

DBT Skills Class

LAMB BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER, LLC

Tuesdays at 5pm

Telehealth until further notice

What is DBT skills class?

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The skills taught in this class are based on a model of therapy called Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). DBT is a type of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) developed by Marsha Linehan. Full DBT requires several components, including skills training (DBT skills class), individual therapy, phone coaching, and therapist participation on a DBT consultation team. Fully adherent DBT has a large body of high quality research with evidence for improving a large array of patient outcomes, even for patients for whom other therapies have failed.

Currently, Lamb Behavioral Health Center is offering DBT skills classes as a way for

individuals to learn specific, in-depth coping strategies that fall within the four DBT skills modules. Fully adherent or “full DBT” is not available at Lamb Behavioral Health Center at this time. Even without full DBT, stand-alone skills classes have a growing body of research for improving outcomes for a range of different populations (Blackford & Love, 2011; Sambrook, Abba, & Chadwick, 2007; Zapolski & Smith, 2016).

This skills training class will function like a class, not a process group. Each week, the skills trainer will teach a new skill within one of the four DBT skills modules. Participants will learn new ways to relax, problem solve, communicate,



and generally cope well with a myriad of life’s challenges.

Participants are expected to complete homework assignments as part of this class. Sometimes homework assignments may involve writing something down or keeping track of a particular behavior. Other times, the homework may be to try using a new skill and then report back on how the skills use went. Participants are encouraged to incorporate skills into their lives, and skills trainers must do the same.

What are “dialectics?”



The term “dialectics” or “dialectical” means “concerned with or acting through opposing forces.” In DBT we talk about dialectics explicitly, often. Being “dialectical” means holding onto two seemingly opposing beliefs simultaneously.

One dialectic in DBT is the

assumption that people are doing the best they can AND people can and need to do better. This is the dialectic of Acceptance and Change. In DBT, we believe that both statements, on either side of the “AND,” are true simultaneously, and for everyone.

In DBT we are purposefully aware of balancing acceptance and change. This balance is reflected in the way skills modules are organized, the skills themselves, and within the philosophy of the skills trainers. Information on the skills modules is provided on the next page.

References:

- Blackford, J. U., & Love, R. (2011). Dialectical behavior therapy group skills training in a community mental health setting: A pilot study. *International journal of group psychotherapy*, 61(4), 645-657.
- Sambrook, S., Abba, N., & Chadwick, P. (2007). Evaluation of DBT emotional coping skills groups for people with parasuicidal behaviours. *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy*, 35(2), 241.
- Zapolski, T. C., & Smith, G. T. (2017). Pilot study: Implementing a brief DBT skills program in schools to reduce health risk behaviors among early adolescents. *The Journal of School Nursing*, 33(3), 198-204.

*“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally”
—Jon Kabat-Zinn*

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is considered a foundational skill in DBT— all other skills rely on the participant’s ability to practice some level of mindfulness effectively. When people think of mindfulness, they often think of long periods of meditation, being “zen,” and practicing yoga. These certainly are examples of mindfulness and are useful practices for many; however, these examples are only a few of the many ways to practice mindfulness.

Mindfulness does work best when it is a frequent, intentional practice, but it does not need to take the form of long periods of meditation. It can last only seconds at a time to start. Many people find meditation to be uncomfortable, time consuming, or simply too difficult to maintain because their judgements about “not doing it right” or becoming distracted are too strong. This is okay. Those who hate mediation can still benefit from other types

of mindfulness practice, and research suggests that many people are likely to benefit greatly from it.

Mindfulness is paying attention, on purpose, to the present moment, non-judgmentally. Almost any activity can be done mindfully. We can read mindfully, brush teeth mindfully, argue mindfully, and even watch TV mindfully. The mindfulness module helps us learn how to be mindful.



Emotion Regulation

Emotion regulation is the ability to inhibit impulses and ineffective behavior that can occur when we are in “emotion mind.” Emotion regulation can be automatic and purposeful.

The goal of the emotion regulation module is to first increase purposeful control over our responses. Once the skills are learned, the goal becomes to

practice them so often they become second nature. When skills are overlearned, they can be automatically in the situations where we need them most.

Some emotion regulation skills are meant to be used when emotions are moderately high and our urges to act (e.g., yelling, avoiding, using substances) are not effective at

helping us accomplish our larger goals or stick to our values. Some of the other emotion regulation skills are meant to help us build up our emotional stamina over time by taking care of our bodies (and thus our brains). This helps to reduce our vulnerability to “emotion mind” and keep us in “wise mind” more often.



Interpersonal Effectiveness

Interpersonal effectiveness skills help us communicate and navigate tricky conversations effectively. The interpersonal effectiveness module aims to break down skills into their component parts so we can plan our communication strategies when emotions are likely to be high. Like other skills, the goal is to practice purposefully first,

and eventually the skills will come more naturally.

The interpersonal effectiveness module covers such topics as how to maintain pleasant communication patterns to build up relationships we care about, how to maintain our self-respect, and how to be assertive. The module also includes supplemental skills on how to be

mindful of others, how to end relationships that are destructive, and how to “walk the middle path,” that is, how to be “dialectical” in our approach to relationships by using validation and behavior change strategies effectively.

Distress Tolerance

Distress tolerance skills involve being able to tolerate unpleasant, uncomfortable emotions, particularly during moments of crisis or intense emotion. The distress tolerance module, like the mindfulness module, is considered an “Acceptance” module. This means the focus is on accepting reality as it is and accepting some level of pain and discomfort in order to reduce suffering ultimately.

The distress tolerance module also includes crisis management skills to help us quickly change our physiology to bring intense emotions down a bit. Other crisis management skills help us to “STOP” acting impulsively and distract ourselves with something pleasant or neutral to prevent ourselves from making a situation worse.

The distress tolerance skills help us tolerate intensely unpleasant emotions. If we use

these strategies effectively, we can prevent ourselves from making problems worse by engaging in unhelpful, ineffective behaviors. These skills are powerful and important, and they work best in conjunction with other skills. These skills help us when things could not seem to get worse, and we must use other skills in order to make our lives truly better.

“Radical acceptance rests on letting go of the illusion of control and a willingness to notice and accept things as they are right now, without judging”

—Marsha M. Linehan

What is not included in DBT skills class?

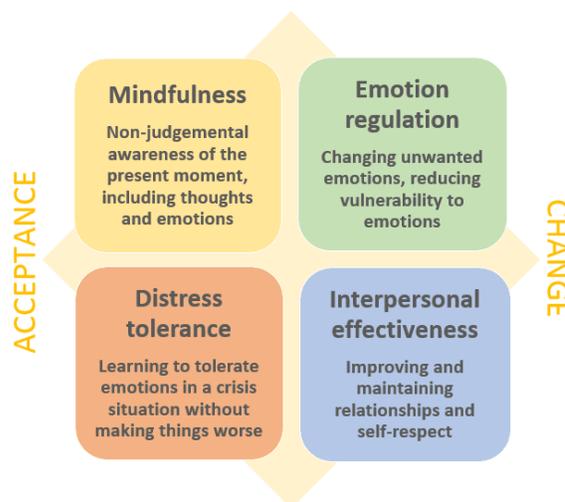
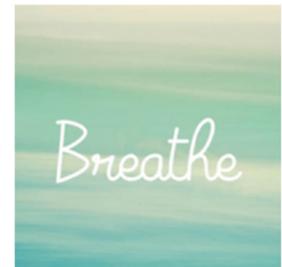
Many people may benefit from learning DBT skills. Attending a DBT skills class is a great way to help learn new strategies to cope effectively. Still, many people may find that DBT skills class alone is not enough to help them manage their emotions and behaviors effectively.

It is important to know that DBT Skills Class at Lamb

Behavioral Health Center (LBHC) is not full DBT, it is a skills class.

LBHC does offer individual therapy; however, this is separate from the skills class, and this individual therapy would be considered individual Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, not Dialectical Behavior Therapy.

Skills class participants are welcome and encouraged to participate in individual therapy while they attend skills class. Skills class does not intend to replace individual therapy. It can supplement therapy by explicitly teaching new skills in a setting catered to group learning, or the class could be a standalone treatment for some individuals.





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About Our Business

Lamb Behavioral Health Center, LLC opened in 2013 to provide behavioral health services to children and families in the Brazos Valley. Please visit our website to learn more about the services we offer.

Hours

The office is generally open these hours:

Monday: 8:00 am to 6:00 pm

Tuesday: 8:00 am to 6:00 pm

Wednesday: 8:00 am to 6:00 pm

Thursday: 8:00 am to 6:00 pm

Friday: 8:00 am to 6:00 pm

The office may be closed for lunch from 12:30-1:00 pm.

Other Services

Lamb Behavioral Health Center provides behavioral health services for:

- ADHD
- Autism
- Anxiety
- Behavior problems
- Depression
- Emotion regulation
- Learning problems
- Parenting skills
- Potty training
- Relationship issues
- Sleep issues
- Social skills
- Study skills

This list is provided for example only and is not all-inclusive.

Lamb Behavioral Health Center provides a variety of psychological services for children and families. Services are provided primarily from a cognitive-behavioral approach.

Counseling/Therapy

Lamb Behavioral Health Center provides individual therapy to children, adolescents, and adults. When working with children and adolescents, the involvement of the parents is often very helpful. Once initial information is gathered about the presenting problem, a treatment plan will be formulated. This plan will be updated as needed, based on progress made and/or additional information learned. This plan will be shared with the patient.

Therapy sessions are typically 45-60 minutes in length, but session length may vary based on the needs of the patient.

Parent Consultation

Our office provides support to parents by improving their skills at communicating and interacting with their children. Most often it can help parents acquire new strategies for handling difficult situations, particularly with children who, due to age or cognitive/communicative ability, may not be able to benefit from direct therapy. Examples of skills include implementing timeout procedures, establishing bedtime routines, and giving appropriate commands. Depending on needs and availability, consultation may take the form of individual or group sessions.

IEP Advocacy & Consultation

Navigating the special education system can be overwhelming to parents. Lamb Behavioral Health Center helps parents understand the special education process so they can be better advocates for their child's needs. Services include reviewing school evaluations and explaining them to parents, helping parents understand the services the school can provide, and even attending the ARD meeting with the parent, when needed.