real place — like your bedroom, a park, or the beach — or a made-up place in your imagination, like floating on a cloud or sitting under a glowing tree.

This activity helps you use **mindfulness and visualization** to calm your body and mind.

Step 1: Imagine Your Safe Place

Close your eyes and take three slow breaths.

Now, think about your safe place:

- What do you see? (colors, shapes, light)
- What do you hear? (music, nature, quiet)
- What do you feel? (warm sun, soft blanket, gentle breeze)
- Who or what makes you feel safe there?

Step 2: Draw Your Safe Place

Use this space to **draw or paint** your calm, happy place.

You can also write a few words or phrases that describe it.



Step 3: Add a Comfort Word

Write a special word that reminds you of this place — a word you can repeat when you need to calm down.

Examples:

“Peace.” “Breathe.” “Home.” “Ocean.” “Safe.”

My Comfort Word: _____

Tip:

When you feel upset, **close your eyes and picture this place.** Imagine the colors, sounds, and feelings around you — like a mini mental vacation for your brain!

**Parent Tip:**

Ask your child to describe their safe place to you after they draw it. Listening to them talk about it helps you understand what brings them comfort — and gives you both a shared calming strategy to use later.

“My Safe Sound” Worksheet

Instructions: Find the Sounds That Calm You

Just like your body feels relaxed in your *safe place*, your ears can help your mind feel calm too!

This activity helps you discover the **sounds that soothe you** — the ones that help you breathe slower, smile, and let go of stress.

Step 1: Listen Carefully

Take a few quiet minutes.

Notice the sounds around you — both nearby and far away.

Now, think about sounds that make you feel peaceful, happy, or safe.

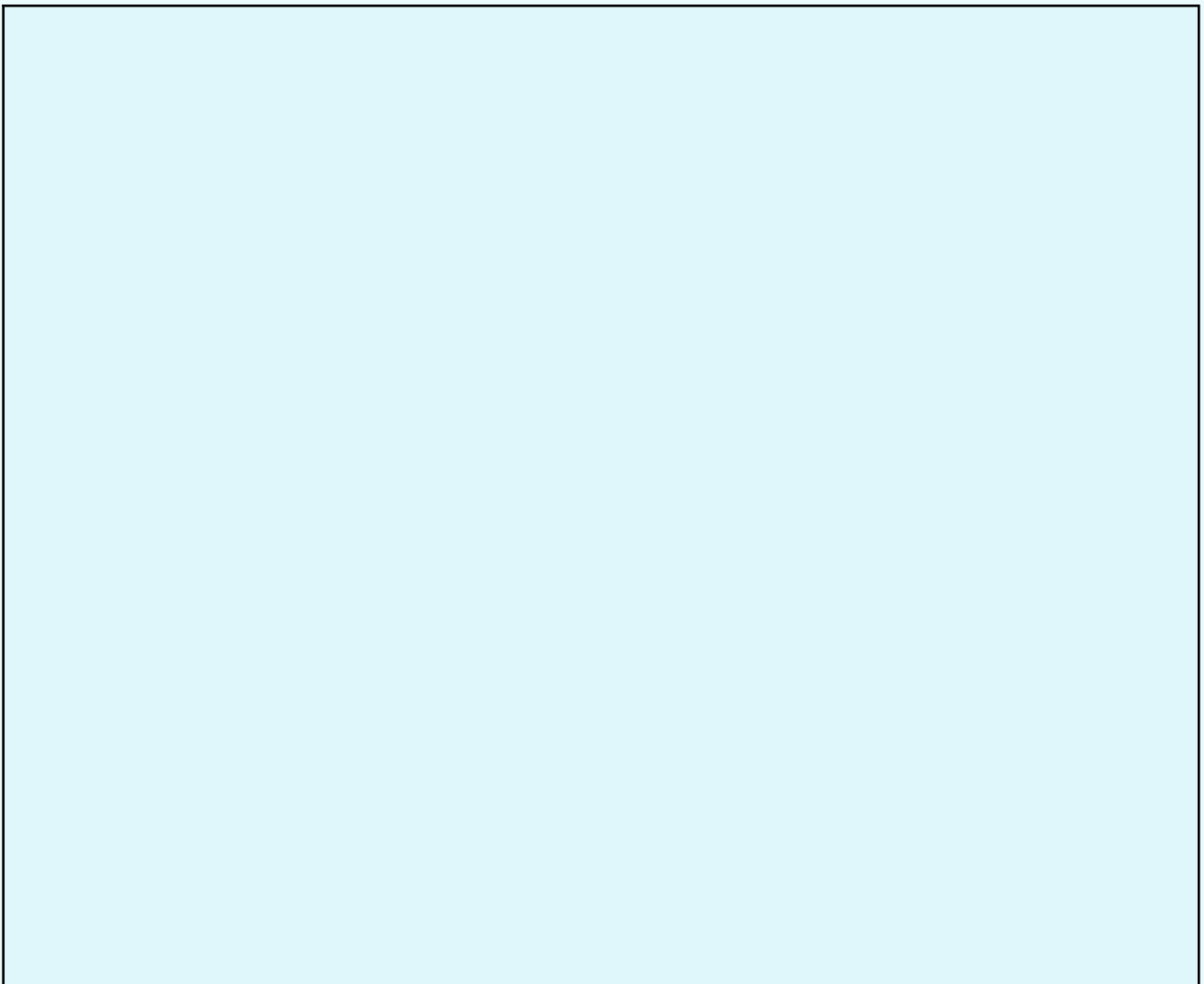
Here are some ideas to get you started:

- The ocean or gentle waves 
- Birds singing in the morning 
- A favorite song or lullaby 
- Rain tapping on the window 
- Someone’s voice who makes you feel safe 
- The wind in the trees 
- A purring cat or soft pet noises 

- The hum of quiet music or white noise

Step 2: Draw or List Your Safe Sounds 🎨

Use this space to **draw, write, or color** the sounds that help you feel calm.
You can even create your own “sound map” — where each sound is a shape or color.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing or writing safe sounds.

Step 3: Make Your Calming Playlist

Write down a few songs, nature sounds, or noises you can listen to when you want to relax.

My Calming Sounds Playlist:

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



Tip:

If you ever feel upset or overwhelmed, play one of your calming sounds. Close your eyes, breathe slowly, and imagine your safe place while you listen.



Parent Tip:

You can make a “Family Calm Playlist” together. Add songs, sounds, or short recordings everyone likes — it helps kids practice mindfulness through sound and connection.

You Did It! Building Calm, One Step at a Time

Every time you practiced a skill in this packet — taking a breath, finding your safe place, using your senses, or choosing calm over chaos — you built emotional strength. That’s what *distress tolerance* is all about!

It’s okay if some days are harder than others. What matters most is that you **keep trying**, one small step at a time.

Remember:

- Feelings are visitors — they come and go.
- You have the power to calm your body and your mind.
- Every time you use your tools, you’re training your “calm muscles.”
- You are learning to be the boss of your emotions, not the other way around.

My Favorite Tools So Far:

Write or draw the skills that helped you most:

 _____

 _____

 _____

 _____

Encouragement for You:

“Even the strongest waves calm down eventually — and so can you.” 

 Parent Tip:

Celebrate progress! Ask your child which tool or worksheet they liked best. Keep a small “Calm Tools Box” at home with their favorite sensory items, notes, or drawings so they always have a reminder that peace is possible.



Picture This!

