

## Dialectical Behavior Therapy at a Glance

Developed by Marsha Linehan, Ph.D., at the University of Washington, Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) is a type of psychotherapy for borderline personality disorder (BPD). DBT evolved as a treatment for adult women who were suicidal, diagnosed with BPD, and not responding to behavioral therapy. DBT adds validation and dialectics (systematic arguments that present contradictory ideas, usually to help resolve conflict) to traditional behavioral therapy.

DBT has been increasingly used over time to treat adults and adolescents with other psychiatric disorders and comorbid substance abuse. The focus of DBT is on helping clients learn and apply skills that will decrease ineffective ways of coping with strong emotions.

DBT can be provided by a wide range of health care professionals, and the treatment does not require delivery by any particular discipline. DBT is designed to be implemented as a team-based treatment with a minimum of three and a maximum of eight clinicians.

### What the Evidence Tells Us

DBT is the first psychotherapy shown to be effective in treating BPD in controlled clinical trials. In comparison to other psychotherapy approaches, DBT has been proven superior in these areas:

- ▶ Reductions in suicidal attempts and nonsuicidal self-injury
- ▶ Fewer psychiatric inpatient days and fewer emergency room visits
- ▶ Treatment completion
- ▶ Increase in binge abstinence and reductions in binge frequency
- ▶ Decreased depression and anxiety
- ▶ Decreased substance use

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**DBT has been proven to be effective in the treatment of eating disorders (binge eating, anorexia, and bulimia), depression and bipolar disorder, trichotillomania, developmentally delayed individuals and those with attention deficit disorder, individuals who stalk, HIV patients, and victims of domestic violence.**

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### Why Your Organization May Consider Implementing DBT

Your organization may consider implementing DBT because it is an evidence-based practice with significant positive outcomes in the treatment of difficult-to-manage behaviors. It has been recognized by national and international agencies as a recommended treatment for BPD.

### More Information on Implementing DBT

- ▶ Behavioral Tech, LLC, Web site <http://www.behavioraltech.org>
- ▶ The National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices Web site <http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=36>