Dialectical Behavioral Therapy

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DIALECTICAL BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

Theory and Application
WHAT IS DBT

- DBT is a third wave behavioral therapy that focuses on dialectics
  - Integration of two seemingly opposite parts
- Core topics are mindfulness, interpersonal effectiveness, distress tolerance, and emotional regulation
- DBT is meant to be practical - it focuses on skills that increase self-compassion and promotes positive changes
WHY DBT?

• It was initially created to help patients with borderline personality disorder
• Research has also been done with bipolar disorder, eating disorders, generalized anxiety disorder, major depressive disorder (including treatment resistant and chronic depression), obsessive compulsive disorder, post traumatic stress disorder, substance use disorders, self harm, and suicidal ideation
CORE TOPICS: MINDFULNESS

- Why would mindfulness be important when thinking about the goal of DBT (integration of two separate parts)?
CORE TOPICS: DISTRESS TOLERANCE

- Distress tolerance aids in accepting the current situation, including crisis moments
  - Including distraction, improving the moment, self-soothing, etc.
- It provides preparation for intense emotions and cope in with a long-term outlook
DISTRESS TOLERANCE SKILLS

TEMPERATURE
Change your body temperature. Splash your face with cold water, hold an ice cube, let car AC blow on your face, take a cold shower.

INTENSE EXERCISE
Do intense exercise to match your intense emotion. Sprint to the end of the street, do jumping jacks, push ups, intense dancing.

PACED BREATHING
Try Box Breathing: Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold it for 4 seconds, breathe out 4, and hold 4. Start again, and continue until you feel more calm.

PAIRED MUSCLE RELAXATION
Focus on 1 muscle group at a time. Tighten your muscles as much as possible for 5 seconds. Then release & relax. Repeat with other muscle groups.
CORE TOPICS: INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

• Interpersonal effectiveness helps those who tend to be passive be more assertive in relationships
• Skills include learning to listen well and communicate effectively
**INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS SKILLS**

**Describe:**
the situation as objectively as possible. Stick to the facts and avoid opinions.

**Express:**
how you feel about the situation. Use feeling words: "I feel ________, because ________.”

**Assert:**
what you need from the other person. Don’t “beat around the bush”.

**Reinforce:**
"Reward" the person for any cooperation, even if it seems small. Give a statement of thanks. You may also tell them how you both will benefit from them doing what you need.

**Mindful**
Stay focused on the objective, and don’t get sidetracked into other topics.

**Appear Confident**
Speak in a clear, confident tone and make appropriate eye contact.

**Negotiate**
Be open to compromise. Ask the other person if they have a solution.
CORE TOPICS: EMOTIONAL REGULATION

- Aides in learning about emotions and associated coping skills for intense emotions
- It reduces emotional vulnerability and helps to encourage more positive emotional experiences
REFERENCES