

Join the D.O.T.S.

When painful thoughts and feelings start showing up in our lives, there are many ways we try to get rid of them or avoid them. Common ones include: **D**istracti**o**n, **O**pting out, **T**hinking strategies, **S**ubstances

Distractio**n:** list everything you have ever done to distract yourself from, or ‘zone out’, or ‘take your mind off’ how you are feeling:

Opting out: list all the activities, interests, events, people, or places that you have avoided or withdrawn from, and all the opportunities you have missed out on, because you did not feel good or wanted to avoid feeling bad:

Thinking strategies: list all the different ways of thinking you have tried (deliberately or unintentionally) when painful thoughts and feelings started showing up. Tick any of the following that you have done, and write in any others:

- Worrying
- Dwelling on the past
- Fantasizing about the future
- Imagining escape scenarios (eg leaving your job or your partner)
- Imagining revenge scenarios
- Imagining suicide scenarios
- Thinking ‘It’s not fair ...’
- Thinking ‘If only’
- Thinking of killing yourself
- Blaming yourself
- Blaming others
- Blaming the world
- Talking logically to yourself
- Talking positively to yourself
- Talking negatively to yourself
- Analyzing yourself (trying to figure out why you are like this)
- Analyzing the situation (trying to figure out why this happened)
- Analyzing others (trying to figure out why they are like this)

Substances: list all the substances you have ever used to try and feel better, including foods, drinks, cigarettes, recreational drugs, and prescription drugs

Did these things in the long term improve your health, wellbeing, vitality and relationships? When you join the DOTS, what pattern emerges?