

Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) Program for Adolescents

What is DBT?

Dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT) is an outpatient treatment for adolescents with complex mental health disorders. DBT therapy balances empathy and warm acceptance for the adolescent with a focus on behavior change. This is done through a strong patient-therapist relationship and skills training.

Who might be referred for DBT therapy?

Our DBT program is designed to treat your adolescent ages 13 to 18 who has serious emotional and behavioral problems including:

- Self-harm behaviors
- Active suicidal ideation and suicidal behaviors
- Inability to control emotions in response to life stressors
- Eating disordered behaviors

What services are part of the full DBT program?

Initial assessment:

First we will meet with you and your adolescent to discuss our program and assess whether the DBT model is a match for your needs.

DBT skills group:

This is a 90-minute weekly skills group offered to adolescents who are also receiving individual therapy through our program.

Individual therapy:

Your adolescent comes into clinic for individual therapy 1 to 2 times per week, depending on their individual needs.

Adjunct therapies:

Each adolescent has an individualized plan that might include medication, family therapy or other services. Adolescents being treated for an eating disorder are also followed by the Departments of Adolescent Medicine and Nutrition.

What other options beyond the full program are offered?

Children's offers a separate **adolescent skills group** for adolescents who are not enrolled in our full DBT program. This group is for adolescents who are being seen by a community therapist and who are clinically stable and not actively suicidal. The group focuses on teaching distress-tolerance skills using the same curriculum in our full program. The group meets weekly for 15 weeks. Each session lasts 90 minutes. Two adolescent skills groups are offered each year, beginning in January and September.

Is there a wait for services?

Wait times vary for group and individual services, depending on space in our program.

Referral information:

If you have questions or would like to learn more about our DBT program, please call:

- Barbara Kleine at (206) 987-3369 or
- Jennifer Gross at (206) 987-3372

TO LEARN MORE

- **Psychiatry Intake Office, (206) 987-3560**

Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Please call the Family Resource Center at (206) 987-2201.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Children's Hospital. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's health care provider.