

Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT)

What is DBT?

It is a modified type of cognitive behavioral therapy. Its main goals are to teach people how to live in the moment, develop healthy ways to cope with stress, regulate their emotions, and improve their relationships with others.

Settings in which DBT are often used include:

- **Group therapy** where patients are taught behavioral skills in a group setting.
- **Individual therapy** with a trained professional where a patient's learned behavioral skills are adapted to their personal life challenges.
- **Phone coaching** in which patients can call the therapist between sessions to receive guidance on coping with a difficult situation they are currently in.

Strategies and Techniques that are used in DBT include:

Mindfulness helps you focus on the present or "live in the moment." This helps you pay attention to what is happening inside you (your thoughts, feelings, sensations, and impulses) as well as using your senses to tune in to what's happening around you (what you see, hear, smell, and touch) in nonjudgmental ways.

Interpersonal effectiveness helps you to become more assertive in a relationship (for example, expressing your needs and be able to say "no") while still keeping a relationship positive and healthy. You will learn to listen and communicate more effectively, deal with challenging people, and respect yourself and others.

Emotion regulation lets you navigate powerful feelings in a more effective way. The skills you learn will help you to identify, name, and change your emotions.

Distress tolerance skills help you accept yourself and your current situation. DBT teaches several techniques for handling a crisis, including:

- Distraction
- Improving the moment
- Self-soothing
- Thinking of the pros and cons of not tolerating distress

Distress tolerance techniques help prepare you for intense emotions and empower you to cope with them with a more positive long-term outlook.