

# Practical Applications of Dialectical Behavior Therapy for Individuals At Risk for Suicide

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# Question

Why was Dialectical Behavior Therapy originally created?

A) Borderline Personality Disorder

B) Impulsivity

C) Bipolar Disorder

D) Suicidality

E) Major Depressive Disorder

# Answer

A

Linehan's original work looked specifically at suicidality, and then it was expanded to Borderline Personality Disorder.

Why Should You Care About DBT?

We are ineffective at predicting which patients will end up harming themselves

A history of *IMPULSIVE* aggression remains the best predictor of suicide attempts

DBT is one of the only treatments which directly addresses impulsivity

Authentic, genuine, and customized. Also semi-structured.

Multiple simultaneous components addressing separate but important issues

Can expand for use in anyone with impulsive behaviors (including substance abuse)

What is DBT? What is a Dialectic?

## Question 2

Which of the following thinking patterns is reflective of a “dialectic”?

- 1) Persistently negative (everything is terrible and always will be)
- 2) Catastrophizing (the fact that I am late for this meeting will ruin my whole life)
- 3) Black and White (my husband is perfect and my mother-in-law has no redeemable qualities)
- 4) Paranoia (my family wants to cook for me so that they can put something in my food)
- 5) Distorted Thinking (I know I am normal weight but when I look in the mirror all I see is someone who is grotesque)

# Answer

Black and White (my husband is perfect and my mother-in-law has no redeemable qualities)

The other types of thinking could also be possible in DBT patients as well!

Dialectics refer to opposing/conflicting ideas

“Black and White” thinking is a hallmark of impulsive individuals

The point of DBT is to help patients see things objectively and less extremely, and to help see the truths in both sides

DBT started out as a therapy aimed at addressing dialectics, but really has moved to addressing many extremes in thinking

# Examples of Extreme Thinking

Independent Self-View: “I’m worthless” or “Everything in my life sucks and it always will”

Interpersonal Self-View: “Everybody hates me”

View of Others: “My mom is the worst person in the world”

Interpretation: “My dad criticized the way I was cleaning so he doesn’t love me, his life would be easier without me, and I should kill myself”

What Are the Components of DBT?

## Question 3

What are the components of DBT?

- A) Individual Therapy/Phone Coaching
- B) Skills Groups
- C) Consultation Groups
- D) Family Therapy
- E) All of the Above

Answer

All of the Above

# DBT Structure

Individual Therapy: 1 hour per week

Phone Coaching

Skills Group: 2-2.5 hour group per week

Family Therapy/Involvement

Consultation Group: 1.5 – 2 hour group per week

\*None of these components have been shown to be efficacious in the absence of the others

# Individual Therapy Skills/Tools

Diary Card

Behavioral Chain Analysis

# Diary Card

Dialectical Behavior Therapy Adolescent Diary Card		First name <i>Jessica</i>			Filled out in session? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Date	Self harm		Suicidal		Alcohol		Drugs		Meds
	Urge	Actions	Thoughts	Actions	Urge	Use amount/type	Urge	Use amount/type	Taken as prescribed
	0-5	Yes/no	0-5	Yes/no	0-5		0-5		Yes/no
<i>Mon 2/1</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Tues 2/2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Wed 2/3</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Thurs 2/4</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Fri 2/5</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Sat 2/6</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Sun 2/7</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Yes</i>

**USED SKILLS**

- 0 = Not thought about or used
- 1 = Thought about, not used, didn't want to
- 2 = Thought about, not used, wanted to
- 3 = Tried but couldn't use them

- 4 = Tried, could do them, but they didn't help
- 5 = Tried, could use them, helped
- 6 = Didn't try, used them, didn't help
- 7 = Didn't try, used them, helped

**Instructions:** Circle the days you worked on each skill.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
1. Wise mind	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Observe (Just notice what's going on inside)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Describe (Put words on the experience)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Participate (Enter into the experience)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Don't judge (Nonjudgmental stance)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Stay focused (One-mindfully: in the moment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Do what works (Effectiveness)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Identifying and labeling emotions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. PLEASE (Reduce vulnerability to emotion mind)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
10. MASTER (Building mastery, feeling effective)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Engaging in pleasant activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Working toward long-term goals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
13. Building structure // time, work, play	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Acting opposite to current emotion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(cont.)

FIGURE 8.1. Jessica's diary card.

How often did you fill out this section? <u>X</u> Daily ___ 2-3x ___ Once												Date started
How often did you use phone consult? ___												2/1
Other				Emotions							Skills*	Notes:
Cut class/school	Risky sex	Urge to argue with boyfriend	Argued with boyfriend	Anger	Fear	Happy	Anxious	Sad	Shame	Misery		
Yes/no	Yes/no	0-5	Yes/no	0-5	0-5	0-5	0-5	0-5	0-5	0-5	0-7	
No	No	4	Yes	2	3	1	3	3	2	3	5	
No	No	2	No	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	4	
Yes	Yes	4	Yes	4	2	4	4	4	4	2	5	
No	No	5	Yes!!!	5	5	2	5	5	4	5	3	
No	No	4	Yes	5	5	2	4	2	5	5	5	
No	No	3	No	4	3	3	2	1	4	2	5	
No	No	2	No	3	2	1	3	1	3	1	5	

**Rating scale for emotions and urges (above):**

0 = Not at all    1 = A bit    2 = Somewhat    3 = Rather strong    4 = Very strong    5 = Extremely strong

Urge to quit therapy: 1    Misery index: 4

**Instructions:** Circle the days you worked on each skill.

		Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Interpersonal Effectiveness	15. DEAR MAN (Getting what you want)	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
	16. GIVE (Improving the relationship)	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
	17. FAST (Feeling effective and keeping your self-respect)	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Distress Tolerance	18. Cheerleading statements for worry thoughts	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
	19. ACCEPTS (Distract)	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
	20. Self-soothe (Five senses)	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
	21. Pros and cons	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Walking the Middle Path	22. Radical acceptance	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
	23. Positive reinforcement	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
	24. Validate self	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
	25. Validate someone else	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
	26. Think dialectically (not in black and white)	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
	27. Act dialectically (walk the middle path)	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun

FIGURE 8.1 (cont.)

## Question 4

What method do DBT therapists use in individual therapy when a patient endorses recent cutting?

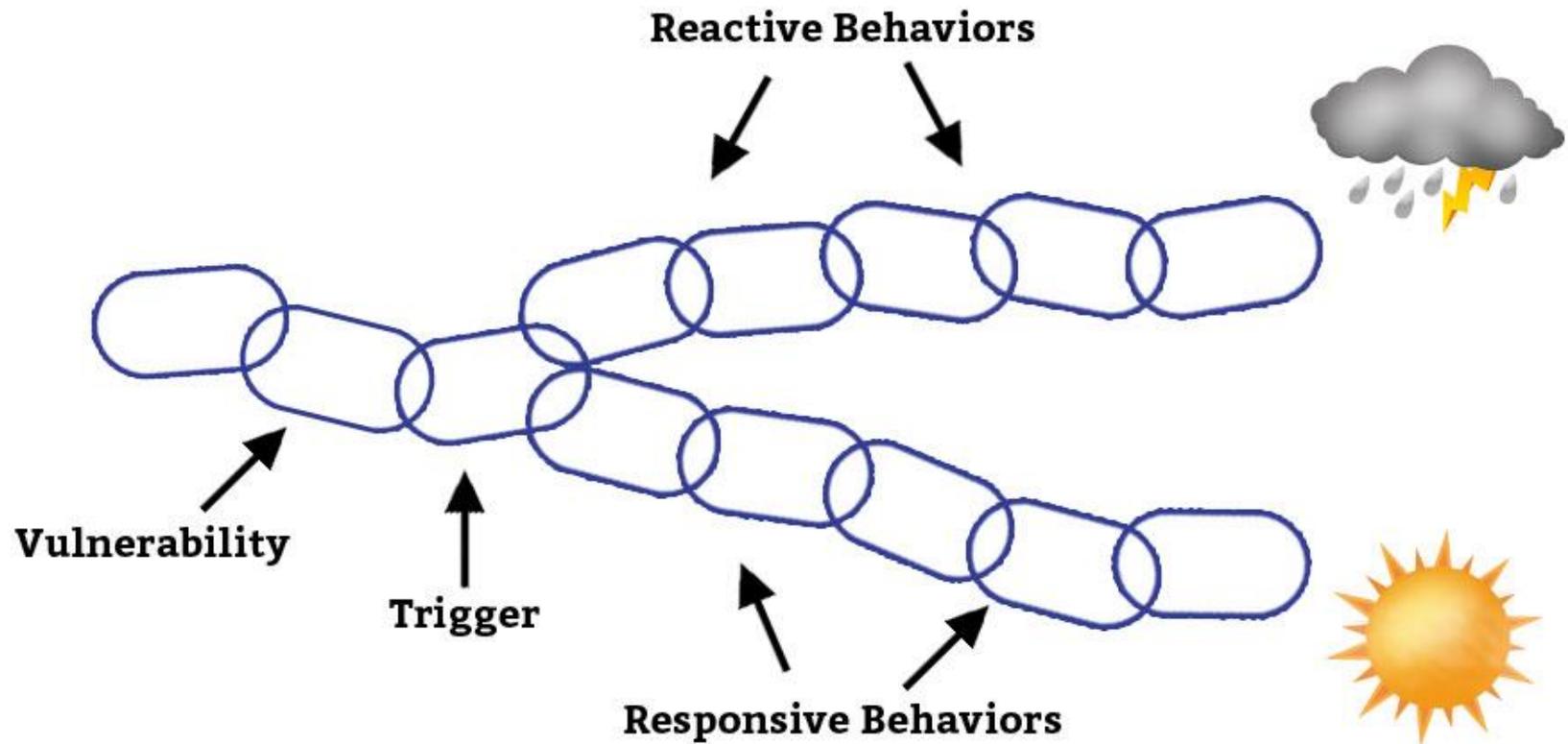
- A) Cognitive Restructuring
- B) Exposure-Response Prevention
- C) Habit Reversal Training
- D) Behavior Chain Analysis
- E) Insight-Oriented Interpretation

Answer

Behavioral Chain Analysis

# Behavioral Chain Analysis

# DBT Chain Analysis



# 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:

A) When did the sequence of events that led to the problem behavior begin? When did the problem start?

B) What was going on the moment the problem started?

C) What were you doing, thinking, feeling, and imagining at the time?

D) 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 event in 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, feeling, or action followed that? What next? 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 thought, feeling or 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

**Vulnerability:**  
Conflicts with  
boyfriend and best  
friend; impaired  
sleep.

**Prompting event:**  
Father refused to grant a  
previous request; mother  
criticized her  
dishwashing.

**Links:**  
Emotion: Sadness.  
Thought: "No one  
loves me any more."

**Consequences:**  
Negative reinforcement:  
Experienced emotional relief.  
Positive reinforcement: Mother  
and boyfriend lavished her  
with love and affection after  
suicide attempt.

**Problem behavior:**  
Suicide attempt: Cut  
herself with razor blade

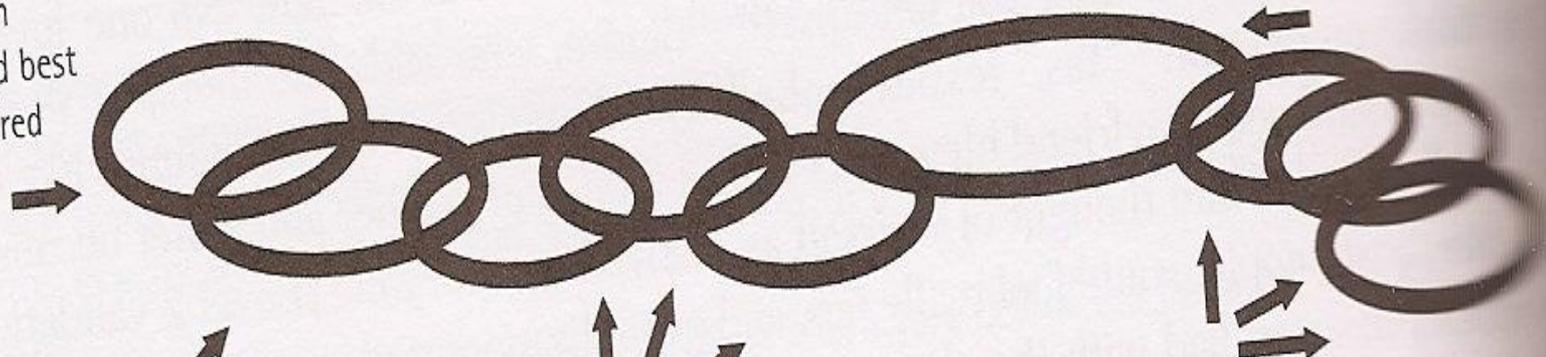
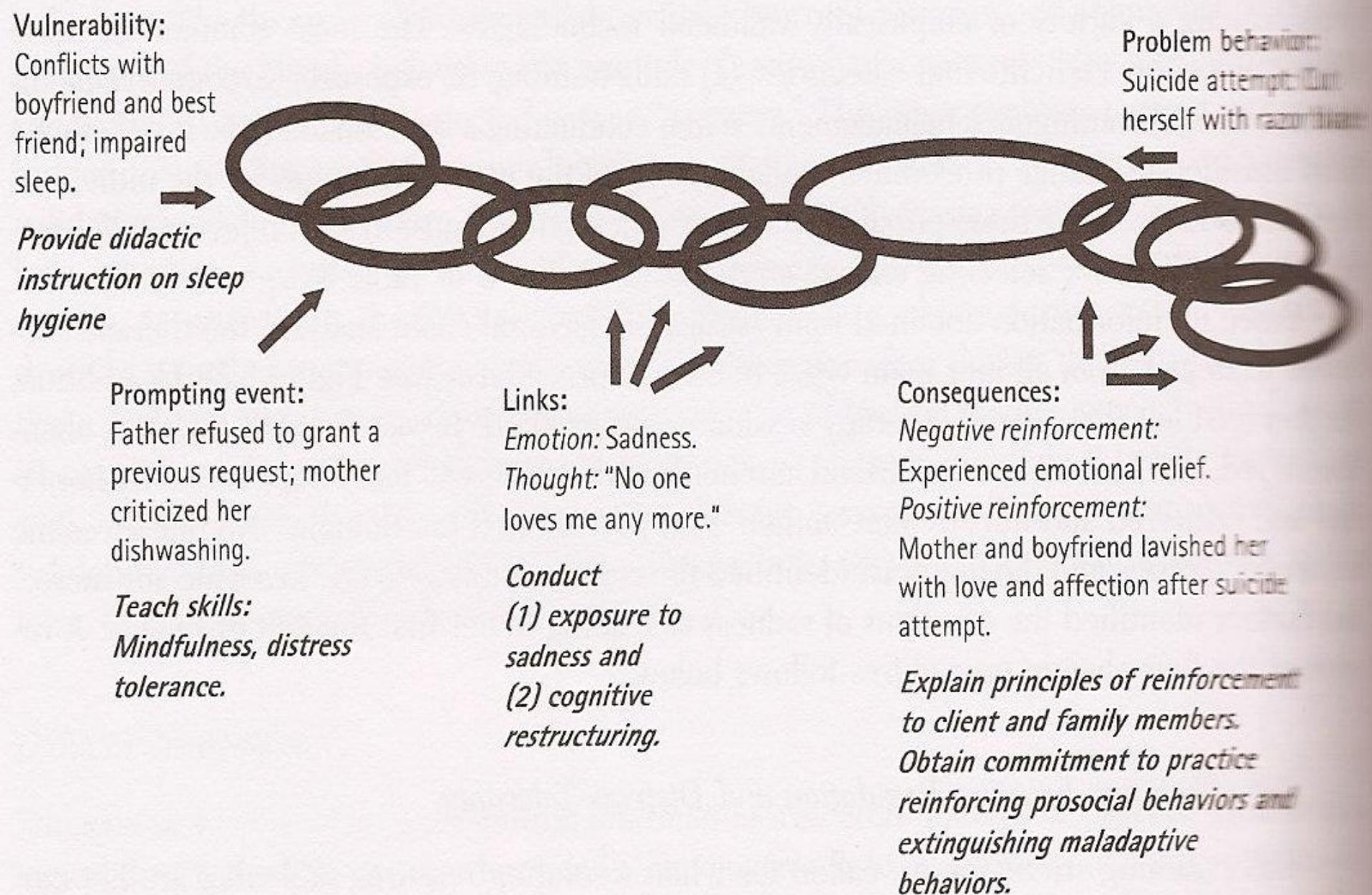


FIGURE 8.2. Behavioral chain analysis of Jessica's suicide attempt.



**FIGURE 8.3.** *Solution analysis of Jessica's suicide attempt.*

# SKILLS GROUPS

# Dialectical Behavior Therapy

## PROBLEMS (What to decrease)

## SKILLS (What to increase)

- I. Confusion about yourself  
(Not always knowing what you feel or why you get upset; dissociation)
- II. Impulsivity  
(Acting without thinking it all through)
- III. Emotional instability  
(Fast, intense mood changes with little control; or, steady negative emotional state)
- IV. Interpersonal problems  
(Pattern of difficulty keeping relationships steady, getting what you want, or keeping your self-respect; frantic efforts to avoid abandonment)
- V. Teenager-family dilemmas  
(Polarized thinking, feeling, and acting—e.g., all-or-nothing thinking)

- I. Mindfulness
- II. Distress tolerance
- III. Emotion regulation
- IV. Interpersonal effectiveness
- V. Walking the middle path

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**FIGURE 7.1.** Handout on DBT for adolescents and family members.

## Question 5

Which of the following could be considered a “mindfulness” exercise?

- A. Creating a fear ladder/hierarchy
- B. Taking a walk while noting the sights
- C. Directly addressing uncomfortable emotions
- D. Distracting the mind from negative thoughts
- E. Providing gentle aversive therapy to maladaptive behaviors

Answer

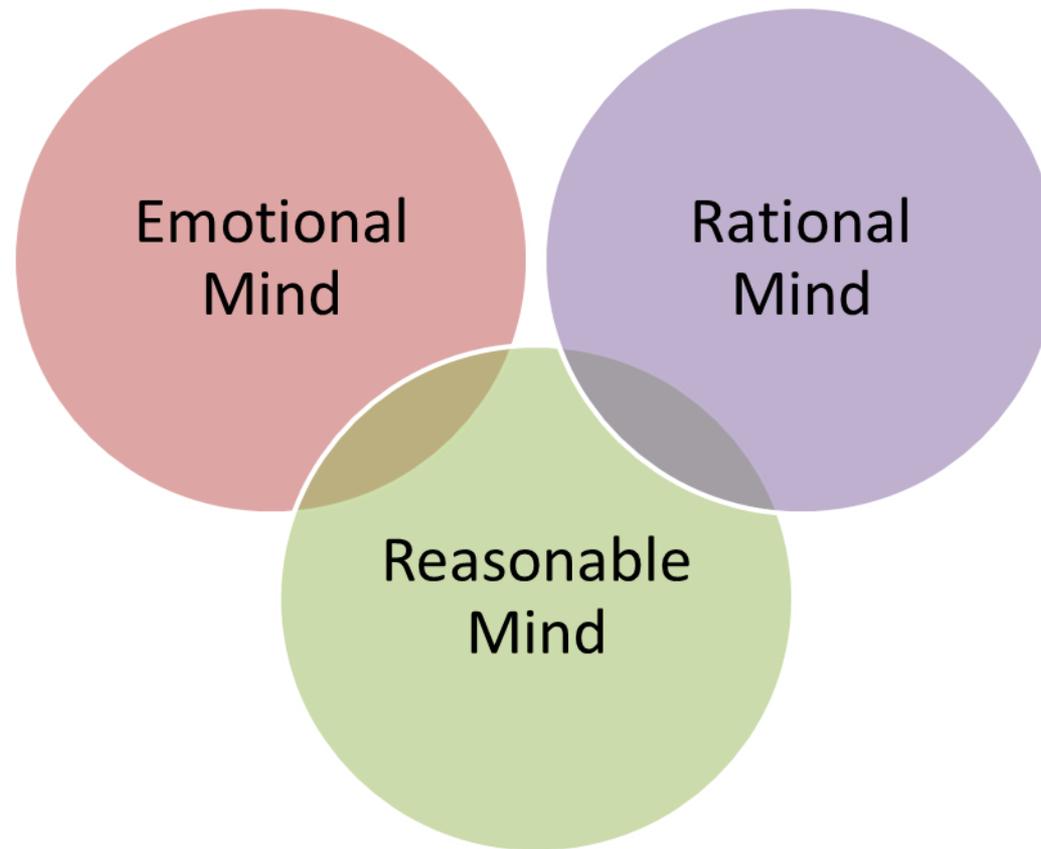
B

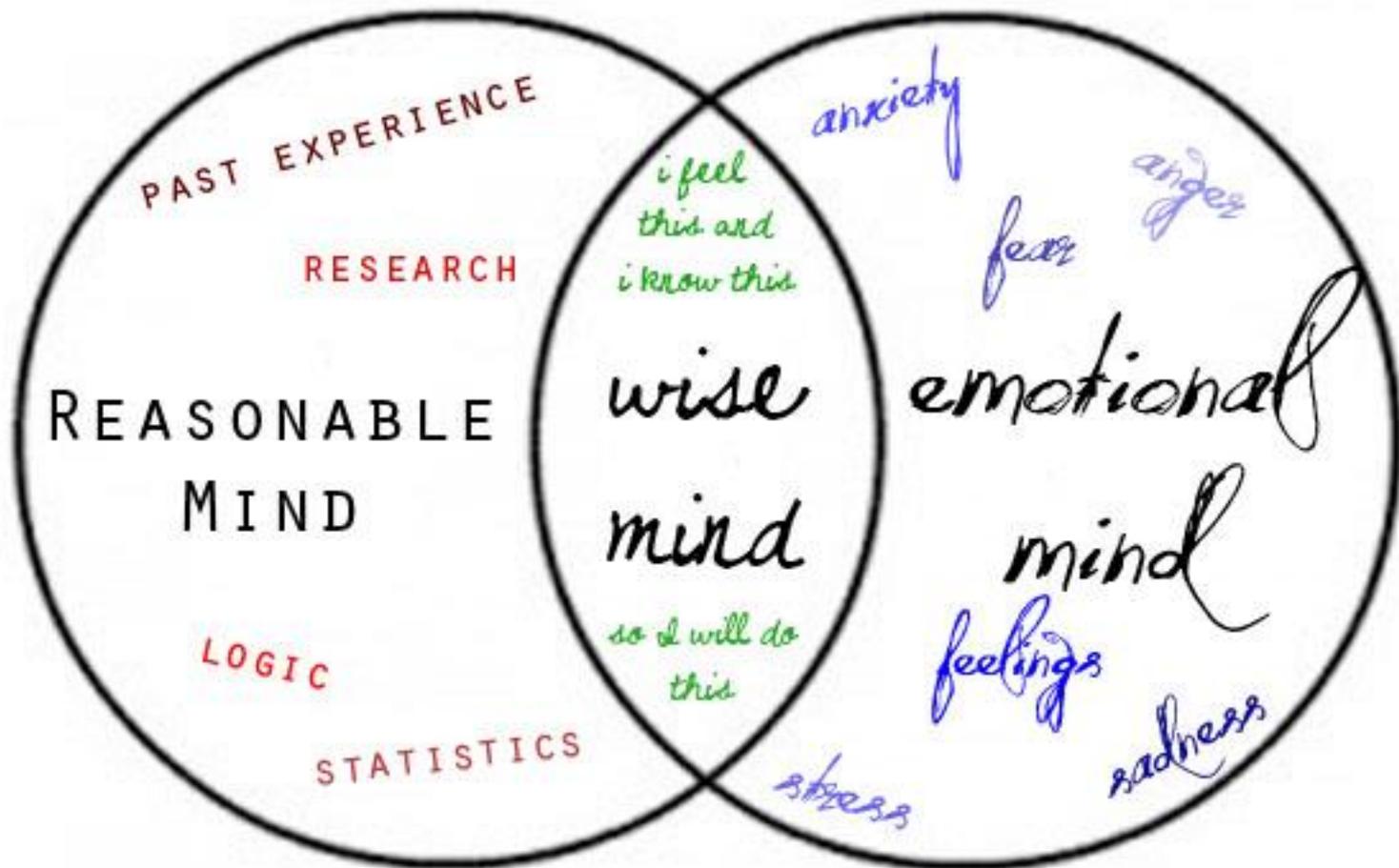
**MINDFULNESS**

# 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





# Mindfulness - “What” Skills

- Observe
- Describe
- Participate

# Mindfulness

## Three Steps to Achieve Wise Mind: "What" Skills

### OBSERVE

- Just notice the experience in the present moment.
- *Wordless watching:* Watch your thoughts and feelings come and go, as if they are on a conveyor belt.
- Don't push away your thoughts and feelings. Just let them happen, even when they are painful.
- Observe both inside and outside yourself.

### DESCRIBE

- *Wordful watching:* Label what you observed with words.
- Put words on the experience—for example, "I feel sad," or "My heart is pounding."
- Describe only what you observe (without interpretations).

### PARTICIPATE

- Try not to worry about tomorrow or focus on yesterday. Throw yourself into the present moment fully (e.g., dancing, cleaning, taking a test, feeling sad in the moment).
- Fully experience your feelings without being self-conscious.
- Listen to your WISE MIND to help you choose to participate (a) your discomfort; (b) in an alternate activity to escape/avoid distress; or (c) in order to experience life fully.
- Remember to use your "HOW" SKILLS while participating.

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FIGURE 10.2a. Example of an adapted skills handout for adolescents.

# 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 (ACCEPTS)

- 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

- physicall illness
- balance eating
- Avoid mood-Altering drugs
- balance sleep
- get exercise
- become a **MASTER**/build **MASTERY**

# Questions?

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