Dialectical Behavior Therapy

An overview of its Therapeutic Application
Seminar Objectives

- Overview and Definitions
- Brief Outcome Research Summary
- Guiding Principles & Treatment Strategies
- Essential Elements and Stages of Treatment
- Cultural Applications
Overview

...Developed as a Cognitive Behavioral Treatment For Chronically suicidal individuals. First validated on BPD clients...
Research

Randomized controlled trials have shown standardized DBT to reduce:
- Suicide attempts
- Self Injurious Behaviors
- Substance Abuse
- Bulimia
- Binge Eating
- Depression
- Premature Termination of Treatment
Research

- DBT is more cost effective than Treatment as Usual in reducing:
  - Medical severity of suicide attempts
  - Hospitalizations, # Inpatient days
  - Emergency Room Visits
  - Utilization of Crisis beds
- These studies were all done where the comprehensive DBT program was in place. Most included subjects diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder or w/persons with SIB histories.
Research

• Research using parts of DBT are continuing to be evaluated. Some success with separated elements of the protocol ie: Individual DBT
• Studies with skills training alone have found similar effects as other evidence based treatments
• Other studies have identified the clinician-patient relationship as the significant contributing factor in effective DBT treatment
• Limited research found on applications to Native American populations.
  • Some Correlates of BPD are suspected to have a significant prevalence within segments of the Native American population
    • Ie: Child Sexual Abuse, Substance Abuse, PTSD, Historical and Generational Trauma
What is your experience of BPD?

- Characterological Features
  - Emotional Dysregulation
  - Perpetual Crisis Situations
  - Dynamic Interpersonal Conflict
  - Therapist Burnout

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Biopsychosocial theory

- BPD a disorder of Emotion Dysregulation
  - Criterion Behaviors serve to regulate or are a function of dysregulated emotion.
- Biological Vulnerability
  - Predispositions in CNS - more frequent, more intense and longer duration of aversive states - Increased vulnerability to emotion states
- Invalidating Environment
  - Emotional Behaviors are incorrect, inappropriate, pathological or not to be taken seriously
Treatment functions

- Enhancing capabilities
- Generalizing capabilities
- Improving motivation and reducing dysfunctional behaviors
- Enhancing and maintaining therapist capabilities and motivation
- Structuring the environment

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Essential Elements of Standard DBT Protocol

- Individual Therapy
- Skills Training
- Coaching- Telephone Consultation
- Consultation Team
- Case Management*
Stages and Priorities

- **Stage 1 - Severe Behavioral Dyscontrol**
  - Life Threatening Behaviors
  - Therapy Interfering Behaviors
  - Behaviors interfering w/ Quality of Life

- **Stage 2 - Quiet Desperation**
  - Non-traumatizing emotional experience
  - Connection to the environment/meaningful relationships

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Stage 3 - Unacceptable Quality of Life
- Improved sense of self
- Resolving problems in living
- Acceptable quality of life

Stage 4 - Unfulfillment - Discontent
- Capacity for freedom, joy and/or spiritual fulfillment
Skills overview

- Interpersonal Effectiveness
  - Factors to consider
  - Assertiveness Training
  - Providing a framework

- Distress Tolerance
  - Crisis Survival
  - Accepting Reality

- Emotion Regulation
  - Observing & Describing
  - Reducing Vulnerability
  - Building Positive Emotions
  - Opposite Action

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DBT vs. CBT

- Focus on Acceptance & Validation of present behaviors
- Focus on Therapy Interfering Behaviors as 2nd behavioral target
- Emphasis on the Therapeutic Relationship
  - Mutuality
  - Limits
  - Contingency Management
  - Flexibility and Tolerance
- Use of Dialectical Processes

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Case management strategies

Defined as responding to obstacles in the environment that interfere with patients functioning or progress.

- Consultation to the Patient - Preferred Approach
- Environmental Intervention when necessary
Case Scenario

44yo Female, Crisis re: Married Boyfriend declining a visit from her, Feeling panicked and overwhelmed with sadness and fear; Thinking she will never find someone to love her; Experiencing urges to drink to avoid flashbacks of past rejections; Planning to ask MD for increase in Rx Dose for sleep.

Skills Application
Coaching Intervention
Validation: Acceptance vs. Change Posture
Case Management

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Culturally Competent Adaptations

- Understand the cultural context of the population served
- Integrate Cultural norms into presentation of skills
- Adopt a Mindful approach - Nonjudgmental, Curious, Open
- Be Dialectical - Look for what is missing; Find the truth in every position
- Work toward mutually established behavior targets
Thank you

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