



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

The Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Endeavour Programme



Creating a life worth living

Client Information Leaflet

**HSE South - North Lee
Adult Mental Health Service
Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Programme**

July 2014

The Endeavour Project

What is The Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Endeavour Programme?

The Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Endeavour Programme is the North Lee Adult Mental Health Service treatment for persons with a diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder or Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder. The programme is based on an evidence based treatment called Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT). DBT was originally developed by Marsha Linehan, Ph.D.,¹ as a treatment for people with self-harm urges/ behaviours, suicidal thoughts, urges for suicide and/ or suicide attempts. DBT is a well researched treatment approach and is shown to be an effective treatment for individuals with a diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder.

What is Borderline Personality Disorder?

Borderline Personality Disorder is an umbrella term used by mental health professionals to assist in understanding a collection of symptoms that you may experience, so as to plan the most appropriate treatment based on expert research and opinion. The criteria for a diagnosis of this disorder are listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR)². You may discuss these criteria with your doctor.

If your doctor has discussed this diagnosis with you, then you may be able to relate to the following types of difficulties:

- Problems naming, understanding and controlling feelings, often feeling depressed, anxious or angry.
- Reporting suicidal feelings which you find difficult to manage.
- Often acting impulsively, in ways that can cause harm to your self, such as cutting, burning, taking overdoses or threatening to self harm.
- Worry that you will be rejected by family or friends, having fears of being left all alone.
- Your relationships are often really intense and can see-saw from being seen as really good to really bad in a short time. Relating to others and feeling secure in doing so is a significant difficulty.
- Given problems regulating feelings and coping with interpersonal relationships, you may feel unsure of who you really are, you may have feelings of being empty all which adds to your sense of isolation from others.
- Often you will have had many contacts with mental health services, having tried many medications and treatments none of which appeared to be effective in the long term.
- You most likely feel like you would like to change, but feel afraid to do so.

Borderline Personality Disorder is recognised as one of the most distressing disorders for clients and most difficult for clinicians to treat. *A Vision for Change – Report of the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy (2006)*³ states that people with this disorder “can present with histories of abusive relationships, repeated self harm behaviour, emotional instability” (Department of Health and Children, 2006, p. 162). The report highlights that Dialectical Behaviour Therapy is an effective treatment to help you if you engage in deliberate self-harm behaviours as a means of coping with emotional distress.

What is Dialectical Behaviour Therapy?

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) was initially formulated as a treatment for people with interpersonal problems associated with emotion self-regulation skills and impulsive behaviours. It is a combination of cognitive-behavioural therapy enhanced with mindfulness practice and acceptance based philosophy and practice. The therapy aims to help you to create ‘a life worth living’ by not only accepting you and those around you as they are, but also to support you in learning new skills that you can practice with the therapy teams support.

What does The Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Endeavour Programme involve?

The programme aims to support you in decreasing self harm behaviours which are interfering with you living the kind of life you would like to live. DBT is an intensive treatment programme with a number of key components. These components are:

Group Skills Training

Skills Training consists of two and a half hours of skills training in a group session each week to assist you in learning new skills to:

1. Be more aware of your thoughts, feelings and actions, and how they impact on your behaviour (**mindfulness skills**)
2. Build skills to cope more effectively in managing stressful life events, coping in a way that is less destructive to your body and your relationships (**distress tolerance**).
3. Practice skills in understanding and managing your emotions (**emotion regulation**).
4. Improve your ability to relate to people and to feel more skilled and confident in doing so (**interpersonal effectiveness**).

Individual Therapy

Individual therapy consists of an individual session with your DBT therapist each week which typically lasts 60 minutes. Individual therapy helps to motivate you to practice skills from the group skills sessions and to reduce factors that interfere or inhibit your progress.

Phone Coaching

Phone coaching enables you to contact your DBT therapist between individual therapy sessions to assist you in utilising the skills you have learned to support you in being effective. Phone coaching enables you to apply what you have learned in skills training and individual therapy to your daily life.

DBT Therapist Team Consultation

DBT therapists involved in your treatment will meet each week to ensure that you are fully participating in the programme and to discuss how they can help you to get the maximum benefit from the programme.

The Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Endeavour Programme runs for 12 months. During this time, you will complete all of the group skills sessions twice, with the aim of learning and revising the skills. Individual therapy will be weekly and any changes to schedules due to holidays etc. will be discussed with you in advance. You will be given contact details of an alternative skills coach to support you in implementing your skills when your own therapist is on leave. In order for us to ensure that the programme is meeting your needs, you will be asked to complete a number of assessment measures at various time points throughout the programme.

The Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Endeavour Programme sounds like it might be something I would like to apply for. What next?

If you are interested in attending this treatment programme, you will need to be referred by your doctor. S/ he will complete a standard referral form which will outline your main difficulties. On receipt of the referral, you will be offered an initial assessment appointment with an individual DBT therapist from the programme. Typically you will meet this person 4-6 times for pre- screening. The aim of these sessions is to complete a number of assessment measures with you, to give you further information about the programme and to ensure that you will be willing to fully commit to the programme. If we agree that the programme is suitable for you, you will be offered a place on the programme. However, it is possible that you might not be able to start immediately as there are a limited number of places. You may be asked to remain on a waiting list until a space becomes available on the programme.

I have some more questions about the programme and whether or not it is right for me. Who can I contact for some answers?

In the first instance, we would encourage you to speak to your doctor if you would like to seek clarification about your diagnosis and the treatment recommendation. Having done so, if you have any further questions you can contact:

**The Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Endeavour
Programme Team,
Inniscarraig House,
Western Road,
Cork.**

Tel: 07610 84176

References:

1. Linehan, M. (1993) *Cognitive Behaviour Treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder*, Guilford Press, London.
2. American Psychiatric Association (2000) *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 4th Ed Text Revision*, American Psychiatric Publishing Inc., USA.
3. Department of Health and Children (2006) *A Vision for Change- Report of the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy*, Stationery Office, Dublin.