

# Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT)

## What is Dialectical Behaviour Therapy?

Some people's lives can feel unbearable. Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) works to decrease emotional suffering and help build a life worth living. DBT teaches specific skills in order to help people deal more effectively with themselves and the world around them.

DBT is a cognitive behavioural treatment that has been developed for people diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) / Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder (EUPD). People who receive DBT typically have several difficulties including experiencing intense emotions, unstable relationships and chronic and severe suicidal and self-harming behaviours that require treatment.

DBT is based on a combination of both acceptance and change strategies, which together increase more helpful and adaptive behaviour. The 'dialectical' part of the therapy is about exploring and holding different points of view. It assumes that in any given situation there is no one single truth.

## How will DBT work?

All treatment strategies help you to understand and accept yourself, whilst encouraging you to identify areas of change such as replacing destructive behaviours with more helpful coping strategies. This will ultimately help you to live a more rewarding and productive life. In particular the treatment focuses on teaching:

- **Core Mindfulness:** A way of being that helps you focus your attention and live your life in the present, rather than being distracted by worries about the past or the future.
- **Interpersonal Effectiveness:** Learning how to get your needs met and dealing with conflict in relationships, whilst maintaining your self-respect.
- **Emotion Regulation:** Learning skills to help you to manage intense emotional states and destructive behaviour like self-harm.
- **Distress Tolerance:** Tolerating and surviving crises and accepting life as it is at the moment

## What does DBT involve?

### Assessment

This involves gaining a shared understanding of difficulties with the therapist and deciding on whether DBT will be the best treatment option.

## Pre-commitment Phase

This involves one-to-one sessions with a therapist to get ready for the full DBT programme; gaining an understanding of the therapy and setting individual goals and targets.

## DBT Programme

This involves attending a weekly skills group, a weekly one-to-one session and skills telephone coaching for up to 12 months.

## What can I expect from DBT?

- You will be expected to have a commitment to treatment, to attend regular one-to-one sessions and attend the group skills training sessions.
- You will have to fill out a weekly diary card and be expected to practice the skills taught.

## What else do I need to know?

- You will be asked to complete regular questionnaires. This enables us to monitor how helpful the therapy is to you and you will be given the opportunity to discuss the outcome of your questionnaires with the therapists.
- Drugs and alcohol will have a negative impact on your therapy so this will have to be carefully considered with you if it is an area of concern.
- Research has shown DBT to be an effective treatment, with benefits being sustained years following therapy.
- Sessions may be recorded for supervision or training purposes.

## How to contact us

### If you need to contact us or require further information...

**Call:** 0300 365 8000

**Address:** IMPACTT,  
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