Overview of Dialectical Behavior Therapy

Skill Generalization as a Strong Mechanism to Change
Change in the Therapy session

Change outside the Therapy Session
What Happens in DBT?

- Commitment
- Dialectical process of change
- Problem solving
- Acceptance
- Validation
- Mindfulness, Interpersonal Effectiveness, Emotion Regulation, Distress tolerance skills
- Chain analysis
- Insight
- Discrimination training
- Expanding behavioral repertoires
- Stimulus control
- Contingency management
- Contingency clarification
- Cognitive modification

- Dialectical strategies
- Irreverence/warmth
- Relentless/Caring Staff & Therapist
- Radically genuine Staff & Therapists
- Compassion and non-judgment
- Hope
- Persons “start stopping” in their life
- Speed, movement, & flow
- Unpredictability of the World
- Responding differently than other therapists & staff have
- Exposure, response prevention, opposite action to urges
- Tolerance for aversive states
So, What Really Happens in DBT?

A whole lot of learning
Adapted to the Person’s Capability and Learning Style!
Skills

Newly learned behavior that is likely to be effective = skills
Targeting Behavioral Change Across the DBT Program

• Skillful behavior occurs during group and individual therapy sessions
  – Mindfulness, emotion regulation, interpersonal effectiveness, and distress tolerance skills
  – Problem-solving
  – Validation
  – Acceptance
Targeting Behavioral Change Outside the Session

• OK, so the skillful behaviors have been acquired, but now what?

• Wait and hope?
• I don’t think so….
• Goal is skill transfer into all relevant contexts
Targeting Behavioral Change Outside the Session

- Consulting with the individual to improve interpersonal relationships and solve problems
- Problem-solving environmental barriers
- Self-monitoring
- Therapy homework
- Willingness to intervene in the environment if needed
## Principles of Skill Transfer (Stokes and Osnes, 1989) and DBT

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Principles</th>
<th>DBT</th>
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<td>(1) Exploit current functional contingencies</td>
<td>DBT therapists &amp; staff use praise and warmth to <em>reinforce occurrences of skill use</em> that are recorded naturalistically; Individuals are taught to use skills in <em>contexts that will reinforce the use of skills</em> (e.g., with supportive significant others)</td>
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<td>(2) Train diversely EVERYONE learns DBT</td>
<td>DBT therapists &amp; staff attempt to increase the use of skills across a wide array of relevant contexts</td>
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<td>(3) Incorporate functional mediators</td>
<td>DBT therapists &amp; staff are paired with skill acquisition in treatment sessions; Diary card, audiotapes, telephone etc. All are factors that can function to evoke skills previously learned in the therapy setting</td>
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Generalization/Skill Transfer in DBT

- Functional mediators (e.g., diary card, phone, physical reminders of sessions) are used
- However, one size does not fit all when it comes to generalization....
- So, solution analyses are critical when planning for skill generalization
- Solution analyses promote the personalized application of functional mediators (e.g., how will THIS way of transferring skills work THIS week for YOU? Why won’t it work?)
Skill Transfer Technology

Simple     Complex
Skill Transfer as a Possible Mechanism of Change.... is DBT!

Questions