

Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT)

“DBT has three simple goals: **Get out of hell, stay out of hell, and build a life worth living.** ‘Hell,’ in DBT lingo, refers to intense emotional pain.”¹

DBT is an evidence-based, skills-based psychotherapy—branching from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and rooted in mindfulness, “To be aware, on purpose, in the present, without judging”¹. It was originally designed in-mind for folks with Borderline Personality Disorder, which is a trauma-based “disorder.” However, DBT has shown effectiveness with a vast array of psychological struggles, even for those without diagnosis. I know this both from [evidence in research](#), but also from mine and my friends’ personal experiences with DBT.

“This approach was developed by Marsha Linehan to help people increase their emotional and cognitive regulation by learning about the triggers that lead to reactive states and helping to assess which coping skills to apply in the sequence of events, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to help avoid undesired reactions.”

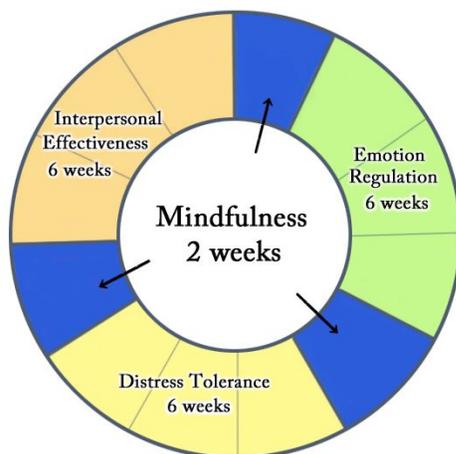
([Wikipedia](#))

Dialectic(s) defined + applied —

[Wiki](#): “Greek: διαλεκτική, dialektikḗ; *related to dialogue*”

[M-W](#): “the ([Hegelian](#))² process of change in which a concept or its realization passes over into and is preserved and fulfilled by its opposite” or “concerned with or acting through opposing forces.” (e.g. chaos & order; yin & yang)

“So what is DBT, and what does “dialectical” mean? “*Dialectical*” is simply a fancy philosophy term that *refers to the process of bringing together opposite ideas*, so that you can see things from more or different perspectives. DBT applies this idea of dialectics to emotional healing. Not surprising, DBT has many dialectics. *The main dialectic of DBT is acceptance versus change.* On one hand, healing requires you to accept yourself as you are. On the other hand, healing also requires you to change. Do you see how that is a dialectic? Even though these ideas seem like opposites, do you also see how both can be true at the same time? For example, deciding to accept yourself is already a change. In addition, you can’t change something that you haven’t accepted yet. In other words, even concepts that seem like opposites are sometimes two sides of the same coin!”¹



DBT is split into four modules:

- + Mindfulness (core)
- + Interpersonal Effectiveness
- + Emotional Regulation
- + Distress Tolerance

Reference / Notes:

1. Kirby Reutter, [The Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Workbook for PTSD](#)
2. [Definition of Hegelianism](#): the philosophy of Hegel that places ultimate reality in ideas rather than in things and that uses dialectic to comprehend an absolute idea behind phenomena