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## What happens next?

You will be expected to attend regular one to one therapy sessions, as well as group skills training sessions. You may also get telephone coaching with your therapist.

You will have to fill out a weekly diary card and will be expected to try new skills and keep practicing them.

## Other useful information

### Royal College of Psychiatrists

Personality Disorder Leaflet

<http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsdisorders.aspx> Available in:

Chinese

Polish

Spanish

### MIND

Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)

Dialectal Behavioural Therapy (DBT)

[www.mind.org.uk/Information](http://www.mind.org.uk/Information)

National Institute for Clinical Excellence

[www.nice.org.uk/CG78](http://www.nice.org.uk/CG78)

## Contact us

Please talk to your care coordinator for further information.

For information on Trust services visit [www.awp.nhs.uk](http://www.awp.nhs.uk)

## PALS

To make a comment, raise a concern or make a complaint, please contact the Trust's Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

Tel: 01225 362900

Free phone: 0800 073 1778

Email: [awp.pals@nhs.net](mailto:awp.pals@nhs.net)

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Avon and Wiltshire Mental  
Health Partnership  
NHS Trust

# Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT)

You matter, we care

## What is DBT and what is it for?

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) is a Cognitive Behavioural treatment designed for people who experience difficulties in managing their emotions and who may have found ways of coping which include self-harm and attempted suicide.

People who may benefit from DBT are likely to have behaviours consistent with the diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder, such as:

- Sudden mood changes that feel intense and overwhelming
- Acting in self-damaging ways such as drinking too much or taking drugs, spending too much, uncontrollable eating, having sex with people you hardly know, or “unsafe” sex
- Problems in relationships which may be intense and unstable possibly related to a fear of being abandoned
- Being unsure of your identity; perhaps involving lots of sudden changes in goals, career plans, religious beliefs, or simply being different things with different people
- Problems thinking straight such as getting spaced out or confused
- Feelings of emptiness inside
- Self-harming as a way of managing difficult emotions.

## How does it work?

Some people’s lives can feel unbearable. DBT aims to decrease emotional suffering and help build a life worth living.

It works by focusing on set targets, especially reducing life-threatening behaviours, and anything that might interfere with therapy.

DBT works by teaching people specific skills to deal effectively with themselves and with the world around them. In particular, the treatment focuses on:

### Core mindfulness

Mindfulness is central to DBT. The skills taught are psychological and behavioural meditation practices drawn from Eastern traditions. It focuses on states of mind known as “emotion mind” and “rational mind” and attempts to balance these two to produce a third mental state known as “wise mind”.

### Interpersonal effectiveness

This is learning how to be effective in getting what you want, saying “no” and dealing with conflicts within relationships whilst maintaining self-respect.

### Emotion regulation

This teaches how to understand and label emotions. It also teaches skills to deal with intense and painful emotional states, and to help you to put things in place that will bring about more positive emotions in the longer term.

## Distress tolerance

This teaches crisis survival skills to help you cope when you can’t immediately make changes for the better. As the name suggests, it also teaches how to tolerate difficult feelings, without resorting to impulsive strategies or ways that only make things worse.

## What will I be expected to do?

If you are referred to your nearest DBT service, you will then be assessed by someone from the DBT team.

You may be expected to complete some assessment questionnaires. These will help work out your diagnosis and whether DBT is likely to help you.

After the assessment, we may suggest other therapies would be more suitable.

If DBT is suitable, we may invite you for a period of pre-treatment.

This usually involves one to one sessions with a DBT therapist to learn about the therapy, identify goals, try a few skills and to problem solve any potential obstacles to fully engaging in the therapy.

Then, if appropriate we will invite you to sign a treatment agreement. This will set out what we will expect from you and what you can expect from us.