

DBT Skills Workbook for Rec Therapy Sessions



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Introduction

Marsha Linehan is a psychologist who created Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). She created DBT specifically for the treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD). DBT has been found to have successful outcomes for people with other mental health needs as well.

This workbook is in no way adequate for covering the content and knowledge by Marsha Linehan. The skills covered in this free workbook are limited. All of the DBT skills are definitely not covered here.

True evidenced-based practice DBT requires a facility to be trained to provide DBT. Practitioners participate in conference calls as well as training.

The best resource for DBT is her site here:

<https://linehaninstitute.org>



The Skills

DBT skills are taught to people in group sessions.

People who know the skills can teach the skills.

Many of the skills taught in DBT are in the scope of practice for recreational therapists.

Note – the activities in this workbook are recreation based with the purpose of helping people to handle a crisis, improve interpersonal skills, to be focused on the present and to regulate emotions.

How to use this workbook

The pages in this FREE workbook are for individual training sessions or group sessions, educational/ classroom settings.

Practitioners using this workbook can print the pages from this workbook to use for educational and recreational sessions.

Participants can draw, doodle, or write their answers.

Encourage participants to share aloud their answer during a wrap-up discussion. However, don't force or pressure anyone to share.

Recreational therapists (and allied professionals using this workbook) can be creative and add activities and lessons to coincide with each page/ lesson.



Part 1

Distress Tolerance Skills

How to Survive a Crisis



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Distress Tolerance Skills

How to Survive a Crisis

Crisis and stress are part of life.
Sometimes bad things happen.

Skills in this section can be used to help you
bear with the crisis in your life.

IMPROVE and Radical Acceptance skills
are taught in this section.

Do you need help with surviving a crisis?
Do you want to learn skills that could help?

If you answered, yes, then please continue.



I is for Imagery

What images do you enjoy? These could be real images or imaginary images.

How does imagery help you to feel better?

Tip: Put together a collection of pictures to look at to help you to feel better and to get your mind off of the stressful event.



M is for Meaning

What might be the meaning in your suffering? Are you able to find a good outcome?

How can finding a meaning help you to feel better?



P is for Prayer

Crate your own “thank you” and gratitude prayer. List things that you feel thankful for and grateful for in life.

How does prayer help you to feel better?



R is for Relaxation

How do you like to relax? Answer below.

How does relaxation help you to feel better?



O is for One-minded

Focus on one-thing at a time. What is an activity that you could do that would help you to get your mind focused on something besides the stress?

How does focusing on the present and doing one thing at a time help you to feel better?



V is for mini-Vacation

Sometimes we're not able to take a full vacation. How could you create smaller vacations during the day to help you cope? A small vacation could be taking the time to look at the stars or drink a cup of coffee.

How does taking a mini-vacation help you to feel better?



E is for Encouragement

Who are some people who encourage you?

What are some of the positive encouraging things they've said to you?

Who are people who cheer you up?

Are any of these people available? Call them up. They may not be available in this moment.

What are some positive encouraging things that you can say to yourself?

Radical Acceptance

Sometimes bad things happen and there isn't anything we can do about it.

Refusing to accept the bad thing causes additional distress.

Accepting that it is what it is helps you to feel slightly better.

What are some things (that you might not even like) that you could accept are real to help you to stop resisting and fighting and feeling bad?



Wrap-up Skills

Distress Tolerance Skills

How to Survive a Crisis

IMPROVE

Imagery

Meaning

Prayer

Relaxation

One-Minded

Mini-Vacation

Encouragement

Radical Acceptance



Part 2

Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

How to maintain healthy relationships



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Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

How to maintain healthy relationships

Relationships can be stressful.

Sometimes people don't get along.

Skills in this section are focused to help you to improve people skills.

GIVE skills can help you to maintain a healthy relationship with people.

DEARMAN skills can help you to ask for what you want or to deny a request.

Do need help getting along better with others? Do you want to be effective in getting what you want?

If you answered, yes, then please continue.



G is for Gentle

How can you talk in a gentle tone of voice?

How can you have gentle facial expressions?

How can you have gentle body language?

How can you show gentle and kindness?

How can being gentle improve your relations with this person?

I is for Be Interested in Them

How you can you focus and pay attention to a person?

How can you tell if a person is definitely not paying attention to you?

How can you tell if a person is paying attention?

How can paying attention to someone improve your relationship with them?



V is for Validate Their Emotions

What is this person feeling?

How you can tell they are feeling this way?

How can you communicate to them in a way that lets them know that you understand their thoughts, feelings, and emotions? Note – you might not agree with their thoughts or feelings. However, you can accept that they are a real person and their current emotions are real to them.

How will validating their thoughts and feelings improve your relationship with them?



E is for Be Easy-Going

How can you be easy-going with other people?

What are the problems with being difficult?

How can being easy-going help you to improve relationships with others?



DEARMAN

How to ask for what you want

Describe the facts:

Express your feelings:

Ask for what you want:

Reinforce the benefits for what this is good

Mindful – stay focused on this one topic

Act confident – be confident

Negotiate: what can I do to get a yes? (if they answer no).



DEARMAN

How to refuse a request

Describe the facts:

Express your feelings:

Ask for what you want or tell what you do not want to do

Reinforce the benefits for what this is good

Mindful – stay focused on this one topic

Act confident – be confident

Negotiate: I understand you want me to do something and I don't want to do it. How can we solve this problem?



Wrap-up Skills

Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills

How to maintain healthy relationships

GIVE

Be Gentle

Be Interested in Others

Validate their Feelings

Be Easy-going

DEARMAN

Describe the situation (and facts)

Express your feelings

Assertively ask for what you want

Reinforce the benefits

Mindful: focus on one topic/ one request

Act confident – be confident

Negotiate: ask what can I do to get a yes?



Part 3

Mindfulness Skills

How to be in the moment



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Mindfulness Skills

How to be in the moment

Emotions and distress are part of life.

Mindfulness skills can help a person to tolerate difficult emotions.

Mindfulness consists of being fully present in the moment.

Do you want to learn how being in the moment can help you cope with emotions?

If you answered yes, then please continue reading.

Training Your Mind

Being mindful is about focusing your attention on the present. It is a lot like teaching a dog to sit still. The dog will get up, walk around, and you'll have to put the dog back in the spot and say sit.

Your mind will go places too. You might find yourself thinking about something else. You can remind yourself to focus your attention back on the present moment (here and now).

Activities to practice mindfulness could include:

- Counting your breaths
- Counting stars in the sky
- Counting your heartrate
- Counting your steps
- Saying your ABDs
- Singing a song
- Listening to a song
- Taking a walk
- Eating
- Writing a letter
- Playing a sport
- Yoga
- Meditation
- Watching a television show or movie
- Drawing or doodling

What can you do to focus on the task and present moment and be in the now if you find your mind drifting off?



The Inside of the Now

What is your breathing rate like?

What is your heartrate like?

What are you feeling on the inside?

What are your emotions?

What is going on inside of your body?



The Outside of the Now

What do you hear?

What do you smell?

What did you feel (touch)?

What did you taste?

What did you see?



Wrap-up Skills

Mindfulness Skills

How to be in the moment

Training Your Mind

The Inside of the Now

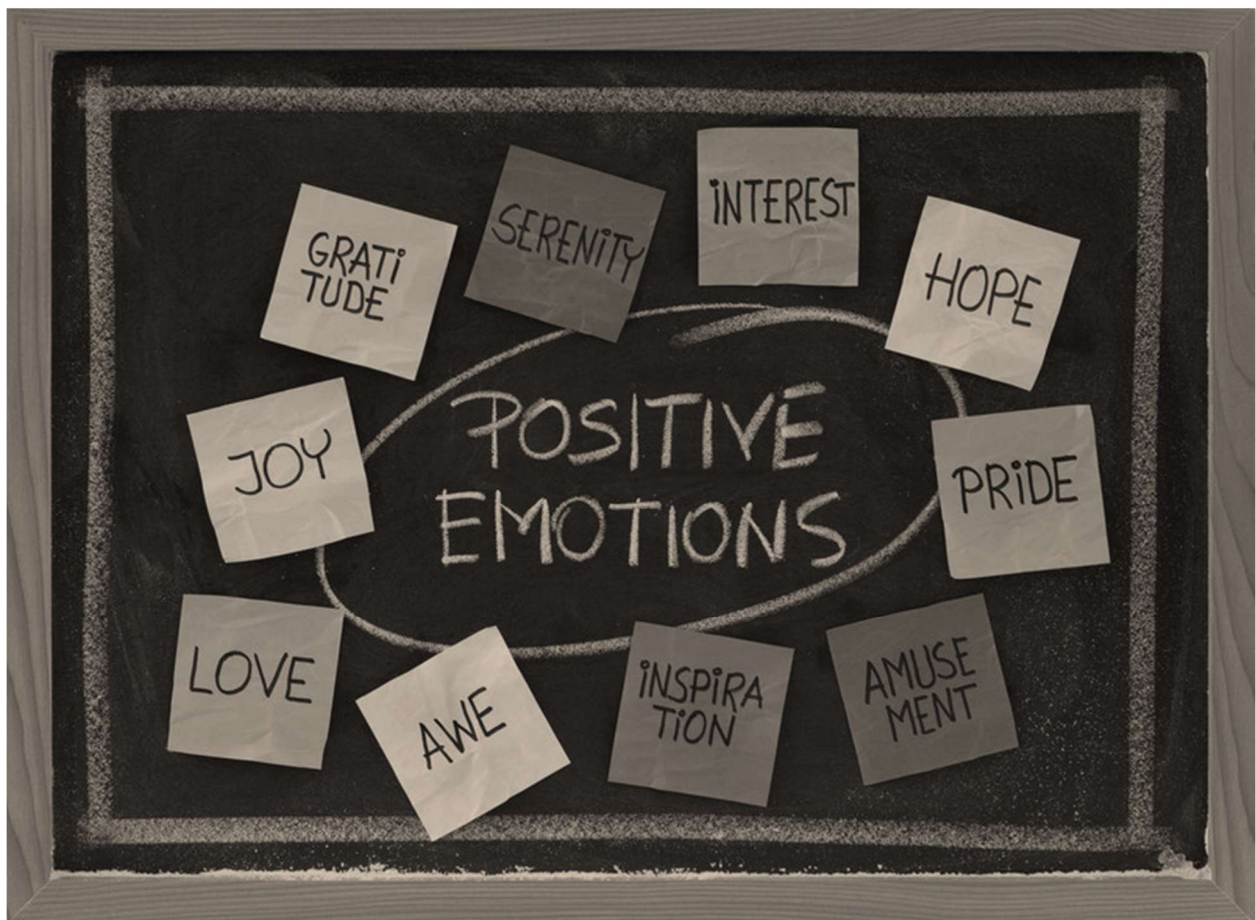
The Outside of the Now



Part 4

Emotion Regulation Skills

How to regulate your emotions



Emotion Regulation Skills

How to regulate your emotions

People experience emotions that they don't like. Sometimes these emotions have extreme intensity.

Skills in this section are designed to help a person to less the intensity of emotions and to increase positive emotions.

ACCEPTS skills can be used to help you regulate your emotions.

Do you want to decrease intensity of distressful emotions and increase feeling positive emotions?

If you answered, yes, then please continue reading.



A is for Activities

What are activities you enjoy doing?

What emotions do you feel when you do these activities?

How can doing this activity cheer you up?

When can you set aside time to do this activity?



C is for Comparisons

Can you think of any ways that you're better off today than you were in the past? Are you more experienced now? Have you matured any?

In what ways are you better off than someone else who is suffering more?

How can comparing yourself to previous you or someone worse off help you to put things in perspective?



C is for Contribution

Who is a person (or what is an organization) that could use help?

How you can donate time or money to help?

How does contributing and helping others help you to get your mind off of your own problems?

E is for Emotion Opposites

What emotions have been causing you to feel bad? Sad, distressed, bored, angry, frustrated?

What is the opposite emotion? Happy, joy, interested, excited, grateful, calm, peaceful?

What are ways you can increase the opposite emotion?



P is for Push Away

Sometimes you might not be in a position to solve a problem. For example: you're in bed at midnight and you recall a phone call you forgot to make. There is not much you can do about it at midnight.

What would happen if you continued to dwell on that problem even if you're not able to solve it or work on it in the moment?

How can you push away a thought to provide relief?

How would you feel if you were able to push away the disturbing thought for a few minutes or even an hour or even for a full day?



T is for Thinking Activities

Some experts claim the right brain is the creative and emotional side. They claim the left side is the logical side.

Thinking activities could help you to switch from the emotional brain to the logical brain.

What are some games and activities that require you to think?

How you can plan to do some of these activities?

How would you feel when doing a thinking activity opposed to dwelling on an emotional problem?



S is for Sensory Activities

Sometimes sensory activities can be a positive and healthy distraction.

What are some textures you could touch? (Like a fleece blanket) or petting your pet, or feeling ice.

What are some foods or drinks that you could taste? Small piece of your favorite candy.

What are some sounds that you could listen to? Sound of rain drops or wind blowing or favorite songs.

What are some things you enjoy looking at? The stars? Trees? Clouds? Are you able to find pictures of these to look at?

Creating a Life Worth Living

What makes your life worth living?

How you can do more of what makes your life worth living?

How would you feel if you were living a life worth living?



Wrap-up Skills

Emotion Regulation Skills

How to regulate your emotions

ACCEPTS

Activities

Contribution

Comparisons

Emotion Opposites

Push Away Thoughts and Feelings

Thinking Activities

Sensory Activities

Creating a Life Worth Living



Danny Pettry

Danny Pettry has worked as a practitioner for a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF) since 2002.

Petry earned two graduate degrees while working full-time as a practitioner. These include a Master of Education in Mental Health Counseling from Linsey Wilson College, Columbia, Kentucky in 2012 and a Master of Science degree in Recreational Therapy from Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana in 2006. Pettry's undergraduate degree was in Therapeutic Recreation from Marshall University, Huntington, West Virginia in 2002.

Petry is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in West Virginia. Pettry has been a National Certified Counselor since 2013 and a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) since 2003. Pettry earned Behavioral Health Specialist credentials above and beyond his CTRS credential in 2018.

Danny Pettry's name has become synonymously famous for providing online self-study continuing education opportunities for recreational therapists at his web-site:

<http://www.DannyPettry.com> (founded in 2007). Pettry operates the <http://www.RecTherapyToday.com> email newsletter as well.

Petry lives in West Virginia. He loves coffee and cookies. His nieces and nephews call him, "Uncle Cookie."

