Overview of DBT Skills Training
for Suicidal Adolescents

Shawn S. Sidhu, M.D.
University of New Mexico Children’s Psychiatric Hospital
SSidhu@salud.unm.edu
Main References


• 2) **DBT 911**: A great application for smartphones with built-in exercises
DBT Structure

• Individual Therapy: One 1 hour session per week

• Phone Coaching

• Skills Group: One 2-2.5 hour group per week

• Family Therapy/Involvement (variable)

• Consultation Group: One 1.5-2 hour group per week
Individual Therapy and Skills Group

**Individual Therapy**
- Life Threatening Behaviors
- Therapy Interfering Behaviors
- Quality of Life Interfering Behaviors
- Essential Life Skills

**Skills Group**
- Mindfulness
- Distress Tolerance
- Interpersonal Effectiveness
- Emotion Regulation
OUTLINE

• Skills Groups
  • Diary Card
  • Behavioral Chain Analysis

• Individual Therapy
  • Mindfulness
  • Distress Tolerance
  • Interpersonal Effectiveness
  • Emotional Regulation
INDIVIDUAL THERAPY
Individual Therapy Tools

• Diary Card

• Behavioral Chain Analysis

• Suicide Risk Assessment
Diary Card

• Patient is to fill out a Diary Card prior to every session

• Should stick to the most important issues

• Examples of things to include:
  • Actual attempts at SI/self-harm
  • Urges to SI/self-harm
  • Drug/Alcohol Use
  • Emotions
  • Medication Compliance
  • YOU CAN BE CREATIVE!
Behavioral Chain Analysis

• Step-by-step approach to looking objectively at events that led up to self-harm

• First, patient documents in detail the series of events

• Second, patient documents thoughts and feelings that accompanied each event

• Lastly, therapist works with patient to generate alternative solutions/interject places where skills could be used
Guidelines for a Behavioral Chain Analysis

1) Describe the specific PROBLEM BEHAVIOR (example cutting or a suicide attempt)

A) Be very specific and detailed. Avoid vague terms.
B) Identify exactly what you did, said, thought, or felt
C) Describe the intensity of the behavior and other characteristics of the behavior that are important
D) Describe the problem behavior in enough detail that an actor in a play or movie could recreate the behavior exactly
Guidelines for a Behavioral Chain Analysis

2) Describe the specific PRECIPITATING EVENT that started the whole chain

A) Identify the environmental event that started the chain. Always start with some event in your environment, even if it doesn’t seem to you that the environmental event caused the problem behavior. Here are some possible questions to get to this:

1) When did the sequence of events that led to the problem behavior begin? When did the problem start?
2) What was going on the moment the problem started?
3) What were you doing, thinking, feeling, and imagining at the time
4) Why did the problem behavior happen on that day instead of the day before?
Guidelines for a Behavioral Chain Analysis

3) Describe the VULNERABILITY FACTORS happening before the precipitating event. What factors or events made you more vulnerable to a problematic chain? Areas to examine include the following:

A) Physical illness, unbalanced eating or sleeping, injury
B) Use of drugs or alcohol, misuse of prescription drugs
C) Stressful events in the environment (positive or negative)
D) Intense emotions, such as sadness, anger, fear, or loneliness
E) Previous behaviors of your own that you found stressful
Guidelines for a Behavioral Chain Analysis

4) Describe in excruciating detail the CHAIN of EVENTS that led up to the problem behavior

* Imagine that your problem behavior is chained to the precipitating even tin the environment. How long is the chain? Where does it go? What are the links? Write out all links in the chain of events, no matter how small. Be very specific, as if you are writing a script for a play.

A) What exact thought (or belief), feeling, or action followed the precipitating event? What thought, followed that? What next?

B) Look at each link in the chain after you write it. Was there another thought, feeling, or action that could have occurred? Could someone else have thought, felt, or acted differently at that point. If so, explain how that specific action came to be.

C) For each link in the chain, ask yourself: is there a smaller link I could describe?
Guidelines for a Behavioral Chain Analysis

5) What were the CONSEQUENCES of this behavior? Be specific. How did other people react immediately and later? How did you feel immediately following the behavior? How about later? What effect did the behavior have on you and your environment?
Guidelines for a Behavioral Chain Analysis

6) Describe in detail different SOLUTIONS to the problem

A) Go back to the chain of your behaviors following the prompting event. Circle each point or link where, if you had done something different, you would have avoided the problem behavior.

B) What could you have done differently at each link in the chain of the events to avoid the problem behavior? What coping behaviors or skillful behaviors could you have used?
Guidelines for a Behavioral Chain Analysis

7) Describe in detail a PREVENTION STRATEGY for how you could have kept the chain from starting by reducing your vulnerability to the chain.

8) Describe what you are going to do to REPAIR important or significant consequences of the problem behavior
SKILLS GROUPS
MINDFULNESS
Mindfulness Training

- Overarching Philosophy: help patients be more in touch with themselves and their environments in the moment

- 3 States of the Mind

- What Skills

- How Skills
Mindfulness - 3 States of the Mind

• Emotional Mind

• Reasonable Mind

• Wise Mind
Mindfulness - “What” Skills

• Observe

• Describe

• Participate
Mindfulness - “How Skills”

• Non-Judgementally

• One Mindfully

• Effectively
DISTRESS TOLERANCE
Distress Tolerance

• Learn Crisis Survival Skills. Core skills include:
  • Self-Soothing Skills
  • Improve the Moment
  • Learn to Evaluate Pros and Cons
  • Distract Yourself with ACCEPTS

• Other Skills Include:
  • Breathing Exercises
  • Half-Smiling Exercises
  • Turning the Mind/Radical Acceptance/Accepting Reality
Distress Tolerance - Distraction

• Activities:
• Contributing:
• Comparisons:
• Emotions:
• Pushing Away:
• Thoughts:
• Sensations:
INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS
Interpersonal Effectiveness

• Keeping Relationships with **GIVE**

• Keeping Self-Respect with **FAST**

• Getting What you Want with **DEAR MAN**

• Factors Reducing Interpersonal Effectiveness

• Self-Affirming Statements for Interpersonal Effectiveness

• Looking into Asking for What You Want/Saying No
GIVE and FAST

• be Gentle
• act Interested
• Validate
• use an Easy manner

• be Fair
• no Apologies
• Stick to your values
• be Truthful
DEAR MAN

• Describe
• Express
• Assert
• Reinforce
• stay Mindful
• Appear confident
• Negotiate
EMOTIONAL REGULATION
Emotion Regulation

- Reducing vulnerability to negative emotions via PLEASE MASTER
- Letting go of emotional suffering
- Mindfulness of the current emotion
- Changing emotions by acting opposite to the current emotion
- Steps for increasing positive emotions
PLEASE MASTER

• Physical illness
• balance Eating
• Avoid mood-Altering drugs
• balance Sleep
• get Exercise
• become a MASTER/build MASTERy