WDBTA
World Dialectical Behavior Therapy Association

SUGGESTED DOMAINS FOR COMPREHENSIVE DBT TRAINING

Published April 15th 2023

Purpose of the document

The WDBTA as the international organization for DBT seeks to provide guidance and support to practitioners and services delivering DBT and to those training mental health professionals to deliver the treatment. As a group of experts in the treatment we have often been asked about what is required to learn DBT such that it is implemented with fidelity to the standard models for which there is evidence. Ultimately our goal is to ensure that people receiving DBT receive high quality treatment. With these aims in mind, the board of WDBTA asked a group of international experts in delivering training in DBT (membership of the committee is listed at the end of this document) to consider what domains of DBT should be included in comprehensive DBT trainings. The WDBTA has developed this guidance to encourage any person or organization seeking or delivering training to consider the domains listed to be those basic to acquiring a fundamental knowledge of the treatment.

How the document was developed

The intent of the committee was to thoughtfully examine and consider approaches to DBT training likely to effectively and efficiently produce DBT adherent programs and providers. Throughout the course of our investigation, we examined training models, guidelines, and standards used throughout the United States and Europe. We began with a review of DBT training models submitted from Behavioral Tech (United States) and its affiliates, British Isles DBT, the German Association for DBT (DDBT), Dialexis (the Netherlands), and DGT Vlaanderen (Belgium). These and other training approaches used by committee members were examined over the course of 18 months. Given the diverse nature of settings in which DBT training occurs, and the range of economic, cultural, and national conditions where DBT is used, we ultimately decided on a suggestive framework rather than prescriptive policies.

It is the consensus of the committee that the list below represents the basic domains of knowledge and skill regarding the theoretical foundations and evidence for the treatment as well as the structure, strategies, procedures and protocols required to deliver DBT with adherence.

Suggested Domains

1. **Foundations and the underlying models of DBT**
   - A. Behavioral Science
     1. Scientific method in treatment development
     2. Scientific method in treatment provision
     3. Use of scientific evidence in determination of treatment
     4. Use of measurement in case formulation and ongoing treatment
     5. Staying abreast of ongoing research
   - B. Acceptance Principles
     1. Mindfulness/Radical acceptance
     2. Validation

C. Dialectical Principles
    1. Dialectical philosophy
    2. Dialectical world view
    3. Core Dialectic of acceptance and change
D. Assumptions
    1. Emotion dysregulation as the heart of patient problems
    2. Skills deficit model of treatment
    3. About patients
    4. About therapy and therapists
E. DBT Case Formulation
    1. Biosocial Model of Disorder
    2. Transaction between patient and environment

2. Structuring DBT

A. Functions and modes of comprehensive treatment according to setting
B. Individual Therapy Sessions
C. Setting up a Skills Training program
D. Structure of Skills Training Sessions
E. Generalizing Treatment via phone calls and other means
F. Consultation team
G. Levels of Disorder & Stages of Treatment
H. DBT Treatment Targets by Stage and Mode
I. Pre-treatment: Orientation and Commitment

3. DBT Core Strategies

A. Problem-Solving:
    1. Behavioral Analysis
    2. Solution & Task Analysis
    3. Skills Training:
        a. Core Mindfulness
        b. Distress Tolerance
        c. Interpersonal Effectiveness
        d. Emotion Regulation
    4. Cognitive Modification
    5. Exposure Procedures
    6. Contingency Management
B. Validation

4. Dialectical Balance

A. Dialectics as a Method of Persuasion
B. Dialectical Strategies
C. Stylistic Strategies:
    1. Reciprocal Communication
    2. Irreverent Communication

5. Suicide Protocols

A. Suicide Risk Assessment
B. Suicide Risk Management
C. Crisis Strategies
D. Treatment of Suicidal and other Life-Threatening Behaviors
    1. Type of life-threatening behavior
    2. Treatment by role, e.g. skills trainer or individual psychotherapist
    3. Specific protocols
E. Suicide Postvention

6. Case Management & Special Treatment Strategies

A. DBT Case Management
B. Ancillary treatment strategies
C. Observing Limits
D. Therapy Interfering Behaviors: Strategies
E. Telephone Consultation Strategies
F. Relationship Strategies

Membership of the Committee

Ann Berens, M.D., Clinical Director University Psychiatric Hospital Duffel; Head of department DBT Treatment Unit Spinnaker 2; President Flemish DBT association

Linda Dimeff, PhD, Institute Director, DBT-Linehan Board of Certification, Certified Clinician™

Anthony P. DuBose, PsyD, DBT-Linehan Board of Certification - Board Certified Clinician, Chief Training Executive & Director of CE/CME, Behavioral Tech, LLC

Azucena Garcia-Palacios, PhD, Abnormal Psychology Full Professor, Universitat Jaume I. Spain. President of the Spanish DBT Associatnene

Pablo H Gagliesi, MD, Director: DBT Iberoamerica. Director: DBT program at Fundacion Foro. Honorary President: SI DBT

Cesare Maffei M.D. Professor Emeritus of Clinical Psychology, Vita-Salute San Raffaele University, Milan, Italy. Past-President of the Italian DBT Society (SIDBT).

Shari Manning PhD (Co-Chair). Treatment Implementation Collaborative

Alec L Miller, PsyD. Co-Founder, Cognitive and Behavioral Consultants, New York, USA

Francheska Perepletchikova PhD. Associate Professor in Psychiatry, University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School

Michaela A Swales PhD (Co-Chair) Director of Training, British Isles DBT Training

Charles Swenson M.D. Associate Professor of Psychiatry, University of Massachusetts School of Medicine.

Louisa (Wies) van den Bosch, PhD, initiator and former director of the Dutch and Belgium training institute 'Dialexis', Clinical Director Dutch DBT treatment Centre.