

Dialectical Behavior Therapy

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About

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) was developed in the 1970s by an American psychologist, Marsha Linehan. DBT is a form of talk therapy to help people regulate intense emotions and improve managing their day-to-day life. DBT sessions can occur once or twice per week, and it can be used in individual as well as group sessions. DBT typically involves learning about and the use of four therapeutic skills: mindfulness, distress tolerance, emotion regulation, and interpersonal effectiveness.

Benefits

The benefits of DBT can include:

- Reduce emotional distress
- Reduced suicidal thoughts and behaviors
- Increased distress tolerance
- Better emotion regulation skills
- Enhanced mindfulness
- Greater sense of self-acceptance and self-compassion
- Improved interpersonal effectiveness

Uses

DBT can be used for any emotional regulation, but specifically can be used for treating and managing the following:

- Anger management
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Eating Disorders
- Borderline Personality Disorder
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Self-Harm
- Substance Abuse
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Bipolar Disorder
- Personality Disorder

Four Therapeutic Skills

Mindfulness

This is the foundational piece for the other therapeutic skills. By practicing mindfulness, you'll learn to be fully aware of yourself, aware of your surroundings, aware of the present moment, experiencing it, recognizing your feelings and thoughts, and avoid worrying about the past or future. The ways to practice mindfulness include:

- Practicing meditation
- Paying attention to the present moment and yourself
- Practicing breathing exercises
- Shifting attention and/or energy

- Observing your thoughts and emotions
- Acknowledging how you feel
- Appreciating moments
- Avoid judging others or yourself
- Observing your energy levels
- Noticing unmet needs

Interpersonal Effectiveness

Interpersonal effectiveness includes utilizing and improving the skills used to interact with others effectively and appropriately to maintain positive relationships. A few aspects that this therapeutic skill includes is:

- Respecting yourself and others
- Asking for what you want and need
- Setting and maintaining boundaries
- Providing empathy
- Being understanding
- Building and forming healthy relationships
- Improving communication skills
- Improving problem solving
- Being assertive
- Resolving conflict
- Building trust
- Understanding yours and others emotional intelligence

Distress Tolerance

Distress tolerance is being able to understand and manage emotions in hard or stressful situations while responding appropriately and effectively instead of responding with harmful behaviors. A few practices to help with managing overwhelming and/or stressful situations include:

IMPROVE Skills

- Imagery
- Meaning
- Prayer
- Relaxation
- One thing/activity
- Vacation
- Encouragement

ACCEPTS Skills

- Activities
- Contributing
- Comparisons
- Emotions
- Pushing away
- Thoughts
- Sensations

Emotional Regulation

Emotional regulation is being able to understand your emotions, being aware of them, and being able to control your emotions. The practices empower the individual to be able to change and/or shift their emotions. A few practices for emotional regulation include:

STOP Skill

- Stop
- Take a break
- Observe
- Proceed mindfully

TIPP Skill

- Temperature
- Intense exercise
- Paced breathing
- Progressive muscle relaxation

Focusing on the 5 Senses

- Touch
- Sight
- Smell
- Taste
- Sounds

References

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