DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOR THERAPY

Using Mindfulness and Validation to Produce Change

The ABCs of DBT

Dialectical Behavior Therapy continues to be a popular approach in the treatment of drug and alcohol abuse because it also addresses more complex, difficult-to-treat mental health issues. This evidence-based therapy has been proven successful in effectively reducing treatment dropout, depression, suicidal ideation, hopelessness, anger, hostility and illicit substance use. At its core, DBT combines the basic strategies of behavior therapy with mindfulness practices and works with patients to replace rigid, black-and-white thinking. DBT focuses on validating and accepting where the patient is in the process, and at the same time it leaves opportunities for facilitating change.

What DBT Can Accomplish

When used as part of a comprehensive treatment program, DBT can do the following:
• Enhance behavioral capabilities
• Improve motivation to change
• Structure the treatment environment in a way that supports the patient’s capabilities

This treatment method also focuses on keeping track of the ultimate goal of helping the patient move from a life mired in addiction to a life worth living, as quickly and efficiently as possible. Therapists emphasize learning and refining new skills to change behavioral, emotional and thinking patterns associated with misery and distress. DBT teaches patients how to decrease interpersonal chaos, impulsiveness and confusion about self.
**A History of DBT**

While addiction treatment is made up of a variety of components, therapy is always at the core of any program. DBT was originally developed by Dr. Marsha M. Linehan, a psychology researcher at the University of Washington from 1977 to the present. Although its initial purpose was to treat people with borderline personality disorder, the process has evolved in the decades since it was first introduced. For instance, DBT was modified from the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy approach and now includes elements of acceptance and mindfulness while emphasizing non-judgment and validation.

Dr. Linehan designed DBT specifically for people who harm themselves, for those diagnosed with borderline personality, and for those who suffer from pervasive suicidal thoughts and/or attempts. It has since been expanded across clinical settings to address a variety of problems, including some related to substance abuse and alcoholism.

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**Foundations Recovery Network utilizes DBT in its inpatient and outpatient programs alongside other evidence-based practices for treating co-occurring disorders.**

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**About Foundations Recovery Network**

Foundations Recovery Network is recognized as the premier leader in integrated treatment for co-occurring addiction and mental health concerns. Our award-winning model combines evidence-based addiction treatment with innovative therapies for emotional and mental health to address a Dual Diagnosis effectively. Results demonstrate that FRN patients are twice as likely to maintain sobriety one year post-treatment compared to those who attend traditional programs.

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**What to Expect from the Treatment Process**

While treatment program components can vary widely, any reputable program will focus on providing support, structure and hope for recovery first and foremost. Ideally, every patient receives an individually-tailored program to meet his or her unique needs through group and individual therapy as well as life skills classes integrated with 12-Step principles. The goal is to develop a schedule for a life of sobriety, increasing patients’ recovery skill sets and helping them to gain valuable relapse prevention awareness. DBT is just one tool in what should be a customized and complete program.