

Dialectical Behavior Therapy Adolescent (DBT-A) Multifamily Groups

What is the DBT-A group?

The Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Group is a two hour group that is one part of a DBT program. Participants in the DBT-A group also receive weekly individual DBT with either a TAP provider or a DBT provider in the community. Group members stay in this group for 24 weeks to learn all sets of DBT skills.

Who can enter the group?

In order to join the DBT-A group, you must be in a full DBT program either with TAP or in the community. This program must include weekly individual DBT, phone coaching, and completion of diary cards. Group members stay in this group for 24 weeks to learn all modules of the DBT skills manual. If you are connected with a TAP DBT therapist, they will orient you to the group and provide a group entry date. If you are seeing a DBT therapist in the community, your DBT therapist must complete a referral form to refer you to this group. Once we receive the referral, we will contact you to complete our paperwork process and you will be scheduled for a one-time intake with a group leader.

The DBT program is designed to teach skills that help with mindfulness, distress tolerance, emotion regulation, and interpersonal communication. It is appropriate for individuals struggling with suicidality, self-harm, aggression, or significant emotion dysregulation. It can also be helpful with co-occurring symptoms of depression, anxiety, impulsivity, or interpersonal difficulties.

Is it the same as the DBT-N group?

No. Though the DBT-N group also teaches DBT skills, the DBT-A group is the group designed for adolescents in what we call “full-model” DBT. This means that the group is for adolescents who are also in individual DBT. The DBT-A group is part of TAP’s Linehan-Board Certified DBT program and is conducted in adherence to Marsha Linehan’s full-model DBT program. All DBT-A group leaders have obtained extensive training in DBT and many are also individually DBT certified. The DBT-A group is neurodivergent friendly, meaning that individuals who are neurodivergent and also need full-model DBT are welcome to join.

What is the DBT-N group?

The DBT-N group is a one and a half hour DBT skills training group for neurodivergent adolescents (those who meet criteria for ADHD or who are on the autism spectrum) and their caregivers. Group members are expected to remain in the program for a full cycle of DBT skills (approx 24 weeks).

Who can enter the group?

Adolescents ages 13-18 who meet criteria for ADHD or who are on the autism spectrum may join the DBT-N group. They must have an individual therapist within or outside of TAP, although the therapist does not need to be a DBT specialist (unless it is clinically indicated). This means that neurodivergent teens who are clinically recommended to participate in full-model DBT (typically due to high levels of risk from chronic suicidality or self-harm) can join the DBT-N group, as well as teens with lower risk levels who could benefit from DBT skills in conjunction with their individual therapy. At least one parent/caregiver is expected to attend each group as well.

Is it the same as a DBT-A group?

No. The DBT-N group is a DBT group that is a standalone skills training group, and is not part of our certified DBT program.