



# UNDERSTANDING LEVELS OF CARE IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE

This document was created to help clients and their families understand the concept that mental health professionals use: Levels of Care.

InsightDBT is what is called a level 2 provider of mental health care. It is more intensive and structured than supportive therapy modalities like general counseling and psychotherapy. DBT provides intensive skills training and structure for individuals who have not found relief from their general psychotherapy.

If you are reading this, then your professional is concerned about you or your child's appropriateness of care at a level 2 provider. Most likely, you or your child may need an increase in their level of care. This is often done to bring our clients back to their Baseline of Functioning. **This refers to a secure level of emotional stability and safety.**

You are not functioning at baseline if:

- 1) You cannot guarantee your own safety.
- 2) You are experiencing a sustained burst of emotional pain that is not resolving.
- 3) You are not able to use skills that once worked for you to regulate effectively.
- 4) You cannot function in your life activities (Social, educational, familial, vocational, etc.)

If you are not functioning at baseline, a recommendation will be made to increase your level of care to bring you back to your baseline. Most of the time, your therapist will move you gradually up a stage, but if your functioning has taken a dramatic downturn, quicker measures will be recommended.

## 1 Regular Psychotherapy or Maintenance

Here you are doing well and are just receiving support from a therapist to process weekly stress and review your coping skills. You should be at baseline at this level of care.

## 2 Intensive Therapy Like DBT

You are on the second level of care because you need structured sessions and coping skills to overcome more significant mental health challenges. You have often 2-3 sessions of psychotherapy a week. Safety concerns are addressed weekly if you struggle with them. You should be at baseline at this level of care.

## 3 Step 2 + Intensive Psychiatry

You are experiencing tremendous emotional pain and need a psychiatric solution to return to baseline functioning. You will meet with your psychiatric provider weekly/biweekly until you have returned to your baseline.

## 4 Short Term Psychiatric Hospitalization/Evaluation (NOT A LONG TERM LEVEL ONLY FOR STABILIZATION)

At this level, you are in need of immediate help and need to go to the hospital as you are unsafe or cannot tolerate your inner experience and you are not able to use your skills.

## 5 IOP, PROS, or Residential Care

If you need IOP, PROS or Residential Care, you are in need of weekly psychiatric sessions, therapy multiple times a day, and even getting away from home/family/social relationships and settings to help you return to baseline. Residential Care is the most comprehensive measure of getting you the most therapy and out of your regular environment. This stage can last anywhere between 1-6 months. In rarer cases more than 6 months. This level of care can also give your support structure a break from crises as well.

## 6 Long Term Hospitalization/Institutionalization

At This level, no prior level has given you the support to help you get back to baseline. You need to reside for an extended period of time in a mental health treatment center. This is a last resort.