

DBT-Skills Squad: An adaptive Dialectical Behaviour Therapy for youth with cognitive challenges

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Clear Picture Exercise



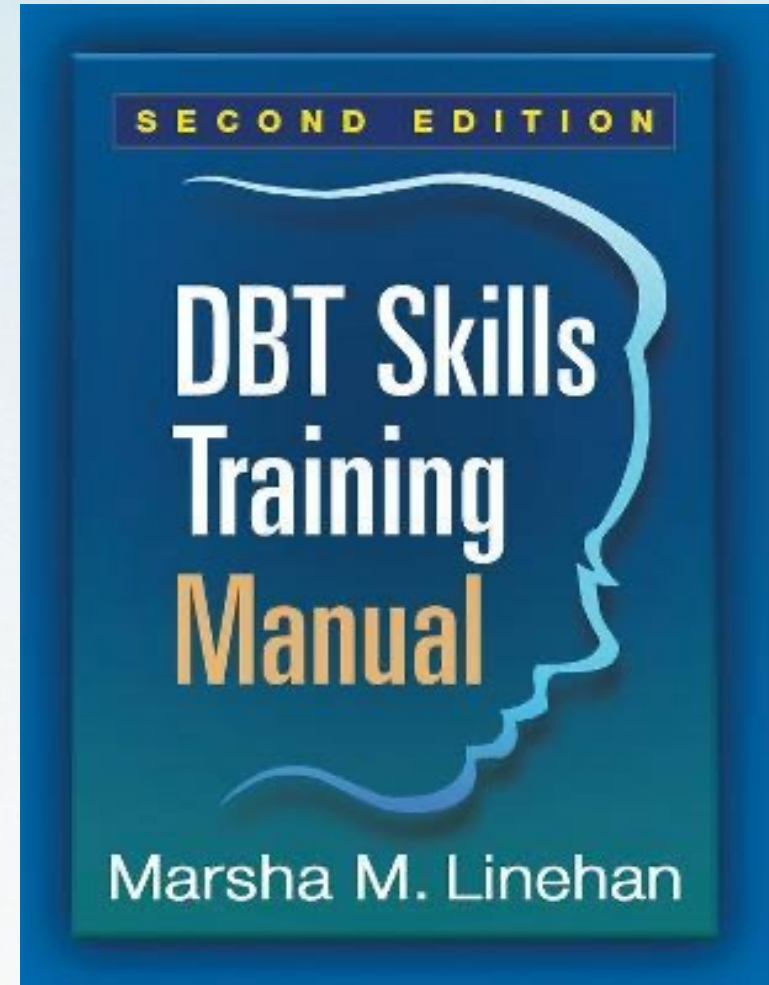
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Why adapt DBT?

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) is a world renowned evidence-based therapy, developed by Marsha Linehan, Ph.D., professor of psychology and researcher at the University of Washington, to treat people with borderline personality disorder, that uses skills and strategies to help regulate emotions, manage distress, practice acceptance and improve interpersonal relations

Challenges with DBT:

- Pace
- Language/abstract concepts
- Cognitive overload
- Limited scaffolding





Source: Public Domain

What is needed...

Simplification (reduced skills)

AND

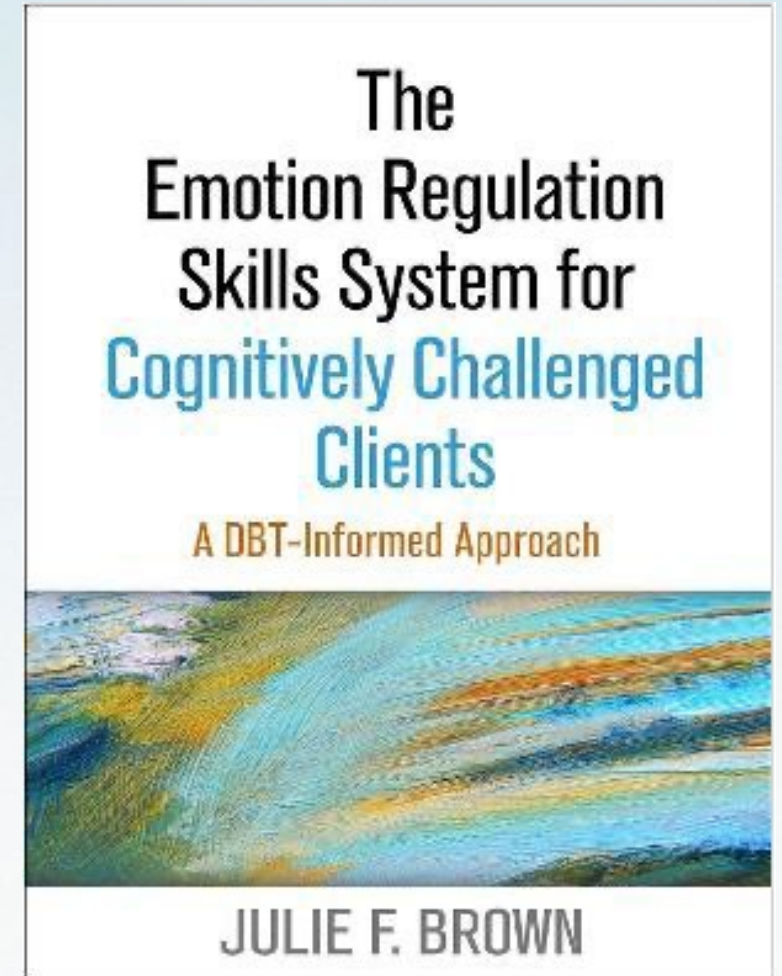
Scaffolding (when to use what skill)

Skills System

Julie Brown, PhD., developed an adapted form of DBT, called the Skills System, which was specifically designed for individuals with intellectual challenges.

Benefits of Skills System:

- Modifies concepts from standard DBT, albeit reduces complexity
- Uses relatable language and images
- Repetition to promote learning
- Increased visuals
- Reduced to 9 skills learnt



Skills System (at Foundry Granville)

- Group of clinicians (social work, psychology, psychiatry) taught ourselves the manual
- Joined the Skills System Community of Practice
- Consulted with Dr Julie Brown, developer of Skills System
- Input from Youth Advisory Committee
- Clinicians rotate in co-facilitating, with a consistent main facilitator
- Youth commit to one hour weekly x 12 weeks; may repeat x 3 = 1 year

Skills Squad



Source: Public Domain

Referral Criteria

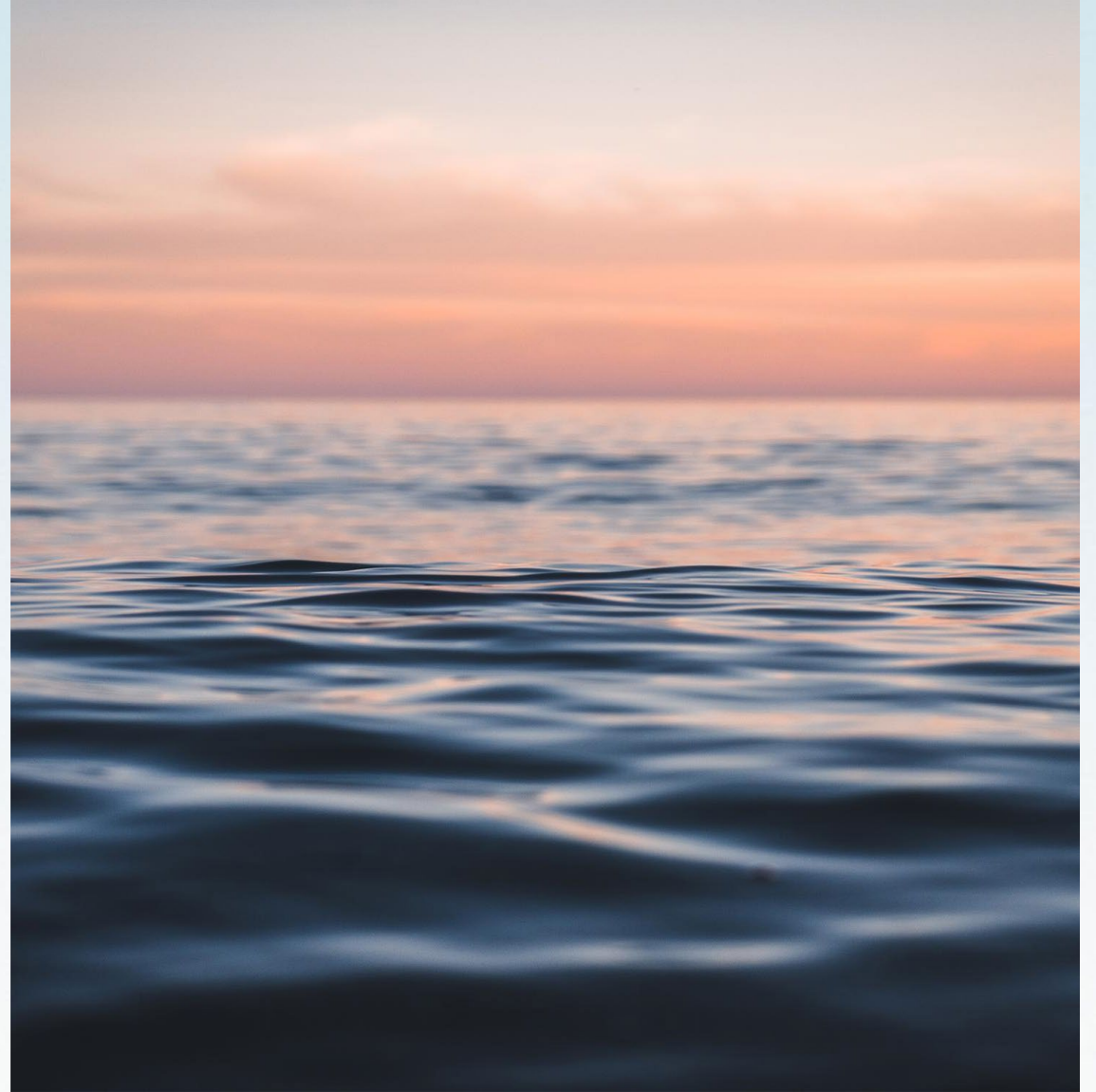
- FSIQ = 100 or below
- Impaired working memory and/or processing speed (= 79 or below)
- Struggles with emotion and social challenges
- (BPD dx is not required)
- Minimal substance use
- No active/recent psychosis

We are accepting referrals!

Why Learn Skills System?

- 1) Persons with intellectual challenges are particularly prone to difficulties with mood regulation and socialization
- 2) A unified approach to behavioural therapy is needed
- 3) We want to provide youth any means to be more skillful and more capable, by generalizing concepts and applying skills effectively in their daily lives

9 Skills



Skills List & Categories



1. Clear Picture



2. On-Track Thinking



3. On-Track Action



4. Safety Plan



5. New-Me Activities



6. Problem Solving



7. Expressing Myself



8. Getting It Right



9. RelationSHIP Care

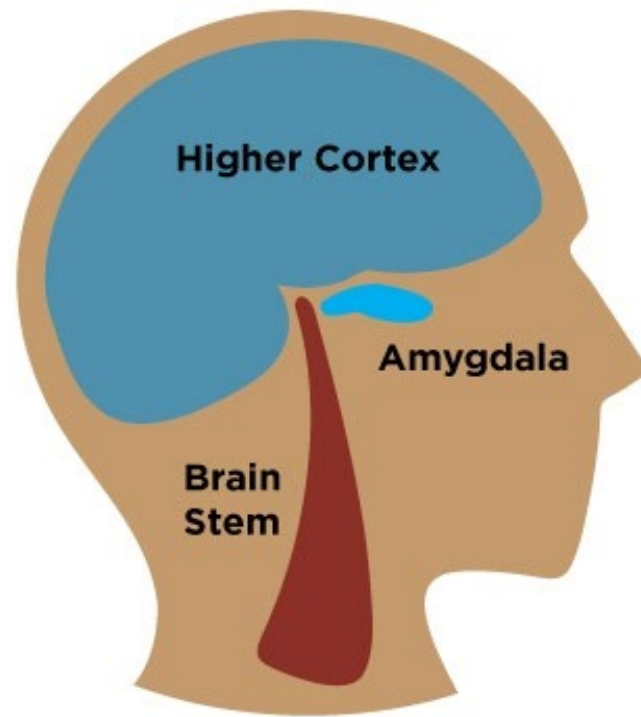
All-The-Time Skills



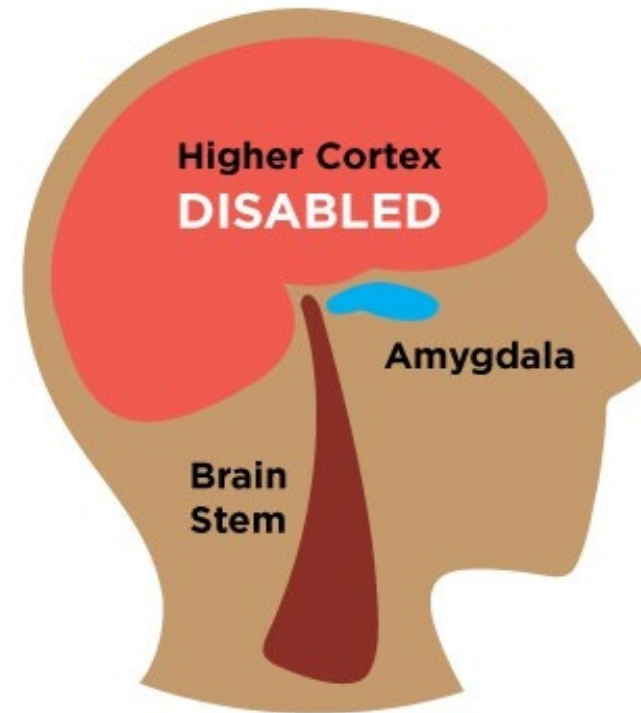
Calm-Only Skills



Bigger emotions need the right type of skill



LOW Emotion
(Calm, Relaxed)



HIGH Emotion
(Anger, Fear, Excitement, Love,
Hate, Disgust, Frustration)

Feelings Rating Scale

Level 5 =
Hurting Self, Other, or Property



5 Overwhelming

Level 4 =
Fuzzy Thinking;
Unable to Talk, Listen
& Have a 2-Way Street
Relationship



4 Strong Feeling



3 Medium Feeling



2 Small Feeling



1 Tiny Feeling



0 No Feeling

Levels 0-3 =
Clear Thinking;
Able to Talk, Listen &
Have a 2-Way Street
Relationship

Skills List & Categories



1. Clear Picture



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All-The-Time Skills



FEELINGS

Calm-Only Skills



FEELINGS

Skill 7 = Expressing Myself

- Determine what I want I to express (thoughts, feelings, wants, desires, etc)
- How do I express this? (voicing, written, body language)
- Learning the right timing - “Calm Only” skill - can be used when at low level emotion
- Understand the difference between avoiding or venting
- Create an expressing myself plan





Name: _____ Date: _____

Expressing Myself Plan

What is something that is On My Mind or In My Heart?

It is a: Thought Concern Need Feeling Like/dislike Hope/dream

Other: _____

Who do I need to Express Myself to?

Why is it important to express this?

How can I best Express Myself?

Talk in Phone Video Signing Letter E-mail Text Body
person call language

Other: _____

When is it best to Express Myself?

Points I need to express:

Purpose of Evaluation

- To assess the feasibility and acceptability of repeated cycles of DBT Skills Squad for inner city youth with co-occurring cognitive difficulties and complex mental health needs.
- We will measure pre-post changes in youth's emotional regulation and social-interpersonal functioning.

Methodology

- Evaluations every 12 weeks
- Youth Evaluation
 - **Demographics**
 - **DERS-SF**
 - **LPI**
 - **ERKS**
 - **C-ORS**
 - **Acceptability scale**
- Caregiver Evaluations
- **DERS-P**
 - **ORS**

Goals



**My most
important
goal was ...**



**Did I reach
this goal?**

YES

NO

COMPLETED SOME OF IT



**What
might have
got in the
way?**

	Not important to me				Very important to me	
Communication skills	0	1	2	3	4	5
Controlling my emotions	0	1	2	3	4	5
Health	0	1	2	3	4	5

Hypotheses

- Youth tend to under-report challenges compared to caregivers
- Youth will improve scores of emotional and social functional functioning with each cycle
- Youth will find the therapy to be both feasible and acceptable

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