# Manhattan Alternative Wellness Collective DBT Orientation

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# The Biosocial Theory

"Biosocial theory is an explanation of how and why some people have so much difficulty with emotional regulation and behavioral control."

(Linehan, 2015, p. 138)

Emotional Vulnerability



Invalidating Environment



Chronic Emotion Dysregulation







High sensitivity and reactivity

High arousal and intensive physical response

Return to baseline is slow

Inappropriate response from caregivers

The experience and expression of emotions is never learned; this reinforces internal and external confusion.

# Categories of Dysregulation

Affective Instability (Emotional Vulnerability):

Difficulty regulating and managing both emotions and reactions

#### Behavior Instability:

Difficulty regulating certain behaviors, often including impulsive and/or self-injurious behaviors

#### Interpersonal Instability:

Difficulty regulating relationships, often combined with a fear of abandonment.

#### Self Instability:

Difficulty regulating a consistent sense of self or identity.

#### Cognitive Instability:

Difficulty managing certain cognitive reactions, like paranoia and dissociation.

### What is a Dialectic?

Opposing
Forces

"For everything that exists, there is an opposite. Dialectics tells us that opposing points of view can both be true."

(Linehan, 2015, pg. 286)

"Dialectics helps us radially accept the changes that are continually occurring: meaning and truth also evolve over time."

(Linehan, 2015, pg. 288)

Change is Constant

Connection

"Everything and every person is connected in some way: dialectics reminds us of our connection to the universe."

"We are all connected to each other physically; each of us has parts, and each is part of a greater whole; separation is an illusion."

(Linehan, 2015, pg. 287)

"Dialectics help us analyze how we are being influenced by our environment and how we are influencing our environment."

(Linehan, 2015, pg. 289)

Change is Transactional

### DBT Assumptions (Lineham, 2015, pg. 53)

"People are doing

the best they can."

"People want to improve."

"People need to do better, try harder, and be more motivated to change."

"People may not have caused all of their own problems, but they have to solve them anyway."

"New behavior has to be learned in all relevant contexts."

"All behaviors (actions, thoughts, emotions) are caused."

"Figuring out and changing the causes of behavior is a more effective way to change than judging and blaming."

# What is Comprehensive DBT?

### The Four Modes of Treatment

#### **Individual Therapy**

"The individual therapist is responsible for helping the patient inhibit maladaptive, borderline behaviors and replace them with adaptive, skillful responses."

"Individual outpatient therapy sessions are usually held once a week." (Linehan, 1993, p. 102)

### Skills Training

"DBT skills training is conducted in a psychoeducational format." (Linehan, 1993, p. 103)

#### Phone Consultation

"With a phone call, a patient can obtain the coaching needed for successful skill generalization to take place." (Linehan, 1993, p. 104)

#### **Consultation Team**

for therapist)

"Problems that arise in a therapist's delivery of treatment are handled in DBT case consultation meetings." (Linehan, 1993, p. 105)

### What does DBT Treat?

Borderline personality disorder, including those with co-occurring dx:

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

Personality disorders:

Postraumatic stress disorder related to childhood sexual abuse

Major depression, including:

Suicidal and self-harming behavior

Substance use disorders

Post Traumatic stress disorder

High irritability

Antisocial personality disorder

Borderline personality disorder

Histrionic personality disorder

Narcissistic personality disorders

Self-harming individuals with personality disorders

Treatment-resistant major depression

Older adults with chronic depression and one or more personality disorders

### What does DBT Treat?

Bipolar disorders

Emotion
Dysregulation:

Suicidal and self-harming adolescents

Transdiagnostic emotion dysregulation

Pre-adolescent children with severe emotional and behavioral dysregulation

Eating Disorders:

Binge eating disorder

Bulimia nervosa

### What are Treatment Targets?

It's crucial for the therapist and client to agree on treatment targets and goals.

The first set of treatment targets addresses life-threatening behaviors.

The second set of treatment targets addresses any behaviors that harm or undermine the therapy/therapy process.

The third set of treatment targets addresses any behaviors or issues that interfere with a positive and high quality of life.

The fourth treatment target is to stabilize skills learned during the past three treatment targets.

An individual cannot continue with treatment or move on to other treatment targets if unwilling to address the first treatment goal, life threatening behaviors.

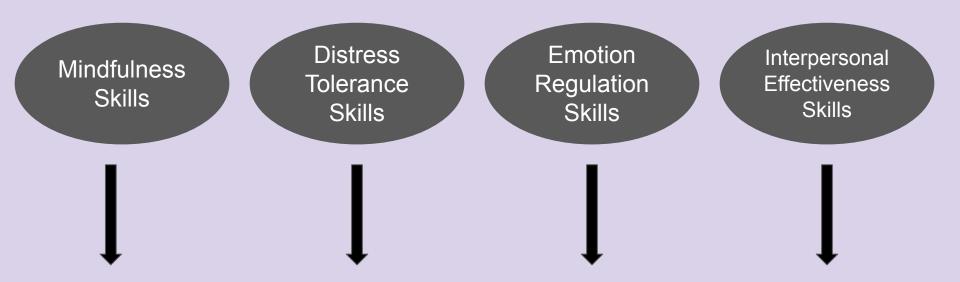
- Life-threatening behaviors:
  - Suicide attempts
  - Suicide crisis beavhiors
  - Deliberate self harm
  - Other imminent life threatening behavior
- Serious therapy-interfering behaviors
  - Non Collaborative behaviors
  - Noncompliance
  - Non-attending behaviors
  - Behaviors that interfere with other patients
  - Behaviors that interfere with therapists' ability to treat
- Severe quality-of-life-interfering behaviors:
  - Incapacitating and/or severe mental disorder
  - Extreme poverty/deprivation/homelessness
  - Criminal behaviors with high imminent risk of jail
  - Domestic violence
  - Behavioral dyscontrol with serious consequences
- Severe skills deficits

- PTSD
- Residual mental disorders with moderate severity not treated in Stage 1:
  - Anxiety disorders
  - Eating disorders
  - Mood disorders
- Emotion dysregulation/dysfunctional intensity or duration of emotions:
  - Shame, guilt, sensitivity to criticism, anger, disgust, envy, jealousy, loneliness, inhibited grieving, emptiness, excessive sadness, fear

- Problems in living:
  - Mild-severity disorder
  - Difficulties in setting and/or achieving life goals
  - Difficulties with problem solving
  - Low self-efficacy/self-esteem
  - Inadequate quality of life
  - Relationship/marital distress
  - Employment difficulties/distress
  - Mild emotion dysregulation
  - Indecision
- Need for check-ins, checkups, tuneups

- Incompleteness:
  - Desire for spiritual fulfillment / spiritual direction
  - Desire for peak
     experiences / experience of
     reality as it is
  - Boredom
  - End of life issues

### What is Taught in a DBT Skills Group?



"Mindfulness is the act of consciously focusing the mind in the present moment without judgement and without attachment to the moment."
(Linehan, 2015, p. 151)

"Distress tolerance is the ability to perceive one's environment without putting demands on it to be different; to experience one's current emotional state without attempting to change it; and to observe one's own thoughts and action patterns without attempting to stop or control them." (Linehan, 2015, p. 416)

"Emotion regulation involves: understanding and naming emotions, changing unwanted emotions, reducing vulnerability to emotion mind, and managing extreme emotions."

(Linehan, 2015 p. 318)

"Interpersonal response patterns are broken into three core sections: core interpersonal skills, decreasing interpersonal isolation, and walking the middle path." (Linehan, 2015, p. 231)

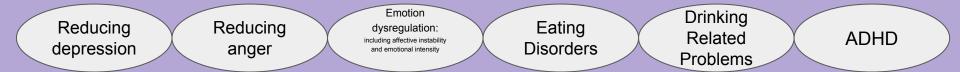
# What if I'm Only in a DBT Skills Group?

"DBT skills training is rapidly emerging as a stand-alone treatment."

"This growing area of research is suggestive that skills training alone can be very effective in many situations."

"...DBT skills training without concurrent individual therapy has been found effective in a number of areas."

(Linehan, 2015, pg. 19)



"From this group of studies, we can infer that DBT skills training alone may indeed be effective in addressing Axis I mental health symptoms (i.e., MDD, ADHD, and BED)."

"...these findings suggest that DBT skills training alone may be sufficient for addressing behaviors and symptoms of clients without Axis II features—and that DBT skills training alone is not sufficient to address behaviors such as self-harm or suicidality, which are common among individuals with BPD."

(Valentine et al., 2015, pg. 16)

### Resources:

Core Evidence and Research. Behavioral Tech. (n.d.). Retrieved July 5, 2022, from https://behavioraltech.org/research/evidence/

Linehan, M. (1993). Skills Training Manual for treating borderline personality disorder. Guilford Press.

Linehan, M. (2015). *Dbt Skills Training Manual*. Guilford Press.

Valentine, S. E., Bankoff, S. M., Poulin, R. M., Reidler, E. B., & Pantalone, D. W. (2015). The use of dialectical behavior therapy skills training as stand-alone treatment: A systematic review of the treatment outcome literature. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *71*(1), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.22114

What is dialectical behavior therapy (DBT)? Behavioral Tech. (n.d.). Retrieved July 5, 2022, from https://behavioraltech.org/resources/faqs/dialectical-behavior-therapy-dbt/