



DBT: DIALECTIC BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY

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WHAT IS IT?

DBT is a type of cognitive behavioural therapy developed by Dr. Marsha Linehan in the 1980s to work with people with borderline personality disorder. As the name suggests, it is derived from the philosophical perspective of dialectics: balancing opposites. There is consistent work done to find ways to hold two seemingly opposite perspectives at once.

To account for this balance, DBT promotes a **both-and** rather than an **either-or** outlook. The concept that everything is built of opposites and that changes would occur when one opposing force is stronger than the other, or in other terms—thesis, antithesis, and synthesis.

The **basic assumptions** of the Dialectics are:

- All things are interconnected.
- Change is constant and inevitable.
- Opposites can be integrated to form a closer approximation of the truth.

GOALS OF DBT

- To teach people how to live in the moment, cope healthily with stress, regulate emotions, and improve relationships with others.
- To resolve the contradiction between self-acceptance and change in order to bring about positive changes in oneself.

WHEN CAN IT BE USED?

DBT skills can be used by anyone when they want to improve their ability to regulate emotions, tolerate distress and negative emotions, be mindful and present in the moment and interact effectively with others.



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FOUR COMPONENTS OF DBT

DBT has four categories of skills that are taught to improve emotion regulation.

- **Mindfulness:** It focuses on living in the present moment by enhancing the experiential attention and awareness into the here and now.
- **Distress Tolerance:** It focuses on helping to learn to accept oneself and the current situation. It aims at building one's skills to manage and tolerate crises event using these four techniques: distraction, self-soothing, improving the movement, and thinking of pros and cons.
- **Interpersonal Effectiveness:** It focuses on aiding oneself to create and maintain healthy relationships with others by practicing skills for developing appropriate boundaries, making requests, and being assertive. These skills help to enhance and improve relationships, build new relationships, maintain self-respect, and manage problematic interpersonal relationships effectively.
- **Emotion Regulation:** It focuses on developing skills to recognizing and coping with negative emotions (for example, anger), learning to understand, validate one's emotions and reducing one's emotional vulnerability by increasing positive emotional experiences.