

Validating Your Child's Opposite Sides

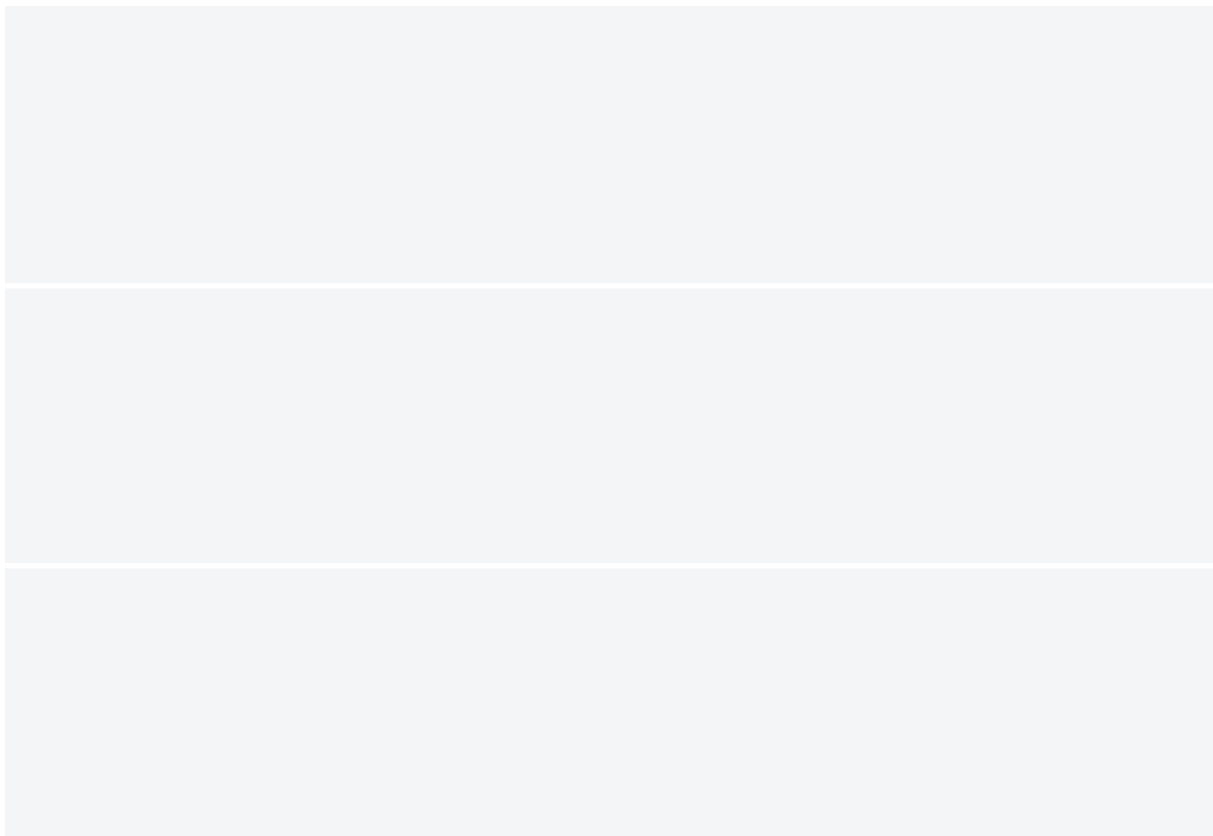
It can be difficult letting children experience conflicting thoughts and emotions, yet it is a crucial part of their development and an important use of validation.

Use the following worksheet to help the child see that it is possible to hold more than one, seemingly conflicting thought or belief (modified from Linehan, 2015).

Ask the child to review the following list of opposites that can both be true:

- You can be tough and gentle
- You can be independent and want help
- You can want to be alone and want to be connected with others
- You can be with others and be lonely
- You can accept yourself and still want to change
- You may have good reason to believe what you believe and still be wrong
- The day can be sunny, and it can rain
- You can disagree with rules and follow them

Note there are many others, can they think of some others in their lives:

Three large, empty rectangular boxes stacked vertically, intended for the child to write down additional opposites they can think of.

Can the child think of examples when they have found it difficult to accept their opposites:

Explain to the child that sometimes we must accept in ourselves that we can hold many different and sometimes confusing thoughts but that we should be accepting and compassionate to ourselves.

References

- Linehan, M. M. (2015). *DBT skills training handouts and worksheets*. The Guilford Press.

Dr. Jeremy Sutton