



OCMHS

Dialectical Behavior Therapy

DBT In A Nutshell

For many adults diagnosed with major mental illness the issue of growth and recovery is severely limited by the inability to effectively modulate and manage emotions given any perceived “prompting event”. A prompting event is any internal or external stimuli that leads to emotion dysregulation (i.e. phone calls, community integration, mail delivery, peer interactions, flashbacks, anniversaries, natural disasters, or deaths).

The inability to regulate emotions creates a life of hopelessness and builds a life with no meaning for the individual. This will often lead to disruption and very often the dissolution of meaningful relationships either natural or professional. Additionally, this can lead to the perpetuation of the “revolving door phenomena” (the rapid and continual admission and discharge within an acute care facility) often seen within the mental health community.

Often times if the individual had been able to identify the prompting event, recognize the trigger, experience and accept the emotion in the moment, and accept the natural outcome of the situation, they would have been able to successfully manage and regulate their emotions.

The goal of Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Skills Group is most simply to assist an individual to create a validating environment in which the individual will manage any emotional dysregulation.

What is DBT?

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) is an effective treatment for people who struggle to manage their emotions, stress, relationships and impulsive behaviors. DBT combines cognitive-behavioral-therapy and mindfulness practice. It is based on a bio-social theory that problems develop from the interaction of biological/physiological makeup and environmental factors, which together, create difficulty managing emotions. DBT therapists take a compassionate view, accepting you for who you are while helping you change and work toward your goals.

The main goal of DBT is to help you build a life worth living.

DBT is an evidenced-based treatment developed by Marsha Linehan, Ph.D. at the University of Washington to help people who struggle with interpersonal chaos, intense emotional swings, impulsiveness, confusion about the self (identity), and suicidal behavior. A great deal of research has been conducted on the effectiveness of DBT.

Dialectics:

DBT is based on the idea that opposites can coexist. This means accepting situations as they are while weighing out various points of view in any situation and constantly working on balancing an effort to change.

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Successful DBT Skills treatment includes:

Teaching patients the skills needed to move toward their life goals. Essentially putting them on the path of building a life worth living. Helping people develop their own ability to use these skills in their daily life when their thoughts and emotions get in the way.

DBT skills can help people:

- Navigate through stressful times
- Help in a crisis and not make the situation worse
- Understand and manage emotions
- Deal with distress
- Ask for what one wants or effectively say no
- Learn how to be taken seriously
- How to be in the present moment

4 Modules

Reality and Acceptance Based Skills

Core Mindfulness:

Helps you to be mindful in the present moment rather than in the past or future, and to be aware of what is happening both within you and outside without judging what you are experiencing.

Foundation of DBT

Distress Tolerance:

Supports development of accepting the current situation as well as crisis survival skills to decrease the likelihood of engaging in problematic behavior often times actually making things worse.

Skills to Further Support Changes in Behavior

Emotion Regulation:

These skills include learning to identify and label current emotions, identifying obstacles to changing emotion and reducing emotional reactivity. These skills aim to reduce your vulnerability and increase your positive emotions.

Interpersonal Effectiveness:

This set of skills teach helpful strategies for asking for what one needs, saying no, and coping with interpersonal conflict. These skills help you to safeguard yourself and your relationships.

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