

## **DBT Essentials**

I attended APT's online 3-day (18 hours) training titled 'in October 2025. This course covered the core concepts and techniques of Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT), including individual sessions, skills development groups, telephone support, and consultation meetings. The training introduced the theoretical foundation of Linehan's Biosocial Model and key therapist strategies such as validation, use of metaphor, relentless problem solving, and contingency management.

The course also explored the four core DBT skill areas: Mindfulness, Distress Tolerance, Emotion Regulation, and Interpersonal Effectiveness. A comprehensive set of DBT materials was included in the course resources, which I have continued to use to consolidate and apply the training in my practice.

Completing this course led to APT Level 1 Accreditation in DBT, with the option of progressing to Level 2 through an additional online assessment.

### My role and hopes for the training

I work as an Integrative Psychotherapist and Counsellor within a local authority service commissioned by CAMHS. My supervisor recommended that I complete this training to strengthen my capacity to work with more complex and high-risk cases. I support young people and refugees who have experienced severe trauma, emotional dysregulation, and difficulties in managing distress. These presentations often require flexible, evidence-based approaches that draw on multiple therapeutic models to meet diverse and complex needs. The DBT Essentials course offered a comprehensive and accessible introduction to Dialectical Behaviour Therapy, providing a strong theoretical foundation and practical tools to integrate into my current work. It also presents an effective route to further develop my training in DBT and enhance my ability to support clients presenting with high levels of risk and emotional instability.

### Training summary

BT Essentials, delivered by Laura Hines at the Association for Psychological Therapies (APT), provided instruction in the concepts, therapeutic framework, and practical skills that underpin DBT. It offered ways for professionals to integrate DBT-informed techniques into their clinical practice and offered guidance on taking the first step/s towards becoming a specialised DBT therapist too.

The course covered both the overarching theory and the essential skills of DBT. It explores Linehan's Biosocial Model, validation, the use of metaphor, relentless problem solving, and contingency management.

The four core DBT skill areas taught on the course were:

- Mindfulness: developing present-moment awareness and balance between the "emotional mind" and "reasonable mind" to achieve "wise mind."
- Distress Tolerance: managing crises effectively using skills such as TIPP, ACCEPTS, and self-soothing through the five senses.
- Emotion Regulation: recognising and naming emotions, reducing emotional vulnerability using ABC PLEASE, and applying Opposite Action.

- Interpersonal Effectiveness: maintaining relationships, asserting needs, and preserving self-respect using DEAR MAN, GIVE, and FAST.

The course integrates didactic teaching, clinical discussion, guided reflection, and practical exercises using specific DBT resources disseminated to professionals. The structured practical exercises helped illustrate how DBT principles can be applied directly in therapeutic work with clients.

Application following the training

In my work, I have found this DBT Essentials training to be highly relevant and applicable to supporting clients who I work with, especially those who present with emotional dysregulation, impulsivity, and difficulties in managing distress. The framework provides a structured, compassionate, and practical approach that supports clients in learning and applying practical skills that foster emotional stability, improved relationships, and resilience.

The course deepened my understanding of the role of validation and relentless problem solving in fostering therapeutic alliance and promoting behavioural change. The mindfulness component has become a valuable addition to my sessions, helping clients develop awareness and acceptance of their internal experiences. The emotion regulation and distress tolerance modules also strengthened my ability to guide clients through moments of heightened emotion, using grounding strategies and self-soothing techniques drawn directly from APT's resources.

I have begun incorporating DBT-informed interventions such as mindfulness check-ins, ABC PLEASE reflections, and interpersonal skills work using DEAR MAN and GIVE frameworks. These approaches have enhanced my ability to help clients recognise patterns, tolerate distress, and communicate their needs more effectively.

On a personal level, the training has reinforced the importance of balance and acceptance, of maintaining compassion for myself as well as for my clients. It has also encouraged a more mindful and measured approach in both my professional and personal interactions. I hope to continue my DBT training and achieve a Level 4 qualification in the future.

I would highly recommend this course to practitioners seeking to integrate evidence-based, skill-focused strategies within their therapeutic work. DBT Essentials offers both the theoretical depth and the practical tools needed to make immediate, meaningful changes in client support.