



DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOR THERAPY PROGRAM

UW HEALTH-PSYCHIATRY
6001 RESEARCH PARK BLVD
MADISON WI 53719

Dialectical Behavior Therapy Program Supervisor:

Stephanie Steinman, PhD

Group Day/Times (choose one):

Mondays 9:00-11:00am

Thursdays 3:00-5:00pm

Fridays 9:00-11:00am

Note: Currently all groups are virtual with the plan of in person option in summer 2022.

What is Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)?

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) is a cognitive behavioral treatment that was originally developed to treat chronically suicidal individuals diagnosed with borderline personality disorder (BPD) and it is now recognized as the gold standard psychological treatment for this population. In addition, research has shown that it is effective in treating a wide range of other disorders such as substance use disorders, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and eating disorders.

What kind of therapy do patients receive in DBT?

1. Patients attend a two-hour weekly skills group. The groups focus on four modules: Interpersonal Effectiveness, Emotion Regulation, Distress Tolerance, and Mindfulness.
2. Patients are required to be seeing an individual therapist in addition to attending group. The group is skills-focused and therefore does not handle individual crises.
3. Patients are to call their individual therapist prior to engaging in unskillful behaviors (including self-harm) to receive coaching through alternatives, including the skills learned in DBT.

Most people who decide to enroll in group do so because they are dissatisfied with a number of things in their lives. The problem areas that DBT addresses are:

1. Interpersonal conflict and relationship problems.
2. Intense painful moods and emotions.
3. Personal situations that feel overwhelming and unmanageable.
Impulsive unskillful behaviors.
4. Trouble maintaining focus and attention and difficulty acting wisely in stressful situations.

What skills are taught in DBT?

DBT includes four sets of behavioral skills:

- **Mindfulness**: the practice of being fully aware and present in this one moment
- **Distress Tolerance**: how to tolerate pain in difficult situations, not change it

- ***Interpersonal Effectiveness***: how to ask for what you want and say no while maintaining self-respect and relationships with others
- ***Emotion Regulation***: how to change emotions that you want to change

There is increasing evidence that DBT skills training is a promising intervention for a wide variety of both clinical and nonclinical populations and across settings.

We find that people who get the most out of group are those who have a clear idea about what the group focus is and how the group would fit in with their goals. To assist with this, you will be asked to complete a treatment plan with one of the group leaders.

The most important overall goal of DBT is helping patients create a life worth living. What makes a life worth living varies from person to person. For some, it's being in a healthy relationship and having children. For others, it's finishing school and finding a career. While all of these goals differ, all patients have the common task of learning skills to apply to problem behaviors.

The DBT curriculum is covered in 6-8 months. Depending on medical necessity, some group members repeat the modules a second time. The groups are comprised of 8-10 members and 2-3 co-leaders.

What does dialectical mean?

The term “dialectical” means a synthesis or integration of opposites. The primary dialectic within DBT is between the seemingly opposite strategies of acceptance and change. For example, DBT therapists accept clients as they are while also acknowledging that they need to change in order to reach their goals. In addition, all of the skills and

strategies taught in DBT are balanced in terms of acceptance and change. For example, the four skills modules include two sets of acceptance-oriented skills (mindfulness and distress tolerance) and two sets of change-oriented skills (emotion regulation and interpersonal effectiveness).

Most insurance companies cover all or some of the group fees. You can check with your insurance provider.

There are ongoing admissions into the groups.

Instructor



Stephanie Steinman, PhD

Dr. Stephanie Steinman is a clinical psychologist and licensed alcohol and drug therapist. Dr. Steinman specializes in Dialectical Behavior Therapy, mindfulness-based therapies, addiction, and adolescent mental health. She works with all ages.

Providers: *To refer to this group, please send a DBT referral form (on the Department of Psychiatry website) to Megan Kasdorf.*