



Managing Emotional Intensity Through Dialectical Behaviour Therapy

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DESCRIPTION

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) is a structured form of therapy that focuses on helping individuals manage intense emotions, improve relationships and develop coping strategies. It is particularly effective for those who experience strong emotional reactions that interfere with daily functioning. By combining cognitive-behavioural techniques with mindfulness and acceptance strategies, DBT allows individuals to develop a balanced approach to understanding and regulating emotions. The central idea of DBT is that emotional responses are natural and valid, yet sometimes they can lead to behaviours that create difficulties in life. Individuals may engage in self-harm; substance use or other maladaptive actions as a way of managing distressing feelings. DBT does not seek to suppress emotions but instead teaches skills to recognize triggers, pause before reacting and make choices that align with long-term goals. This approach provides a structured framework to navigate intense emotional experiences without feeling overwhelmed.

A key component of DBT is mindfulness, which emphasizes awareness of the present moment without judgment. Practicing mindfulness helps individuals observe their thoughts and feelings without becoming entangled in them. For example, noticing anxiety without immediately reacting can allow time to assess the situation and consider more constructive responses. Mindfulness exercises in DBT include meditation, deep breathing and focused attention practices, all of which build a greater understanding of internal experiences and increase emotional stability. Interpersonal effectiveness is another significant aspect of DBT. Many individuals struggle with communication, setting boundaries or asserting their needs in relationships. DBT provides specific strategies to improve interactions, resolve conflicts and maintain healthy connections. Skills in this area include

learning to ask for what is needed respectfully, declining requests without guilt and balancing priorities in relationships. Developing these skills not only reduces interpersonal stress but also supports self-respect and confidence in social contexts.

Emotion regulation is a central focus within DBT. Individuals learn to identify and label emotions, understand their causes and apply techniques to reduce emotional intensity when necessary. Strategies may involve using distraction methods, engaging in positive activities or modifying thoughts to alter emotional responses. Over time, individuals develop greater awareness of patterns in their emotional reactions and gain tools to manage feelings in ways that do not disrupt daily life or relationships. Distress tolerance skills are particularly useful for managing situations that cannot be immediately changed. DBT teaches techniques for coping with discomfort without resorting to impulsive actions. Methods such as self-soothing, reality acceptance and crisis survival strategies help individuals navigate stressful moments safely. By learning these skills, individuals gain confidence in their ability to endure difficult experiences while maintaining control over their behaviour.

DBT is often delivered in multiple formats, including individual therapy, group skills training and phone coaching. Individual therapy allows for personalized guidance, focusing on specific challenges and goals. Group skills training provides a structured environment to learn and practice techniques with others, offering social support and reinforcement. Phone coaching is available to provide real-time assistance during high-stress moments, ensuring that skills can be applied when they are most needed. Research indicates that DBT is effective for a range of challenges beyond emotional intensity, including self-harm behaviours, suicidal thoughts and mood instability. It has also been adapted for use in populations

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dealing with substance dependence, eating disorders and post-traumatic stress symptoms. The structured nature of DBT, combined with its emphasis on practical skills, makes it accessible and applicable across diverse settings and populations. Developing consistent practice is important for the effectiveness of DBT. Skills learned in therapy require repetition and integration into daily life. Individuals are encouraged to track their use of techniques, reflect on outcomes and adjust strategies as needed. This ongoing process allows skills to become automatic responses to emotional challenges, reducing impulsive or harmful behaviours and improving overall functioning.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy offers a practical and structured approach to managing intense emotions and improving behavioural responses. Through mindfulness, interpersonal effectiveness, emotion regulation and distress tolerance, individuals learn strategies to navigate challenges without resorting to maladaptive actions. Regular practice and support within the DBT framework enable long-term improvements in emotional stability, interpersonal relationships and overall quality of life.