



# Dialectical Behavioral Therapy and Behavioral Health OT

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# Objectives

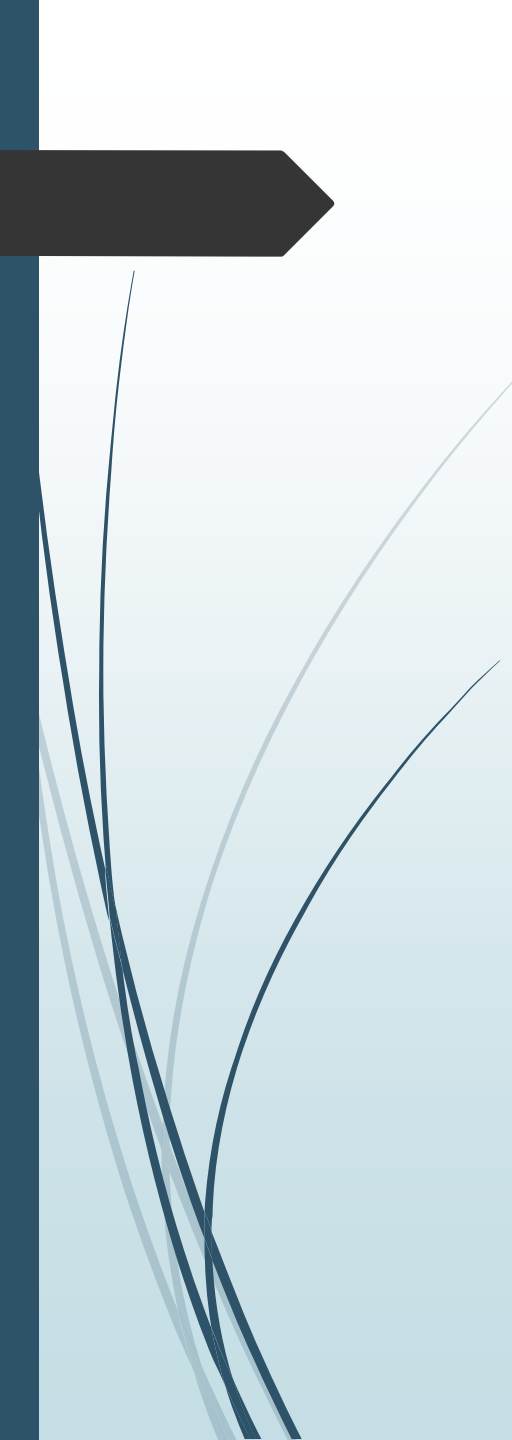
- 1. Understand how Marsha Linehan modified standard CBT for people with borderline personality by balancing radical acceptance and change strategies with DBT.**
- 2. Understand how an OT in mental health may gain the expertise to provide skills training on mindfulness, interpersonal effectiveness, emotion regulation and distress tolerance.**



Borderline Personality Disorder is a psychiatric diagnosis in which emotion dysregulation is identified as a core symptom.

Marsha Linehan describes the etiology of emotion regulation in BPD as the combination of emotional vulnerability and an invalidating environment

A person who is emotionally vulnerable tends to have quick, intense, and difficult to control emotional reactions that can affect performance of occupational roles.



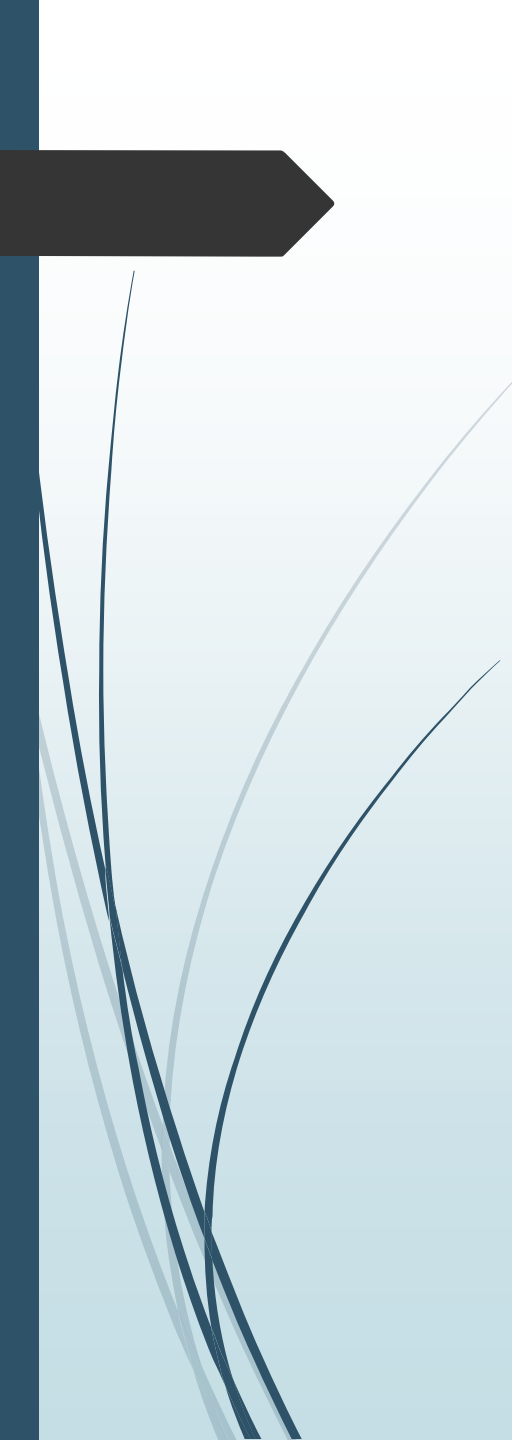
Linehan hypothesizes that emotional dysregulation occurs when a child with high emotional vulnerability is exposed to an environment in which their experiences and responses are disqualified by significant others.

A child's personal expressions of needs, fears, and desires are not accepted as an accurate description of true feelings.



Many individuals with BPD report a history of abuse, neglect, or separation as young children.

Emotionally vulnerable children in invalidating environments experience particular problems, including loss of opportunity to label and understand their feelings and to learn to trust their own responses to events.



As a result, the child's behavior oscillates between emotional inhibition to gain acceptance and extreme displays of emotion in order to have feelings acknowledged.

Erratic and intermittent reinforcement for these actions, resulting in a persistent behavioral pattern that interferes with development of healthy habits and routines, and therefore the competent performance of occupational roles.



Self injury and suicide attempts are highly associated with people who struggle with borderline personality disorder (BPD)



# Assessment of Emotion Dysregulation

**The Diary Card**

**The Social History Interview**

**The Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale**

***Occupational Therapy Assessment focuses on the individual's occupational functioning in daily life. Individuals with Emotional Dysregulation have difficulties in many occupational performance areas, including IADL, work, leisure pursuits and social participation.***






# Interventions for Emotion Regulation

**Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)** assumes that maladaptive, distorted beliefs and cognitive processes underlie symptoms and dysfunctional affect or behavior, and that these beliefs are behaviorally reinforced.

**Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)** combines individual psychotherapy, telephone contact, and therapist consultation with psycho-social skills training. It involves a process of validating the client's current emotional and functional state, while promoting change in skills, behavior, and thinking.

**Anger Management Programs** emphasize changing cognitive distortions or developing more accurate perspectives during social interactions.




Occupational Therapists need to develop assessments and interventions that address emotion regulation in the context of occupational performance.



## Resource

**Marian Scheinholz' chapter on "Emotion Regulation" from Brown and Stoffels' text [OT in Mental Health: A Vision for Participation](#)**



**Behavioral Health Occupational  
Therapy personnel may find  
Marsh Linehan's DBT skills training  
familiar and helpful in structuring  
their OT groups.**

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# Resources

**Marsha M. Linehan' DBT Skills Training Manual, Second Edition**

**Marsha M. Linehan's DBT Skills Training Handouts and Worksheets, Second Edition**

**DBT Training and Certification  
[behavioraltech.org](http://behavioraltech.org)**



# Dialectical Behavioral Therapy Made Simple

## **The Four Modules of DBT Skill Training**

1. Mindfulness
2. Interpersonal Effectiveness
3. Emotion Regulation
4. Distress Tolerance



# Core Mindfulness

## **Finding Balance:**

Reduce Vulnerability to emotions by balancing sleep, treating physical illness, reducing substance use, eating properly, and exercising.

## **Accessing Wise Self:**

Be centered and calm. Balance the emotional self and the reasoning self. Be mindful. To get to your wise self, mentally note emotions, improve self talk, and focus on just this moment.

## **Being Nonjudgmental:**

Reduce your emotional pain by being nonjudgmental. Stick to the facts and your emotions, rather than judgments



### **Practicing Mental Noting:**

Observe and describe whatever you experience, without judgement. Simply experience what is happening

### **Practicing Mindfulness:**

Do one thing at a time, in the present moment, with your full attention, and with acceptance.





# Interpersonal Effectiveness

## Looking for new relationships:

If you don't have enough healthy relationships in your life, make sure you look for and create opportunities to meet new people and develop new relationships.

## Balancing enjoyable activities and responsibilities:

Make sure you do things for yourself because you enjoy them, as well as taking care of your responsibilities and the demands of others. Put your own needs first at times and, at other times, make sacrifices for the people you care about.



### **Communicating Assertively:**

Notice the communication style you're using. Practice assertive communication. Don't let problems pile up in your relationships; address them as they occur

### **Maintaining Relationships:**

Take care of your relationships. Reach out to the [people you care about and show them that they're important to you.



# Emotion Regulation

## **Accept reality:**

reduce your emotional pain by accepting reality. It is what it is. Then consider whether there's something you can do about the situation.)

## **Practice self-validation:**

Be aware of the messages you received about emotions that shape the way you think and feel about them now. Don't judge your emotions; just accept them.

## **Be mindful of emotions:**

Bring your awareness and acceptance to whatever emotions are present; don't fight painful emotions, and don't hang on to pleasant emotions. Remember that emotions are like waves, coming and going.



**Practice Willingness:**

Open yourself up to possibilities. Do your best with what you've got, even if you don't like the cards you've been dealt in life.

**Build mastery:**

Increase feelings of fulfillment by doing things that make you feel productive, as though you've accomplished something. Build your self-respect and self-esteem.

**Increase pleasurable activities:**

Engage in activities that are fun, enjoyable, calming, or peaceful for you. Set goals for yourself so you have things to look forward to in both the short-term and long-term.



**Being effective:**

Don't cut off your nose to spite your face. Consider what your long-term goals are, then do what you need to do in order to meet your goal. Act from your wise self.

**Acting opposite to urges:**

Notice the emotion you're experiencing and the urge attached to it, then act opposite to the urge.



# Distress Tolerance

## Coping ahead:

Plan and rehearse for difficult situations that are likely to arise. Imagine the outcome as you want it to be.

## RESISTing urges:

To help yourself not act on urges, reframe, engage in an activity, do something for someone else, generate intense sensations, shut it out, think neutral thoughts, and take a break.

## Doing a cost-benefit analysis:

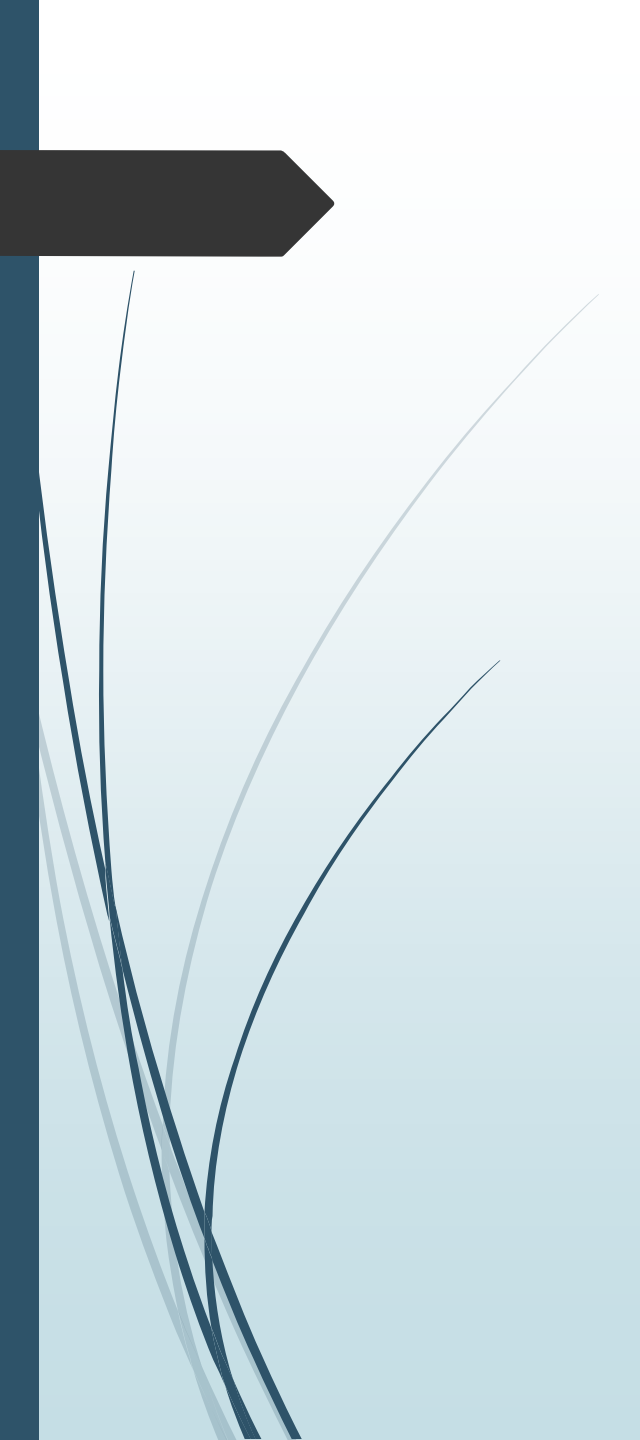
Consider the costs and benefits of problem behaviors.



# Coping with Borderline Personality Disorder

## Emotions:

**Anger,  
Sadness,  
Jealousy,  
Guilt,  
Shame,  
Fear,  
Disgust,  
Loneliness**



**Observing Personal Limits**  
**Mood-Dependent Behavior**  
**Feeling Unreal**  
**Who Am I?**  
**Procrastination**  
**Drugs and Alcohol**  
**Urges to Lash Out**  
**Negative Self-Thoughts**  
**Living in the Past or in the Future**  
**Paranoia**  
**Invalidating Yourself**





# Resources

**Sheri Van Dijk's DBT Made Simple: A Step-by-Step Guide to Dialectical Behavior Therapy**

**Baise Aguirre and Gillian Galen's Coping with BPD: DBT and CBT Skills to Soothe the Symptoms of Borderline Personality Disorder**

**Matthew McKay, Jeffrey Wood, and Jeffrey Brantly's The Dialectical Behavioral Therapy Skills Workbook**

**Donald Altman's The Mindfulness Toolbox**

**PESI and Cross Country Education Workshops**



# Behavioral Health OT Groups

Goal Setting—er

Life Skills—ie

Discharge Planning (Work & Productivity Skills)—dt, ie, er

Leisure Skills—ie, cm, er

Communication & Social Skills—dt, ie, er

Mental Health Recovery—dt, er

Cognitive Task & Recreation—er

Sensory Modulation—cm, er

Mindfulness—cm

Stress Management—cm, er

Expressive Media—er

Mental Health Symptom Management

Substance Use Education—cm, ie, er

Spirituality



# A Future Conn OTA Workshop?

James D. Herbert and Evan M.  
Forman's Acceptance and  
Mindfulness in CBT

Steven Hayes and Michael Levin's  
Mindfulness and Acceptance for  
Addictive Behaviors