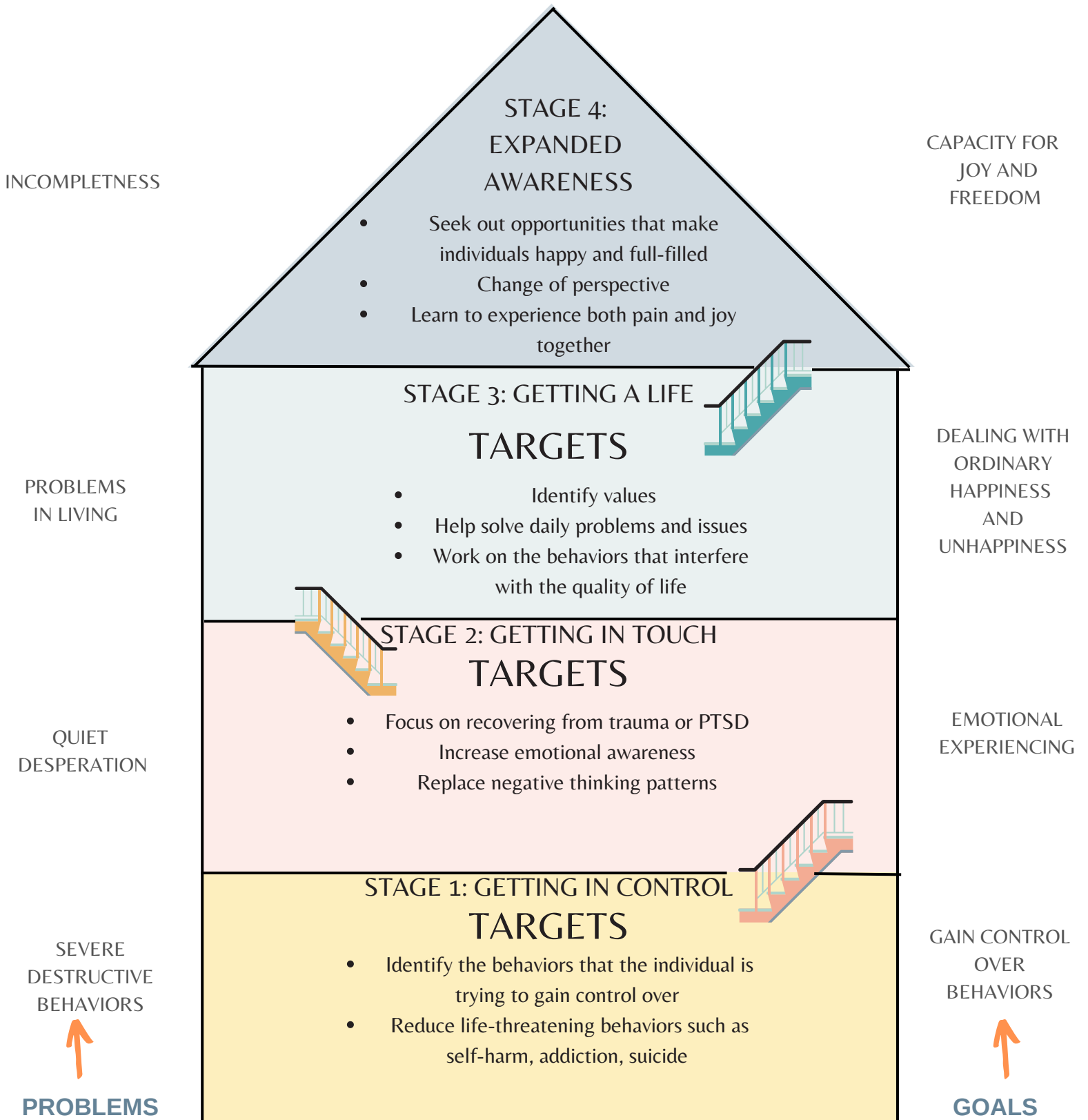




# DBT HOUSE

The DBT House is an exercise developed to help you eliminate life-threatening behaviors, recognize behaviors that need to be changed and help you connect your current situation to your feelings. Throughout the exercise, you will better understand your strengths, coping skills, and values, which helps strengthen your support network and ultimately helps you achieve a life worth living.





# DBT HOUSE

The DBT “House of Treatment” model, created by Dr. Marsha Linehan, consists of four levels which are analogous to the basement, first floor, second floor, and roof of a house. As your behaviors and goals change over time, he or she can move through all these different stages of treatment.

## Level 1: The Basement

The very bottom floor is the basement; it is usually a place with a lot of fire and pain. It’s a difficult place where no one wants to be, but many people find themselves stuck. Those in the basement are usually the ones who have suicidal thoughts, attempts, and self-harm may be a regular behavior in which you engage. A person in this stage is in constant distress, and the pain is so much that they can’t cope with everyday life.

This stage corresponds to treatment at a residential treatment center or psychiatric hospital, where treatment is centered around stabilizing the individual and eliminating life-threatening behaviors. The number-one focus is on crisis management and stabilization.

## Level 2: First Floor

On this level, individuals are still suffering but no longer engaging in chronically life-threatening behaviors.

They need a lot of help with regulating their emotions. Therefore, therapy during this stage is focused on emotional stability. This stage focuses on increasing their emotional self-awareness, replacing negative thinking patterns with positive ones, and becoming more comfortable living with themselves.

Common behaviors include refusing to see the therapist or not doing what the therapist recommends.

These responses are often due to the anxiety experienced when giving up substance abuse, self-harm, or other negative behaviors.

## Level 3: Second Floor

At this stage, you are learning more and more about DBT skills and should now be using those skills to cope with everyday issues in life.

This stage helps you to identify your values and practice positive thinking patterns and behaviors. You may face challenges such as having problems connecting with other people, forming relationships, and feeling anxious about getting close to people.

You may no longer be in residential treatment, and you may be going about your life as usual. However, you should still access professional help with managing your emotions and achieving your goals.

The DBT skills that you might start practicing include mindfulness, distress tolerance, emotion regulation, and interpersonal effectiveness.

## Level 4: The Roof

This stage symbolizes life after leaving the four walls of structured treatment. Your perspective has changed at this stage, and you have learned how to accept pain and joy. You no longer participate in self-destructive behaviors but rather a sense of self-compassion and fulfillment in healthy relationships.

Whenever obstacles come up, you should be better able to cope with them as you have developed strong, healthy coping skills.

Going on the roof is also symbolic of having a new perspective on life and appreciating the view once you’ve reached this stage.



# DBT HOUSE

INCOMPLETNESS

CAPACITY FOR JOY AND FREEDOM

STAGE 4:  
EXPANDED  
AWARENESS

STAGE 3: GETTING A LIFE  
TARGETS

PROBLEMS  
IN LIVING

DEALING WITH  
ORDINARY  
HAPPINESS  
AND  
UNHAPPINESS

QUIET  
DESPERATION

STAGE 2: GETTING IN TOUCH  
TARGETS

EMOTIONAL  
EXPERIENCING

SEVERE  
DESTRUCTIVE  
BEHAVIORS

STAGE 1: GETTING IN CONTROL  
TARGETS

GAIN CONTROL  
OVER  
BEHAVIORS

↑  
**PROBLEMS**

↑  
**GOALS**



# DBT HOUSE

INCOMPLETNESS

STAGE 4:  
EXPANDED  
AWARENESS

CAPACITY FOR  
JOY AND  
FREEDOM

PROBLEMS  
IN LIVING

STAGE 3: GETTING A LIFE  
TARGETS



DEALING WITH  
ORDINARY  
HAPPINESS  
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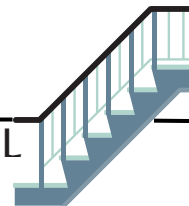


STAGE 2: GETTING IN TOUCH  
TARGETS

EMOTIONAL  
EXPERIENCING

SEVERE  
DESTRUCTIVE  
BEHAVIORS

STAGE 1: GETTING IN CONTROL  
TARGETS



GAIN CONTROL  
OVER  
BEHAVIORS



**PROBLEMS**



**GOALS**