

What is DBT?

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) is an effective treatment for people who have difficulties managing their emotions and behaviours.

DBT aims to help people manage difficult emotions, suicidal thoughts and actions, self-harm and other self-destructive behaviours with skilful behaviours. As a result, it helps the young person balance his/her emotions, thoughts and behaviour. DBT assumes the young person wants to feel better and have a life worth giving.

DBT can be helpful for children and young people experiencing significant behavioural/psychological problems and emotional distress which are not able to be managed within local community resources.

Is DBT for you?

If a young person answers “YES” to more than one of the following questions, they may benefit from a DBT approach:

- Do you become overwhelmed when there is a difficult situation and you don't know how to calm yourself down?
- Do you feel suicidal, feel like hurting yourself or feel like doing something dangerous or risky when you feel distressed?
- Do you worry about others leaving or rejecting you?
- Do you find that it's difficult to keep relationships steady and going well?
- Do you have repeated sudden shifts of mood?
- Do you have trouble controlling your anger and have frequent episodes of anger directed at yourself and/or others?

How do we work?

DBT is an intensive therapy so commitment by the young person and parent/caregiver to participate is required. The following elements are included:

- **Skills groups** teach mindfulness, distress tolerance, emotion regulation and interpersonal effectiveness skills.
- Skills groups sessions are weekly (2 hour sessions) and run for 16 weeks, and teenagers attend with a parent/caregiver.
- **Individual therapy** with the young person focuses on applying these skills to deal with problems in their lives. Individual appointments are attended weekly for the duration of the skills group.
- **Family sessions** focus on familial relationship difficulties. We discuss with the family how often these sessions occur.
- **Telephone consultation** is available to teenagers in the DBT programme. Telephone calls are for the young person to get coaching from their individual therapist at times of distress, or to practise their use of DBT skills.

The Skills Group is divided into five modules:

- The *Mindfulness* module helps you become more aware and in touch with your feelings, thoughts and physical sensations.
- The *Distress Tolerance* module helps you deal more effectively with distress and crisis without engaging in self - harming and self - destructive behaviour.
- The *Emotion Regulation* module helps you to understand and manage your emotions in more helpful ways.
- *The Interpersonal Effectiveness* module helps you deal with people and relationships.
- The *Walking the Middle Path* module focuses on teaching you and your parent/caregiver to see that the world is not just black and white, and that there is more than one way to solve a problem.



The DBT team

There are ten therapists working on the DBT team. If DBT is appropriate for you, one of these therapists will meet with you to discuss the DBT approach further and how it may help you to achieve your goals.

What's happens if I sign up to DBT?

1. You will meet with a member of the DBT team individually to discuss if this is the right time for you to participate in the DBT programme. This person may be your individual therapist.
2. You will be invited to approximately '3' follow on sessions with your designated DBT therapist to discuss your goals and to discuss commitment to DBT.



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

**Dialectical Behaviour
Therapy**
Child and Adolescent
Mental Health Team,
North Lee, Cork

