

What is Dialectical Behavior Therapy?

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Borderline Personality Disorder

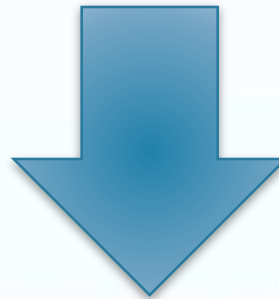
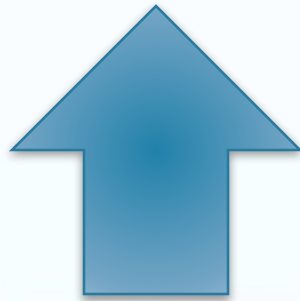
- Emotion Dysregulation
 - Mood swings
 - Problematic anger
- Interpersonal Dysregulation
 - Unstable relationships
 - Efforts to avoid loss
- Self Dysregulation
 - Identity disturbance
 - Unstable self image
 - Chronic feelings of emptiness
- Behavioral Dysregulation
 - Suicidal threats
 - Self-harm behaviors
 - Other impulsive/destructive behaviors
- Cognitive Dysregulation
 - Cognitive disturbances

What is BPD?



What causes BPD?

Emotion regulation problems (biology)



Invalidating environment

Pervasive emotional vulnerability

- **High Sensitivity**
 - Immediate reactions to environmental triggers
 - Low threshold for emotional reaction
- **High Intensity**
 - Reactions tend to be extreme
 - Reactions block effective cognitive processing
- **Slow return to baseline**
 - Long-lasting emotional reactions
 - Heightened vulnerability to the next trigger

Characteristics of invalidating environments

- Normative emotional experiences are rejected as inaccurate, unacceptable, or otherwise invalid
- Environment responds to emotional expression in erratic and unpredictable ways
- Individual learns there is something wrong with them

Consequences of invalidating environments

- The individual *does not* learn to :
 - Label private experiences in a normative manner
 - Effectively regulate emotions
 - Trust inner experiences as valid
 - Tolerate distress
 - Solve difficult problems
 - Accurately identify and express emotions
 - Communicate pain effectively

Consequences of invalidating environments

Instead, the individual learns to:

- Respond with high arousal and extreme behaviors
- Form unrealistic goals and expectations
- Hold on to perfectionistic standards
- Self-invalidate
- Look for cues in the environment
- Move frequently between emotional inhibition and extreme emotional expression

Prevalence of BPD

- ~1% of the general population
- 8 to 11% of psychiatric outpatients
- 14 to 20% of psychiatric inpatients

Source: Behavioral Tech

Treatment challenges

- Individuals with BPD usually do not find traditional mental health interventions helpful
- Frequently drop out of treatment
- Providers experience a range of challenges
- High cost of health care services
- Individuals with BPD are at higher risk for suicide (8-10%)

What is DBT?

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

+

Dialectical* philosophy

+

Zen practice (mindfulness)



*Dialectics

“The house that DBT sits in”

- Dialectics as a world view
 - Everything is interrelated
 - Reality is constantly changing
 - Opposing forces are part of the same reality
- Dialectics as a treatment strategy
 - Address extreme thinking (dialectical failures)
 - Look for “multiple truths” (either/or → both/and)
 - Search for balance/synthesis



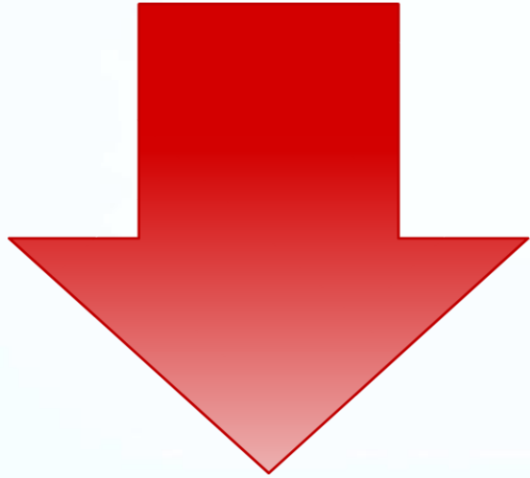
DBT in a nutshell

- Helps individuals build a *“life worth living”*
- Aims to VALIDATE rather than BLAME the individual
- Blocks ineffective/destructive behaviors
- Teaches/reinforces and supports generalization of more effective behaviors (skills)
- Balances validation and problem-solving strategies

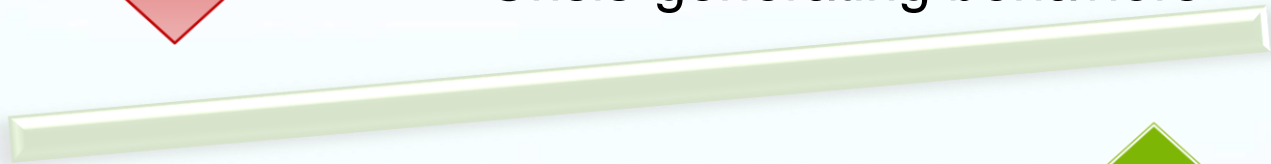
DBT works

- Developed by Marsha Linehan, PhD, ABPP, at the University of Washington in the 1980s
- DBT was the first psychotherapy to be shown effective for BPD and related problems
- Has been shown effective for many other conditions

Goals of DBT



- Suicidal behavior
- Non-suicidal self-injury
- Depression/anxiety
- Maladaptive anger expression
- Symptoms of eating disorders
- Substance misuse
- Crisis-generating behaviors



- Mindfulness
- Interpersonal Effectiveness
- Emotion Regulation
- Distress Tolerance



Components



Individual DBT sessions

- Life-threatening behaviors
- Therapy-interfering behaviors
- Quality-of-life interfering behaviors
- Individual skills coaching

DBT skills training group

- Mindfulness, Interpersonal Effectiveness, Emotion Regulation, and Distress Tolerance skills

24/7 phone coaching

DBT therapist consultation group

Skills examples

- Mindfulness
 - Nonjudgmental
- Interpersonal Effectiveness
 - DEAR MAN
- Emotion Regulation
 - Opposite Action
- Distress Tolerance
 - STOP and TIP

DBT services at HCMC

- DBT Intensive Outpatient Program
- Day Treatment Program's DBT-informed track
- DBT Skills Group in the Adult Psychiatry Clinic

