

Dialectical Behavior Therapy:

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Skills for Reducing Suicidal Distress

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TREATMENT



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Introduction

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About me, scope of the problem, about DBT



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Intro | About Me



**Developmental
Psychopathologist
and
Psychophysiology
Expert**



**DBT Treatment
Developer and
Expert in Severe
Psychopathology/
Suicide Risk**



**Expert in
Adolescent Mood
Disorders and
Suicide
Prevention**



**Lifespan developmental psychopathologist with interests
in suicide prevention and community clinician**



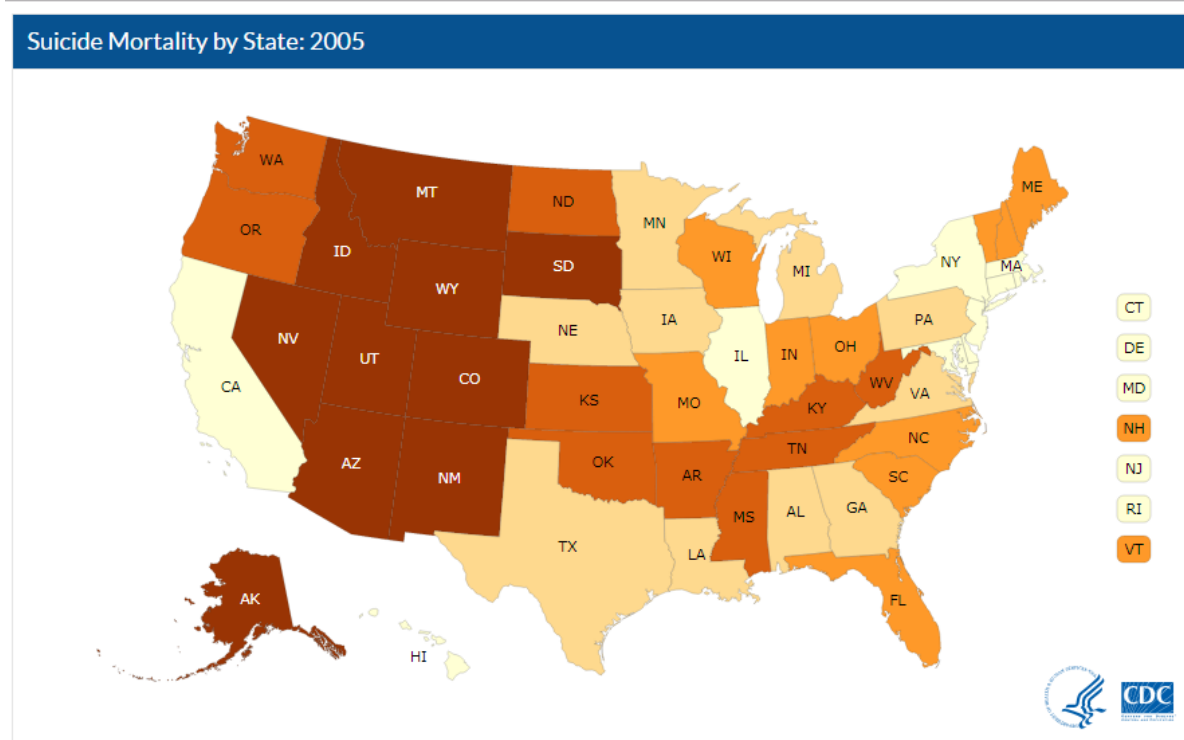
Intro | Why DBT?

- DBT is
 - Effective
 - Supported by evidence
 - Fun and engaging
 - Non-judgmental focus on skills deficits and a biosocial causal theory
 - AND
 - It targets suicide and self-harm thoughts, plans, communications, and/or behaviors in *every* session



Intro | Scope of the problem

- Rates of suicide are increasing



Age-Adjusted Death Rates¹

United States 10.9

6 - 9.7

10.5 - 11.5

11.5 - 12.5

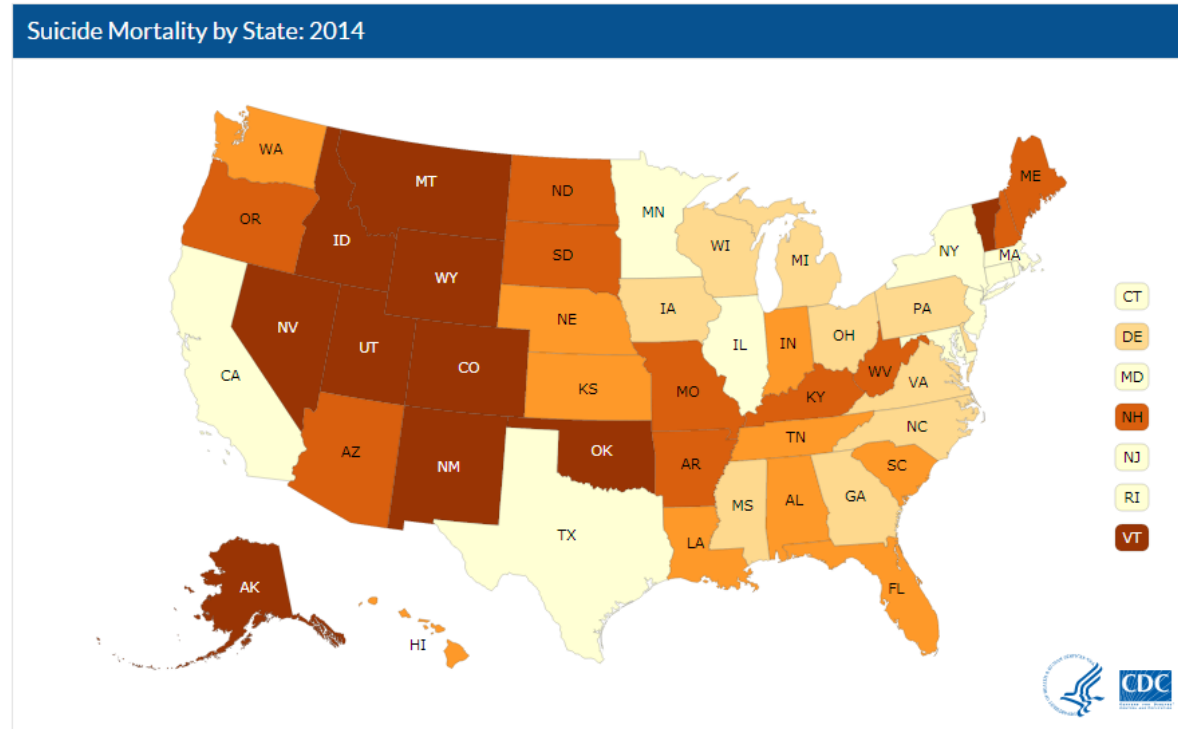
12.7 - 14.9

15.4 - 21.7



Intro | Scope of the problem

- Rates of suicide are increasing



Age-Adjusted Death Rates¹

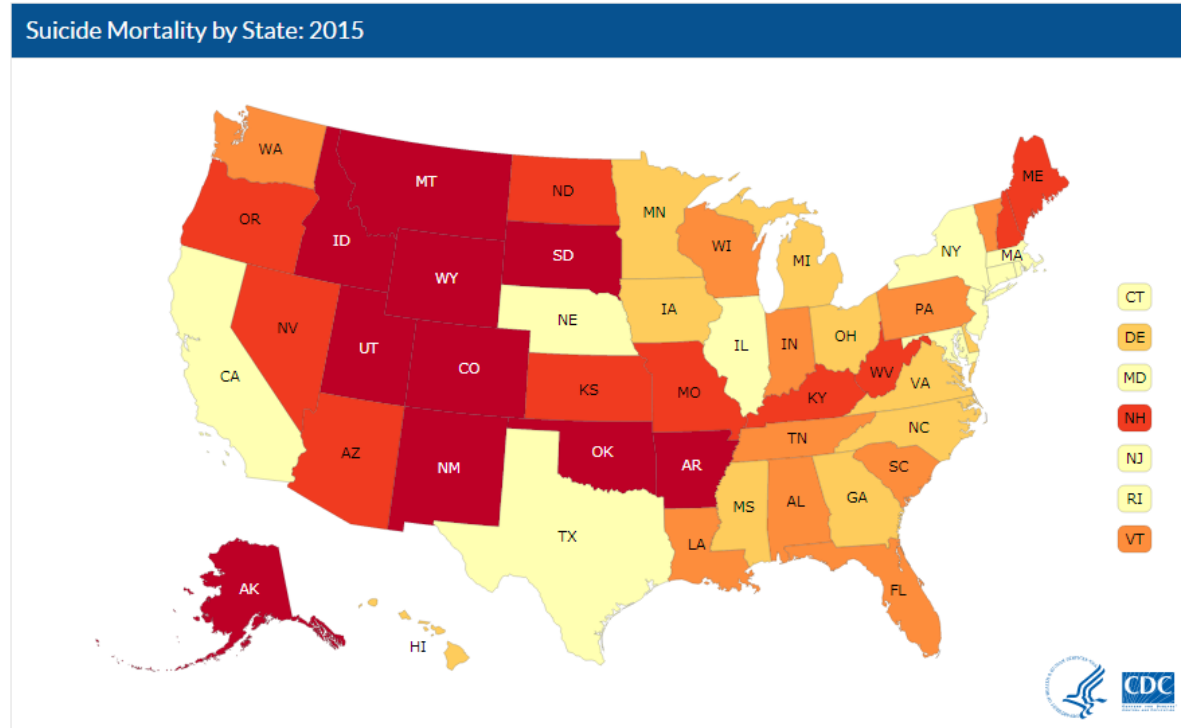
United States 13.0

- 8.1 - 12.2
- 12.5 - 13.3
- 13.4 - 15.7
- 15.7 - 18.6
- 18.7 - 23.9



Intro | Scope of the problem

- Rates of suicide are increasing



Age-Adjusted Death Rates¹

United States 13.3

7.8 - 12.5

12.6 - 14

14 - 15.7

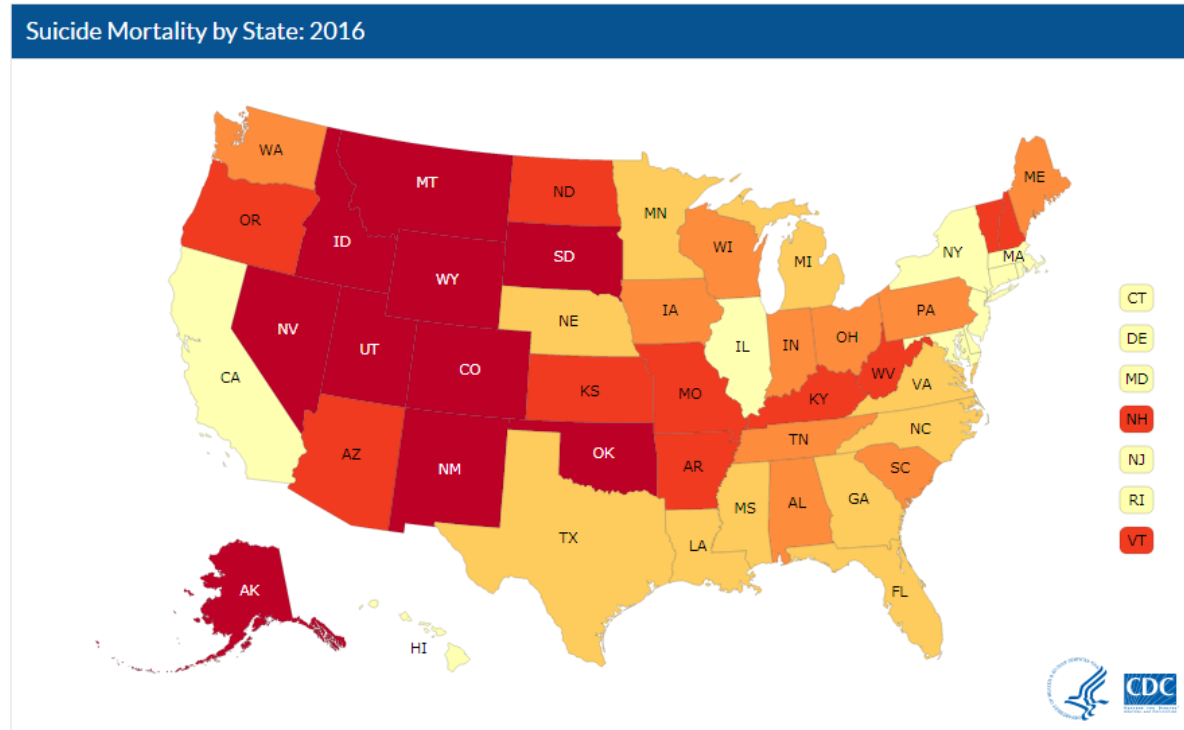
16 - 18.4

19.1 - 28



Intro | Scope of the problem

- Rates of suicide are increasing



Age-Adjusted Death Rates¹

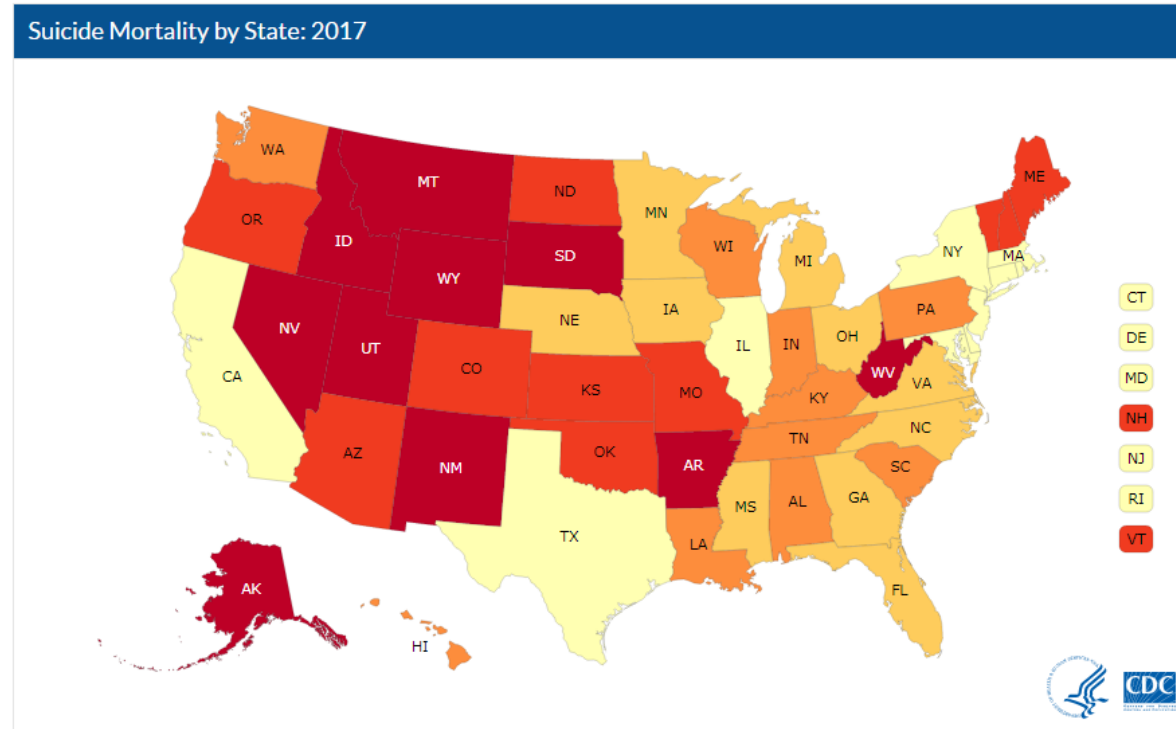
United States 13.5

- 7.2 - 12.1
- 12.6 - 14.2
- 14.2 - 16.3
- 16.8 - 19.3
- 20.2 - 25.9



Intro | Scope of the problem

- Rates of suicide are increasing

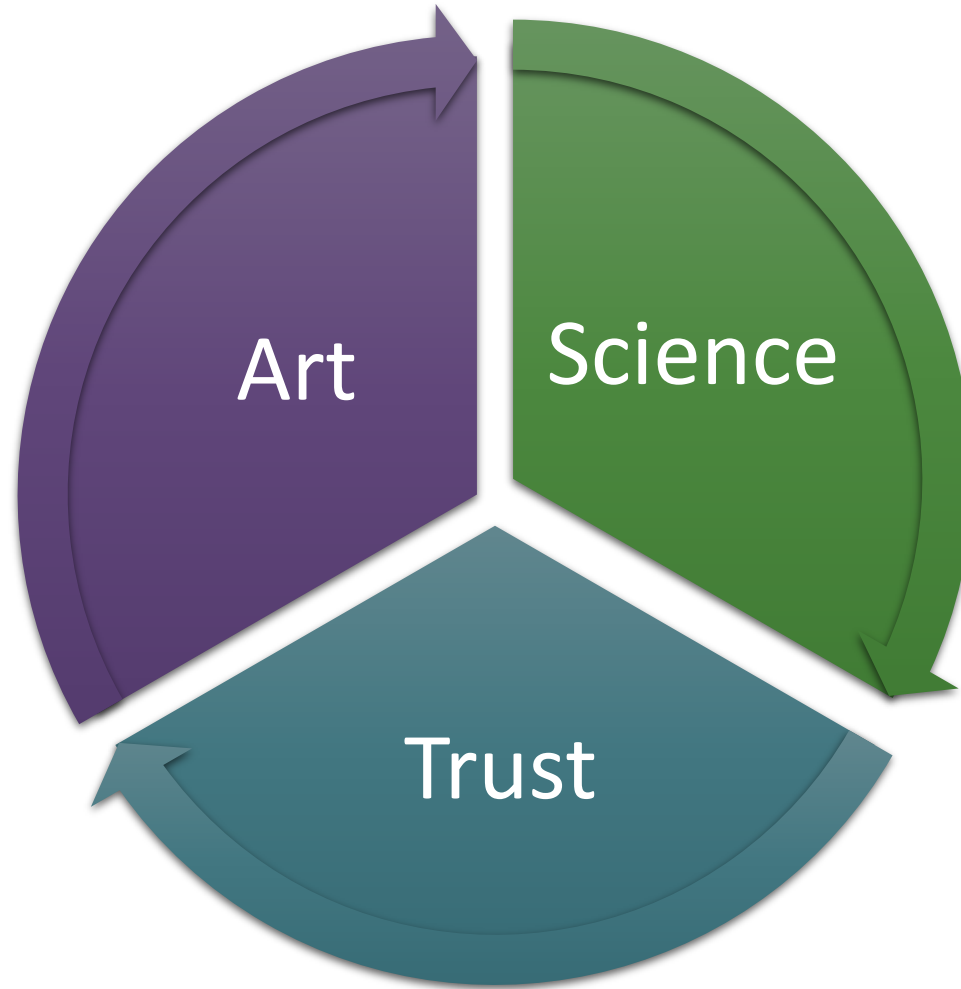


Intro | Why DBT?

DBT is an evidence-based, philosophically rich, comprehensive, cognitive-behavioral therapy that was designed to prevent suicide and self-harm in complex cases



Intro | Why evidence-based treatments?



Intro | Why evidence-based treatments?

- Evidence-based treatment is a *flexible, open minded, hypothesis-driven, and informed* approach to client care
- Key principles:
 - Therapy is organized into targets
 - Therapist is active
 - Consultation and support is essential
 - Therapy is work, and the work is often painful
 - Tracking outcomes is a means of enhancing communication
 - Ongoing training and learning is required



Intro | Why evidence-based treatments?

- Evidence-based treatment is NOT
 - Rigid adherence to protocol over process
 - Identical for every client
 - Blind to race, ethnicity, culture, identity, faith, life history, etc.
 - Cold, heartless, or boring
 - The perfect approach for all clients
 - Endorsement of the DSM or standard psychiatric practice
 - The only approach for reducing suicide



Intro | What is DBT



Intro | What is DBT

- Goal is to change behaviors over thoughts
- Thoughts are (mental) behaviors
- Uses behavioral principles to increase desired actions and decrease problem behaviors
- Therapist words and actions are intentional, related to case formulation

Behaviorism



Intro | What is DBT

- Relationship is validating and irreverent, change-focused and accepting, authentic and thoughtful
- Goal is to leverage the relationship to shift emotions, thoughts, and behaviors



Intro | Who is it for

What is Dialectical Behavior Therapy?

DBT is a treatment for severe and persistent emotional and behavioral difficulties



Suicide

Personality Disorders

Affective Disorders

Eating Disorders

Substance Abuse

Self-Injury

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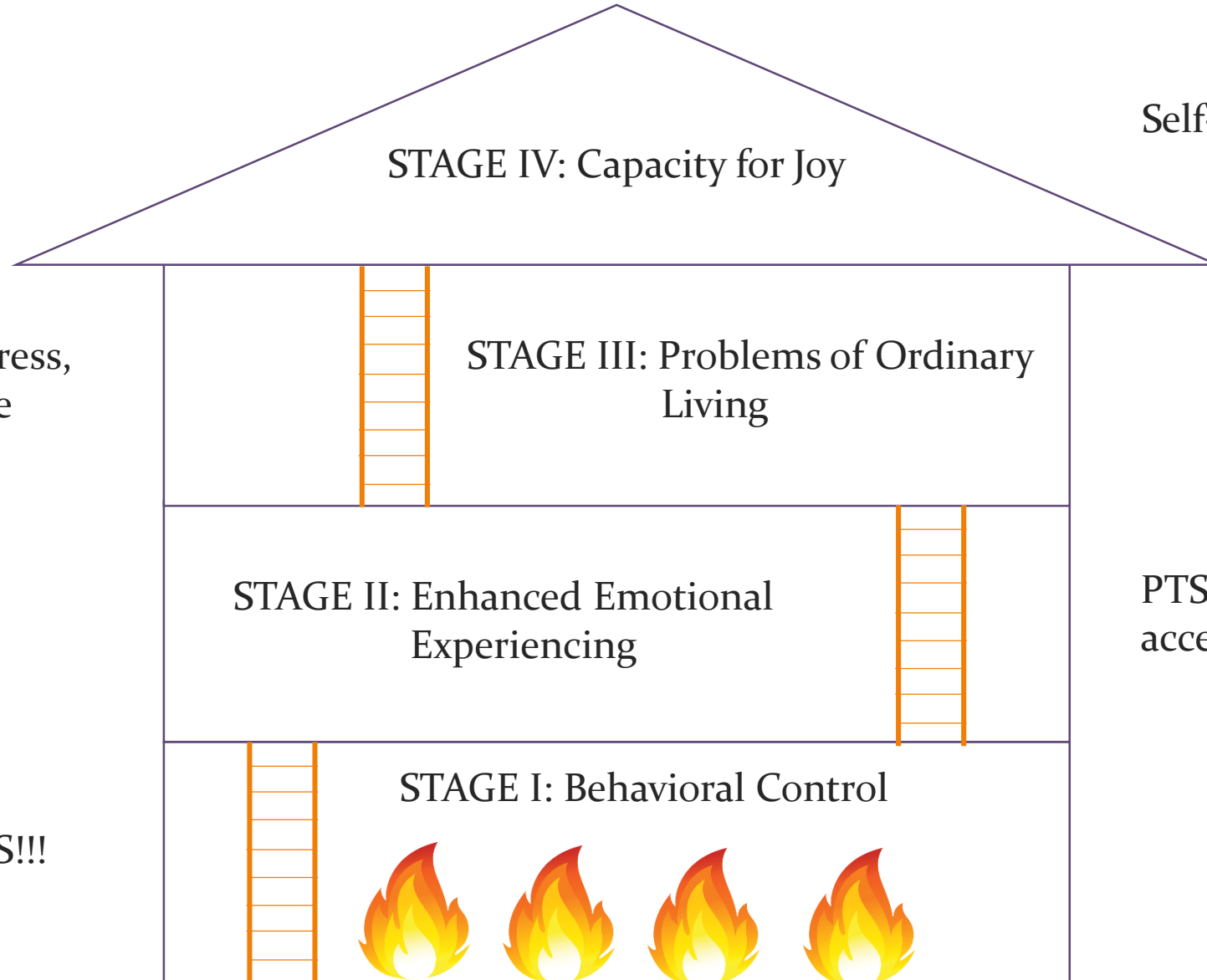


Intro | Is it really DBT

- Has all modes of treatment
 - Individual therapy (with diary card)
 - Skills group (with two leaders)
 - Phone coaching (during stage 1)
 - Consultation team (every week)
- Is a comprehensive, multi-stage treatment



Intro | House of DBT



Support for reducing stress,
improving quality of life

Self-actualization

PTSD treatments and
acceptance-based approaches

SKILLS, SKILLS, SKILLS!!!



Intro | Summary

- DBT is an evidence-based treatment that was designed to target self-harm and suicidality in complex clients
- It is a multistage therapy provided by a team of devoted clinicians
- It is more than just skills



more than just skills



About the Skills

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Commitment, All 4 Modules



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Skills | Building commitment

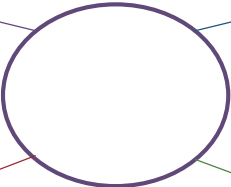
- Commitment stage is ~4 sessions
- Listen for target behaviors
 - Self-injurious/life threatening behaviors
 - Therapy interfering behaviors
 - Quality of life interfering behaviors, skills deficits
 - Risk for dropout
- Biosocial theory, skills, rules of DBT, establishing trust
- Goal: “I hear you; I understand you; I have something for you”





Present
and
Grounded

Calm
when in
Crisis

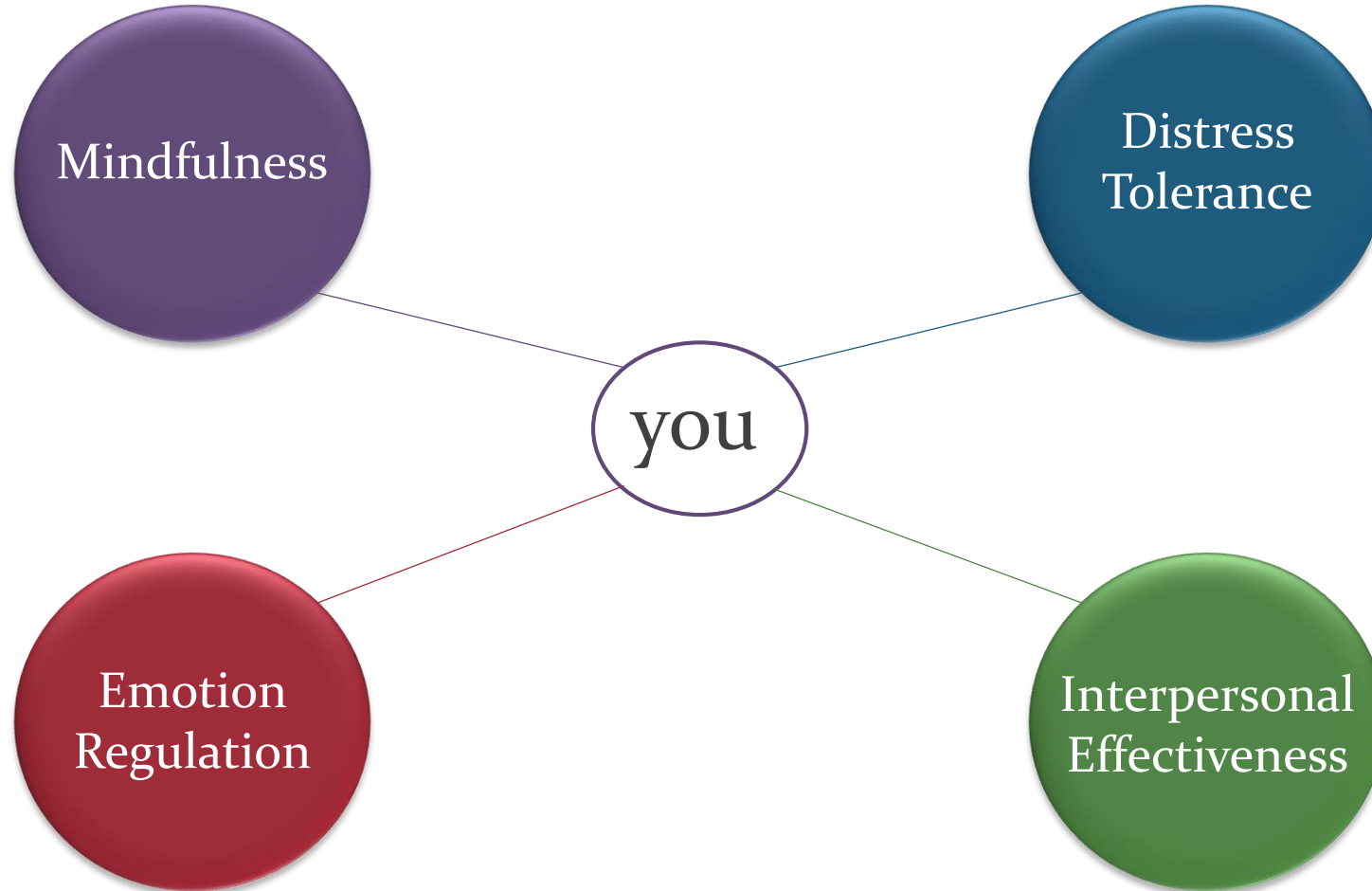


In
Control of
Emotions

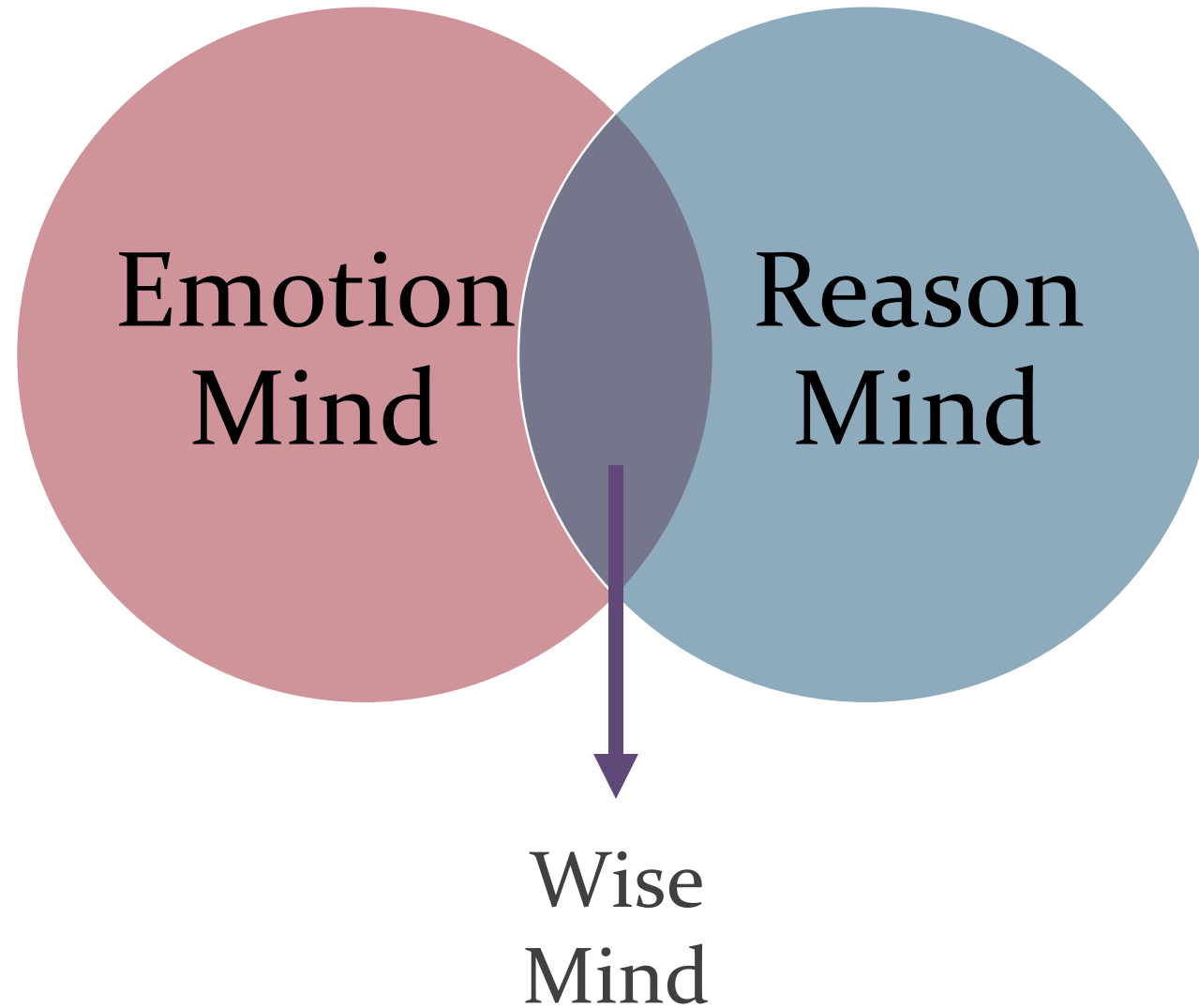
Effective
in
Relation-
ships

you





Skills | Mindfulness



Skills | Mindfulness

WHAT

Observe

Describe

Participate

HOW

Non-
judgmentally

One-
mindfully

Effectively



Managing Crisis

(Without Making it Worse)

Crisis
Survival

Making
Effective
Choices

Accepting
what Can't
Change



Skills | Distress Tolerance – Crisis Survival



SKILL

Stop: Freeze! Don't react. Don't move. Stay in control!

Take a break: Step back, take a deep breath, avoid letting feelings make you act on impulse.

Observe: Take note of of the situation, inside and outside of you, what are your feelings/thoughts, what are other people doing?

Proceed Mindfully: To decide what to do, think of the situation, your/other's feelings/thoughts, your goals. Ask your Wise Mind what will make it better/worse. Be aware of your actions.

SELF-SOOTHING

Self-soothing is a quick and effective way to reduce the intensity of negative emotions.



Sight

Low lighting
Soothing colors
Sleeping masks
Coloring books
Pinterest Collages

Touch

Soft things
Cuddle things
Massage
Hot/cold shower
Heated/weighted blanket



Sound

Calming noise
ASMR videos
Nature sounds
Guided meditations
Binaural beats



Smell

Aromatherapy
Fresh air
Candles/insense
Comforting smells



Taste

Strong flavors
Warm drinks
Eat slowly
Nostalgic flavors



www.blessingmanifesting.com






Skills | Distress Tolerance – Crisis Survival

DBT

- I**magery
- M**eaning
- P**rayer
- R**elaxation
- O**ne thing at a time
- V**acation
- E**ncouragement

THE MOMENT

The TIP Skill

T	I	P
Tipping the temperature of your face with very cold water	Intense exercise of approximately 20 minutes	Paced breathing as well as paired muscle relaxation
		

Linehan, M. M. (2015). DBT® skills training manual (2nd ed.). New York, NY, US: Guilford Press.

Psychotherapy Academy

Activities
Contributions
Comparisons
Emotions
Pushing Away
Thoughts
Sensations



Skills | Distress Tolerance – Effective Choices



Skills | Distress Tolerance – Effective Choices

	USE DRUGS/ALCOHOL	NOT USE DRUGS/ALCOHOL
PROS	Fun with friends: good relationships/time well-spent	
	Decrease in – emotions, increase in + emotions	
	Perspective/insight	
	Distinguishing from old life/identity “being me”	
	Sometimes feels good/meet cool people	
	“Bad” decisions lead to a lot of fun	
CONS		

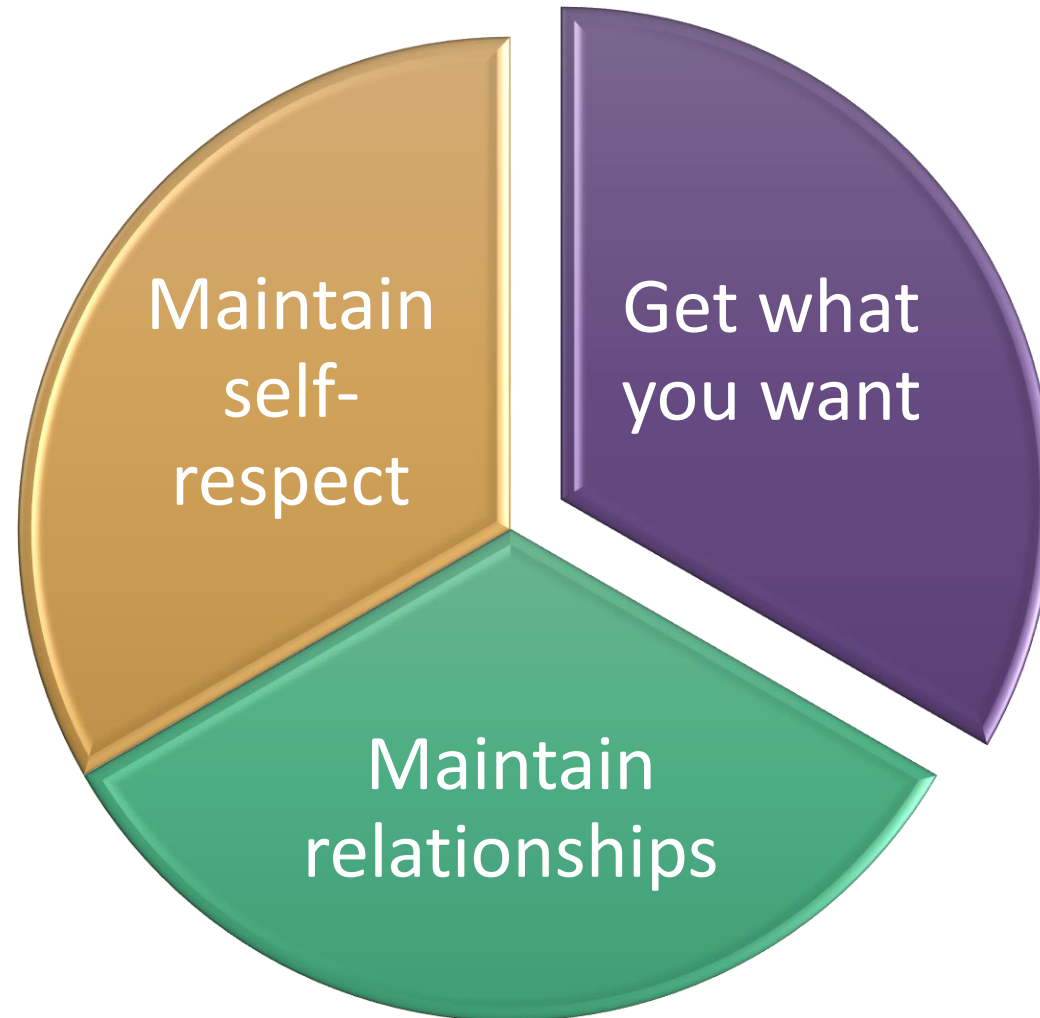


Skills | Distress Tolerance – Reality Acceptance

- Goal – to fully see and understand reality, to accept what is real, and to act with wisdom from that understanding



Skills | Interpersonal Effectiveness



Skills | Interpersonal Effectiveness

- How to ask for what you need
- How to say no
- How intensely to ask/say no
- Observing personal limits
- Six levels of validation
- When to have an easy manner vs. stand up for yourself vs. some of both
- Benefits of scripting and practicing



Skills | Emotion Regulation

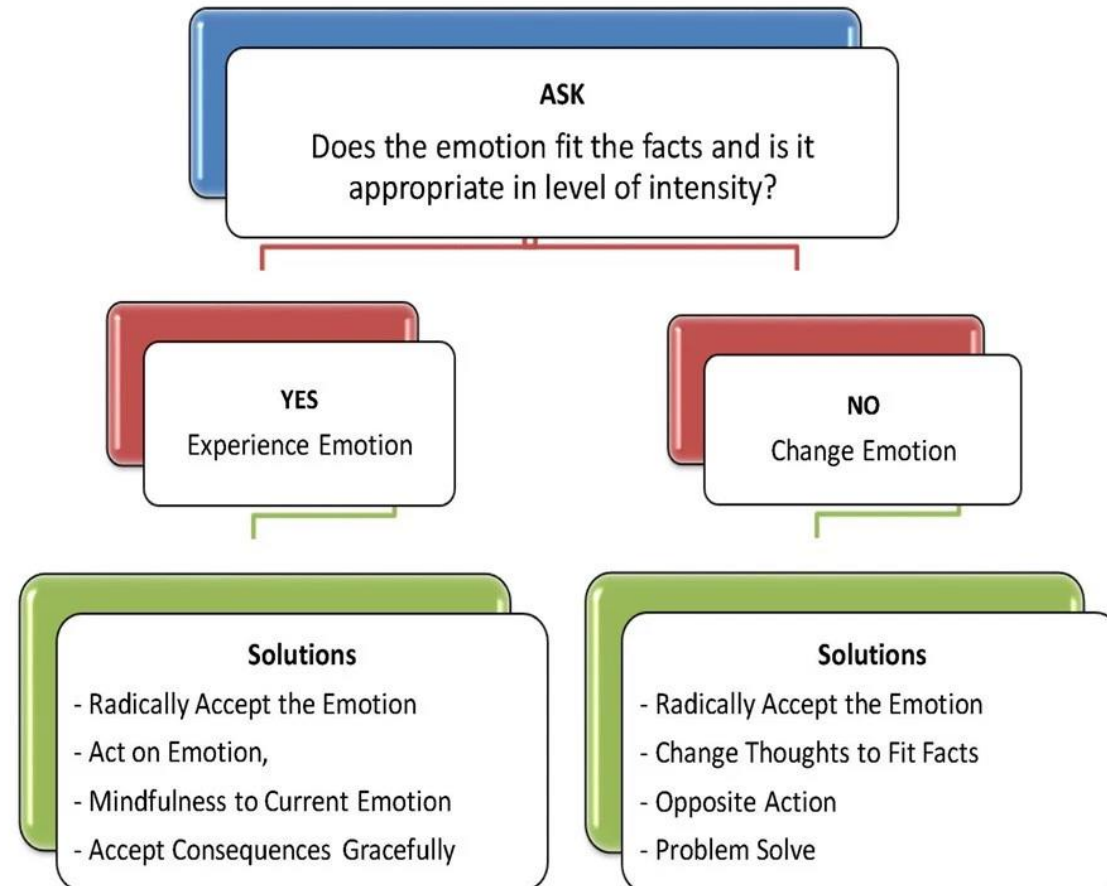
- Most complicated module, by far!
- Every skill builds on the next
 1. Functions of emotions
 2. Elements of the emotion system (prompting events, thoughts, sensations, action urges)
 3. Understanding and labeling all core emotions
 4. Check the facts, when to use opposite action
 5. Reducing vulnerabilities with ABC please



Skills | Emotion Regulation

Check The Facts of Emotional Responses Cheat Sheets

The following diagram shows the basic flowchart used to check the facts for each emotion



Skills | Emotion Regulation

A

- Accumulate Positive Emotions

B

- Build Mastery

C

- Cope Ahead

PL

- Treat Physical Illness

E

- Balanced Eating

A

- Avoid Mood-Altering Drugs

S

- Balanced Sleep

E

- Exercise



Skills | Summary

- Typical DBT skills class is 6 months
- If skills are being incorporated into regular sessions, plan on 12-18 months
- Phone coaching is essential for skills generalization
- Skills are essential AND skills \neq DBT



Concluding Thoughts

- Suicide occurs when people feel trapped, stuck, without escape, and with no other possible solutions
- DBT has approximately 200 different skills and limitless combinations
- Clients in DBT are not alone
 - Crisis resources
 - Skills leader
 - Individual therapist to provide coaching
 - A whole team behind the therapist



Questions? Thoughts?

- Slides will be posted early next week at: www.ucebt.com

