

DBT Skills: An Introduction

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What is DBT?

Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) was developed by Marsha Linehan, PhD, ABPP.

- DBT, including DBT skills training, is based on a dialectical and biosocial theory of psychological disorder that emphasizes the role of difficulties in regulating emotions, both under and over control, and behavior.
- Emotion dysregulation has been linked to a variety of mental health problems stemming from patterns of instability in emotion regulation, impulse control, interpersonal relationships and self-image.
- DBT skills are aimed directly at these dysfunctional patterns.
- The overall goal of DBT skills training is to help individuals change behavioral, emotional, thinking, and interpersonal patterns associated with problems in living.

Key Dialectic of DBT skills



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DBT skills
reflect a key dialectic:

“The need for me to accept myself
as I am,
and the need
for me to change”

Dialectically informed treatment goals

Balance

ACCEPTANCE

CHANGE

Mindfulness

Emotion Regulation

Distress Tolerance

Interpersonal effectiveness

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Mindfulness



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Core Mindfulness Skills

- “What” skills
 - Observe
 - Describe
 - Participate
- “How” skills
 - Nonjudgmentally
 - One-mindfully
 - Effectively



Distress Tolerance



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Goals of Distress Tolerance

- Survive crisis situations
- Accept reality
- Become free

Crisis Survival Skills



- The STOP skills
- Pros and cons
- TIP your body chemistry
- Distract with wise mind ACCEPTS
- Self-soothe with the 5 senses
- Improve the moment

Reality Acceptance Skills

- Radical acceptance
- Turning the mind
- Willingness
- Half-smiling and willing hands
- Allowing the mind: Mindfulness of current thoughts

Radical Acceptance



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- What is radical acceptance?
- What has to be accepted?
- Why accept reality?

From DBT Skills Training Handouts and Worksheets, Second Edition by Marsha M. Linehan. Copyright 2015 by Marsha M. Linehan.

Radical Acceptance



- Understand what is NOT radical acceptance
- Factors that interfere with radical acceptance



Emotion Regulation



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Goals of Emotion Regulation

- Understand and name emotions
- Decrease the frequency of unwanted emotions
- Decrease emotional vulnerability
- Decrease emotional suffering

Barriers to Regulating Emotions

- Biology
- Lack of skill
- Reinforcement of emotional behavior
- Moodiness
- Emotional overload
- Emotion myths

The DBT Model for Describing Emotions



- **Vulnerability factors:** conditions or events that increase sensitivity/reactivity
- **Prompting event:** internal or external cues enter your awareness/get your attention that set off the emotion
- **Interpretations of the prompting event:** thoughts, beliefs, assumptions or appraisals
- **Body changes and experiences**
- **Action urges**
- **Expressions:** body language/what I said/what I did
- **Emotion name and intensity**
- **Aftereffects**

Changing Emotional Response

- Check the facts
- Opposite action
- Problem solving

Interpersonal Effectiveness



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Obtaining Objectives Skillfully

- Clarifying priorities
- Objectives effectiveness: DEAR MAN
- Relationship effectiveness: GIVE
- Self-respect effectiveness: FAST
- Factors to consider



Questions?



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