

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) Skills Group Training Information for Staff

What is DBT Skills Training?

DBT skills training is designed to teach people new skills to help them when they feel suicidal or want to use self-harming or life threatening behaviours to cope with traumatic experience. DBT recognises that people develop these methods of coping as a result of experiences in their lives that could be described as 'invalidating'. This may include abuse, neglect or other kind of personal trauma. People who attend will often have a diagnosis of borderline personality disorder.

What do the Skills Training Groups involve?

There will be nine weekly sessions called modules. Each session is two-and-a-half hours long with a break in the middle. Men and women are welcome and groups can be attended by approximately 8-11 people. Each group will agree guidelines for working together so that everyone feels safe and comfortable. These will include guidelines for attending and confidentiality. We recommend that people attend each module twice in order to get the most out of the group and this will take approximately 14 months to complete.

The groups will cover four sets of skills:

Mindfulness Skills

- learning to stop, reflect and stay in the moment
- increasing a person's self-awareness to help them cope

Mindfulness underpins DBT skills and is taught at the start of each module, rather than being a module in its own right.

Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

- learning how to communicate with people more effectively
- learning to understand personal priorities in problem situations

Emotion Regulation Skills

- learning how to understand emotions and how they affect behaviours
- finding ways to feel less emotionally vulnerable and ways to increase helpful and pleasurable emotions

Distress Tolerance Skills

- increasing ability to tolerate feelings of distress and to cope more effectively in a crisis
- learning how to reduce impulsive and self-harming behaviours

Referral criteria

A person may be referred for DBT skills training if:

- self-harm is ongoing or is a historical feature within the previous six months
- a borderline personality disorder presentation is the primary difficulty
- they are outside of times of crisis, to maximise initial attendance and helpfulness of the programme
- they are interested in working in a group and able to tolerate sitting with and listening to others

Although people do not need to have a formal diagnosis of borderline personality disorder to be referred, their presentation should be consistent with the diagnosis especially regarding the use of self-harm to manage intolerable emotional experiences. Referrals cannot be accepted where other personality disorders, substance use, an eating disorder, psychosis or a moderate/significant learning disability is the primary issue or diagnosis.

Referral and assessment

Referrals can be made by mental health practitioners and GPs. Service users can also self-refer. All referrals must be made using a service referral form.

Assessment is then arranged at the locality hub that is most convenient for the service user. This may involve more than one appointment. People are advised to allow up to 90 minutes for the first appointment.

DBT skills groups will take place at the following locality hubs:

South Leeds	The Vale Circles, Tunstall Road, Beeston, Leeds, LS11 5JF
East Leeds	St. Mary's House, St. Mary's Road, Leeds, LS7 3JX
West Leeds	Southfield House, 40 Clarendon Road, Leeds, LS2 9PJ

To make an enquiry about a potential referral, please contact:

Sara Demaine, Adult Psychotherapist & DBT Team Lead
Leeds Personality Disorder Clinical Network
Unit 24, The Sugar refinery
Sugar Mill Business Park
Oakhurst Avenue
Leeds
LS11 7DF
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You can find out more about DBT at www.behavioraltech.com

Please do not send any personal information here; this is a general DBT information website