

# Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Skills: Improving My Relationships

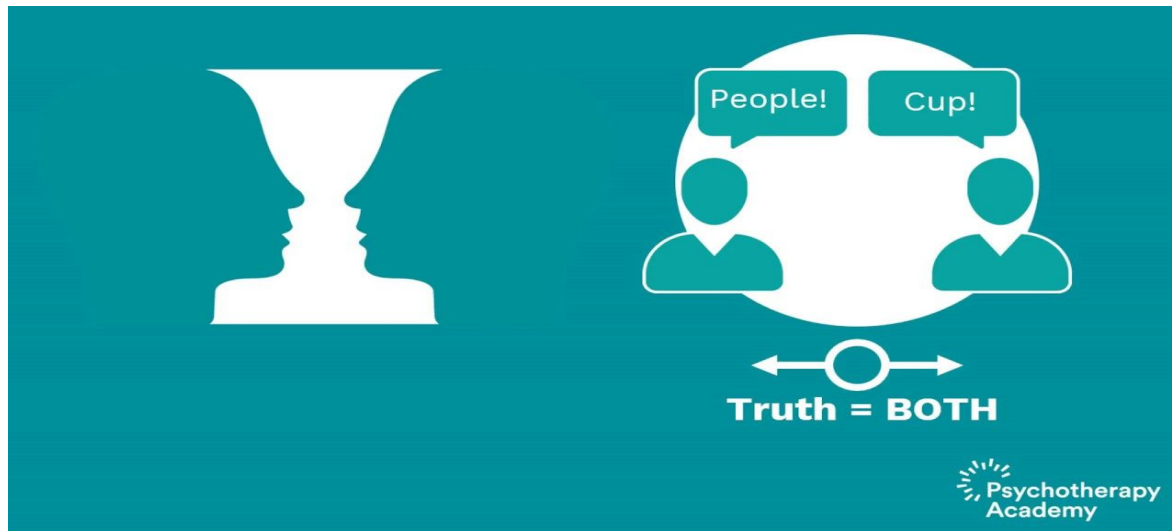
Darien Elementary Schools  
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Nora Gerardi, Psy.D.  
Cognitive & Behavioral  
Consultants



# What is Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)?

- Skills-based curriculum
- Balances acceptance and change
- Targets problems with emotions and behavioral dysregulation
  - *Which are important for relationships!*



# Review: Emotion Regulation Skills

- Emotion regulation skills help to address difficulties with managing emotions
- Starts with getting to know our emotions:  
Name Them to Tame Them
- Goals: reduce vulnerability to negative emotions, increase positive emotions, change unwanted emotions, fewer ups and downs

# Review: Emotion Regulation – LAUGH Skills

Engage in activities that elicit feelings of joy and happiness, accomplishment and pride, and *connection*

## LAUGH Skills

### Let Go of Worries



When you are doing something fun, focus on what you are doing. If any worries come to mind, relax your body and tell yourself “Let it go” or picture putting your worry on a train and watch it leave the station.

### Apply Yourself



Every day do at least one thing that makes you feel good about yourself or that takes a lot of effort. You’ll feel good about yourself when you finish!

### Use Coping Skills



Have a plan for coping with difficult situations that may happen in the future. Have a coping kit ready.

### Goal



Work on things you want to get better at like: basketball, math, friendships, dancing.



### Have Fun



Do fun things that are possible now. Do at least one fun thing each day. Be mindful of fun experiences.

# Matching Problems with Skills

## Problems

- I. Confusion about yourself
  - II. Impulsivity
  - III. Emotional instability
  - IV. *Interpersonal Problems*
- I. Child and Family dilemmas

## Skills

- I. Mindfulness
- II. Distress Tolerance
- III. Emotion Regulation
- IV. *Interpersonal Effectiveness (Improving My Relationships)*
- V. Walking the Middle Path

# Interpersonal Effectiveness: What is my goal?

## Getting what I want

- When I need another person to help me get to my goal
- Examples of goals:
  - I want more time on my video games
  - I want to go over to my friend's house
  - I want my favorite meal for dinner
  - I want my parent to help me with my homework
- What can get in the way:
  - Using demanding tone or threatening language
  - Emotion dysregulation
  - Emotion mind or worry thoughts

## Getting along with others

- Important to build or keep relationships with other people
- Examples of goals:
  - I want my sibling to be nicer to be
  - I want a new kid in class to become my friend
  - I want others to know I care about them
  - I want to feel less lonely
- What can get in the way:
  - Impulsive behaviors
  - Emotion dysregulation
  - Feeling stuck in willfulness
  - Emotion mind or worry thoughts

# What gets in my way: Emotion Mind Thoughts

## IMPROVING MY RELATIONSHIPS

Handout 5



### What is a Worry Thought?

A thought is something you say to yourself inside your head. Worry thoughts are things that we say to ourselves that make us feel bad and make us feel scared, sad, or hopeless.

Here are some examples of worry thoughts:

“Nobody wants to be my friend.” “I never get what I want”  
“Because she said no she doesn’t really care about me.”  
“\_\_\_\_\_”



**When you feel like you are getting stuck in a worry thought, you may need to work on getting unstuck**

How to un-stick my worry thoughts:

I can ask myself:

- (1) Is this thought helping me or hurting me?
- (2) Would I say this to my best friend?
- (3) Is there any evidence that some parts of this thought might not be true?
- (4) Would other people agree? (test it out with a survey)
- (5) Remind myself, “this is just a passing thought. Not a fact.”
- (6) This thought will come and go

### Key Points:

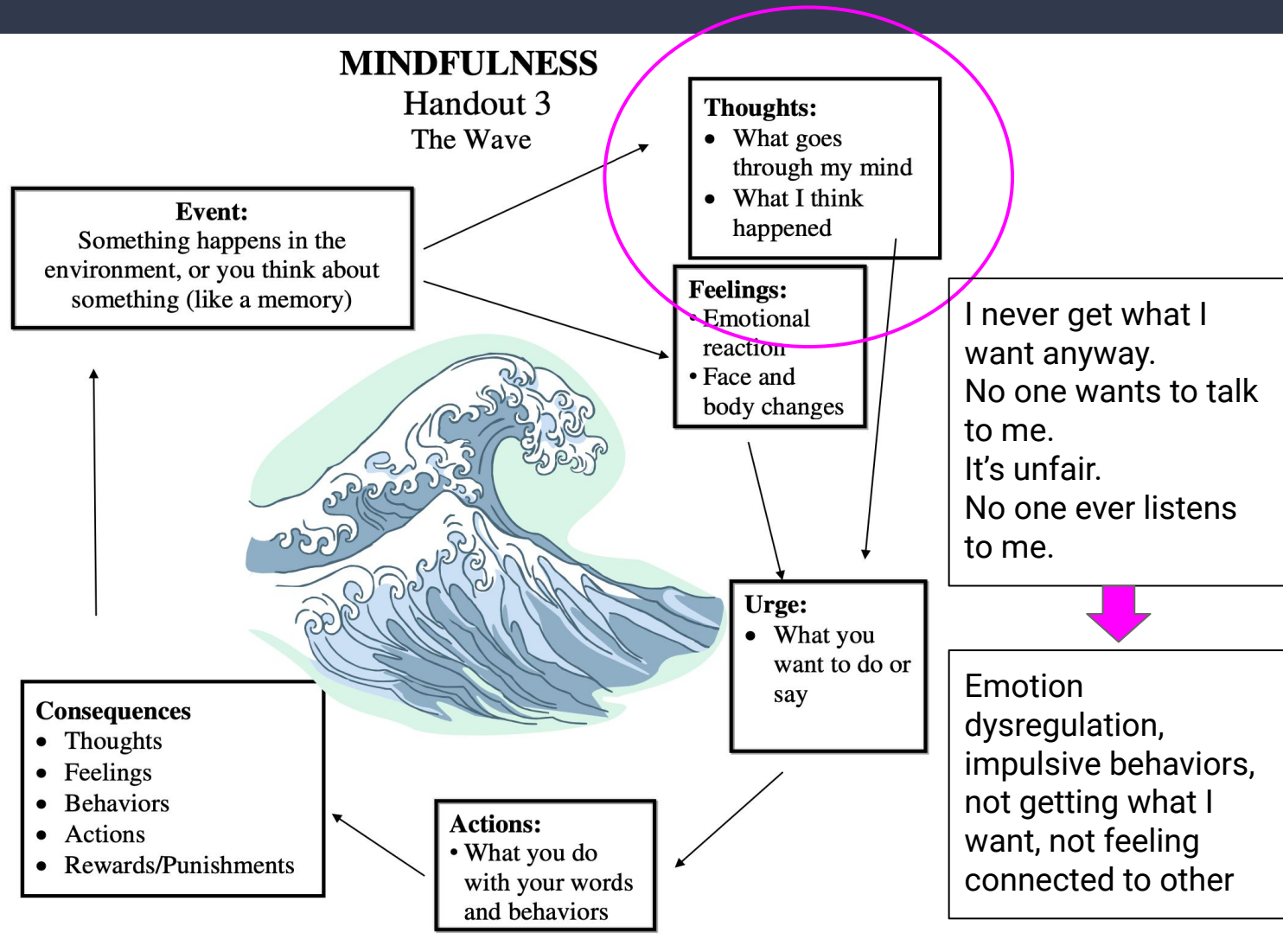
- Remember: Name It to Tame It
- When I was feeling \_\_\_\_\_, I was thinking \_\_\_\_\_.
- Label thoughts as emotion mind or worry thoughts
- Thoughts are thoughts, not facts
- Does this thought help me?

# Putting it into Practice!

- **Example Scenario:** *My name is Alex and I am a fourth grade student. My favorite subject is science and I always place at the school fair. This year, I walked into the gym and saw all the students surrounding another table with a talking robot. I thought, **I am never going to win... there is no way my volcano is as good.** I stood by my booth and only a few people came by. **They probably came because they felt bad for me.** Before, I knew it, the fair was coming to an end and it was time for the awards. I didn't even place... **nobody was interested in my project and all that hard work went to waste.***
- What would wise mind thoughts sound like?



# Review: Wave Skill



# GIVE: Building & Keeping Relationships

## IMPROVING MY RELATIONSHIPS

### Handout 7



SOMETIMES YOU NEED TO **GIVE**  
A LITTLE TO GET A LITTLE

The ***GIVE*** skills can help you if there are times when:

- You don't get what you want
- People don't listen to you
- You feel like people are ignoring you and what you need

Parents, teachers, and friends are more likely to give us what we want when we talk to them in a certain way and use our ***GIVE*** skills.

### **Gentle**

Be nice and show respect. Don't attack, threaten, or make fun. Pay attention to your voice and your body (are you yelling, rolling your eyes, frowning, whining, or are your arms crossed?)

### **Interested**

LISTEN and act interested in what the other person is saying. Don't interrupt or talk over the person. Don't make faces, roll eyes, or suck your teeth. Look at them while they are talking even if you are annoyed.

### **Validate**

Let the person know that you understand his or her feelings. "I know you are busy and I would really appreciate it if you could help me understand this math better." Remember that you can disagree and still understand! Don't be judgmental.

### **Easy Manner**

Leave your attitude at the door. Smile, joke around, use non-threatening body language (don't get in someone's face, point in their face, or stand too close.)

# DEAR (WO)MAN: Asking For What I Want

## IMPROVING MY RELATIONSHIPS

### Handout 10



### Getting What You Want

<b><u>D</u>escribe</b>	Describe the situation. Say what happened. Stick to the facts.
<b><u>E</u>xpress</b>	Express your feelings and thoughts about those facts. Say “I feel...” “I think...” “I want...” Don’t say: “You should...”
<b><u>A</u>sk</b>	Ask for what you want clearly, or assert yourself by saying “No.” Remember: he/she <i>cannot</i> read your mind.
<b><u>R</u>eward</b>	Reward (motivate) the person by telling them what they will get if he or she does what you want. Tell how it will be good for him or her. Example: “If we play at my house, you can go first on guitar hero.”
<b><u>M</u>indful</b>	Keep focused on getting what you want and avoid getting distracted. Keep saying what you want like a “broken record.” Ignore mean things that the other person might say and keep making your point.
<b><u>A</u>ppear <u>C</u>onfident</b>	Keep good eye contact. Use a confident tone of voice-do not whisper, mumble, give up and say “whatever”, or shout.
<b><u>N</u>egotiate:</b>	Be willing to do some give and take. Do what works: better to get some of what you want than nothing at all.

### Key Points:

- W: Willing
- O: Open-mind
- Label thoughts and emotions
- Clearly ask for what I want
- Be willing to give and take
- Cope ahead for someone saying no!

# DBT Skills Summary

- *Mindfulness* skills help us to be present in one moment at a time without judgment
- *Distress Tolerance* skills help us to tolerate big emotions without acting on them or making the situation worse
- *Emotion Regulation* skills help us have more steady and positive moods over time
- *Interpersonal Effectiveness* skills help us build and strengthen relationships, and effectively communicate for what we want or need
- *Validate, validate, validate!*

# Thank you!

- Questions?
- To learn more about DBT or CBC, please visit [cbc-psychology.com](http://cbc-psychology.com)