

DISTRESS TOLERANCE

SELF-SOOTHING WITH THE FIVE SENSES

- VISION** Watch a sunset; look at a picture or a poster that you like; make one space in a room look special or pretty; look at some pleasant aspect of nature around you; focus on any visual detail of wherever you are, even if the detail is emotionally neutral or bland (e.g., the spots on the wall).
- HEARING** Listen to beautiful or soothing music; sing your favorite song; pay attention to the sounds of nature (e.g., rain, birds, wind); listen to a relaxation tape; focus on an auditory detail of wherever you are, even if the detail is emotionally neutral or bland (e.g.; the hum of an air conditioner, the buzz of a fluorescent light bulb).
- SMELL** Put on your favorite perfume, lotion, or cologne; light a scented candle or incense; spray your room with a fragrant air freshener; choose some favorite scented oils; cook or bake food with a soothing smell.
- TASTE** Have a good meal; have a favorite soothing non-alcoholic drink, such as tea or hot chocolate; eat your favorite ice cream or piece of candy; really take the time to taste the things you drink and eat; do so slowly and in moderation.
- TOUCH** Pet your dog or cat; take a soothing bath; brush or braid your hair; hug a friend or family member; notice touch that is soothing – such as favorite fabric, stuffed animal or blanket.

Adapted from Marsha M. Linehan's *Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder*. Guildford Press, 1993. Reprinted with permission from the Guildford Press: New York.

Source: C. Bonner, Ph.D., *Emotion Regulation, Interpersonal Effectiveness, and Distress Tolerance Skills for Adolescents: A Treatment Manual*, © 2002, University of Pittsburgh, Services for Teens at Risk (STAR-Center), Pittsburgh, PA.