

EMOTION REGULATION GROUP FOR JUSTICE INVOLVED CLIENTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Presenters: Dr. Casey Fulford, Kristina Dobosz, & Melissa McMillan

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Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Definition of Intellectual Disability (ID)
3. Rationale and goals for emotion regulation group for justice involved clients with ID
4. Overview of Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT)
5. DBT adapted for individuals with Intellectual Disability
6. Program evaluation results – client information, behavioural observation, outcomes
7. Next steps

Introduction: Who we are

- ▶ Dr. Casey Fulford – Clinical Psychologist – Adult Program, Surrey Place
- ▶ Kristina Dobosz – Dual Diagnosis and Justice Coordinator from the Community Network of Specialized Care – Toronto Region
- ▶ Melissa McMillan - Developmental Justice Case Manager – Downtown East Justice Centre, Toronto

Introduction: Surrey Place

- Surrey Place serves individuals with developmental disabilities (e.g., intellectual disability, autism) and vision impairment.
- Interdisciplinary clinical services
- Surrey Place is the service provider for:

- Developmental Services Ontario



- ▶ Surrey Place is the accountable agency for:

- Community Networks of Specialized Care



Visit www.surreyplace.ca for more information!

SURREY PLACE

Downtown East Justice Centre (DTE-JC)

Partnership between the City of Toronto and Surrey Place

- ▶ Since 2020, Surrey Place has been partnering with the Ontario Court of Justice, Ministry of Attorney General and the City of Toronto to innovate how Justice is delivered to our most vulnerable populations by moving justice out of the traditional courtroom and into a community setting.
- ▶ The DTE-JC Pilot focuses on preventing high-needs individuals at the intersection of poverty, homelessness, isolation, mental health and addictions from cycling through the criminal justice system by addressing criminogenic risk factors with wrap-around psychiatric, primary care and addictions medicine and development disability supports.
- ▶ Surrey Place provides specialized case management supports at the DTE Justice Centre Court for people with developmental disabilities, brain injuries, mental health and addiction concerns, with low to moderate level offences. The goal of the DTE-JC is to reduce jail time and recidivism rates by connecting people to services.
- ▶ These services can include:
 - Supports through Developmental Services Ontario
 - Drop in mental health and substance use services
 - Learning and life skills programs
 - Community victim support worker
 - Employment training, and more!
- ▶ Funding for the Emotion Regulation Group came from Downtown East Justice Centre and City of Toronto.



**EMOTION
REGULATION GROUP
FOR ADULTS WITH
INTELLECTUAL
DISABILITY WHO ARE
JUSTICE INVOLVED**



What is Intellectual Disability (ID)?

High support needs in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior:

- ▶ Intellectual functioning - general mental capacity, such as learning, reasoning, problem solving.
- ▶ Adaptive behavior - conceptual, social, and practical skills.

MILD

AGE EQUIVALENCE:

9-12 years

GRADE:

up to grade 7

MODERATE

AGE EQUIVALENCE:

6-9 years

GRADE:

up to grade 4

SEVERE

AGE EQUIVALENCE:

3-6 years

GRADE:

up to grade 1

PROFOUND

AGE EQUIVALENCE:

0-3 years

Rationale for Emotion Regulation Group for Justice Involved Clients with ID

Client needs:

- ▶ Clients with ID and justice involvement require adapted mental health supports
- ▶ Adapted resources specific to this population are limited
- ▶ Court system does not know how to respond to our client population

How we aim to help

- ▶ Surrey Place is attempting to fill this gap
- ▶ Implement an emotion regulation group for adults with ID and emotional dysregulation
- ▶ Conduct program evaluation to assess feasibility and implementation

Goals for the Emotion Regulation Group

- Provide support to a marginalized and vulnerable population with complex needs, who are **commonly over-represented in the justice system**
- Many charges for this population relate to difficulties with emotion regulation. By teaching skills to cope with distress and regulate emotions, **we aim to reduce recidivism rates** for adults with ID
- Establish the program as a **form of alternative justice**. Reducing the accused's risks of a criminal conviction and or need for trial

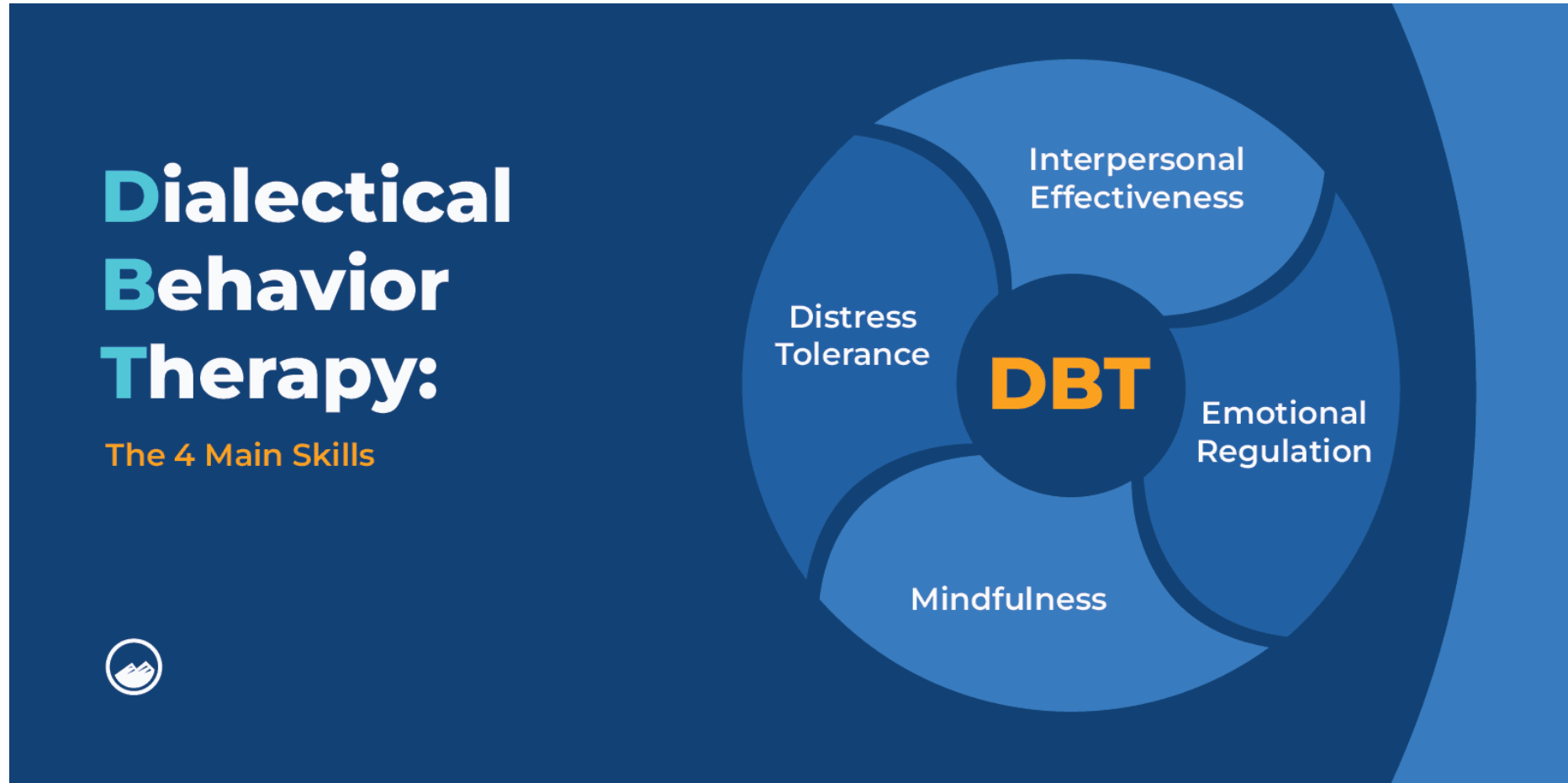


What is Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT)?



- DBT is a form of talk therapy
- Derived from CBT and used to treat those who suffer from intense emotions
- Focuses on what is happening in the here and now
- Increases one's focus on being intensely aware what they are feeling and sensing in the moment

DBT- 4 Categories of Skills



DBT curriculum needs to be adapted for clients with ID

- ▶ Group therapy is effective for treating individuals with ID
- ▶ Original DBT curriculum is not accessible:
 - Complex terms and abstract language
 - Lack of consistent lesson structure
 - Many skills to remember
 - No guidance for when to use skills
- ▶ Content and teaching methods need to be adapted to clients' learning styles

Adapted DBT for individuals with ID

The Emotion Regulation Skills System for Cognitively Challenged Clients

A DBT-Informed Approach



JULIE F. BROWN

The Skills List

-  1. Clear Picture
-  2. On-Track Thinking
-  3. On-Track Action
-  4. Safety Plan
-  5. New-Me Activities
-  6. Problem Solving
-  7. Expressing Myself
-  8. Getting It Right
-  9. Relationship Care

The Emotion Regulation Skills System

FEELINGS RATING SCALE

HANDOUT 1

At a 5, I harm myself, others, or property.



5

OVERWHELMING FEELING

At a 4, I have a hard time talking and listening and staying on-track.



4

STRONG FEELING



3

Medium feeling



2

Small feeling



1

Tiny feeling



0

No feeling

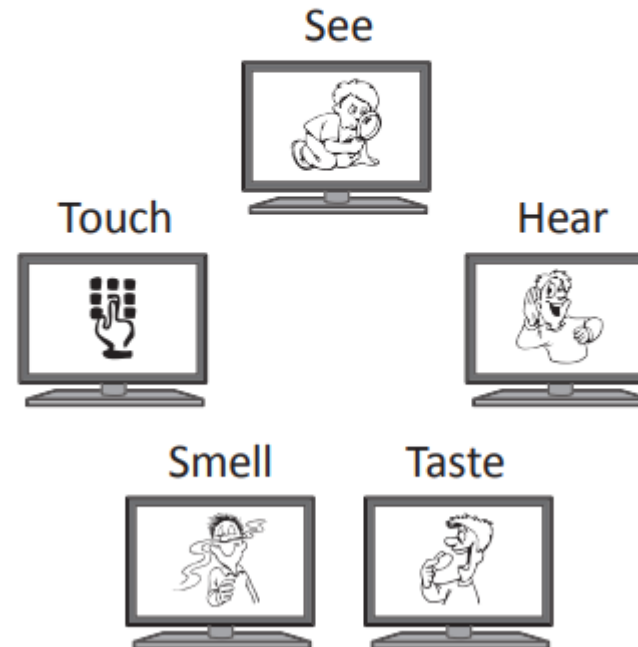
At 0–3 feelings, I can talk and listen and stay on-track.



1. CLEAR PICTURE: NOTICE SURROUNDINGS

HANDOUT 1

I use my senses to get a Clear Picture of my surroundings.



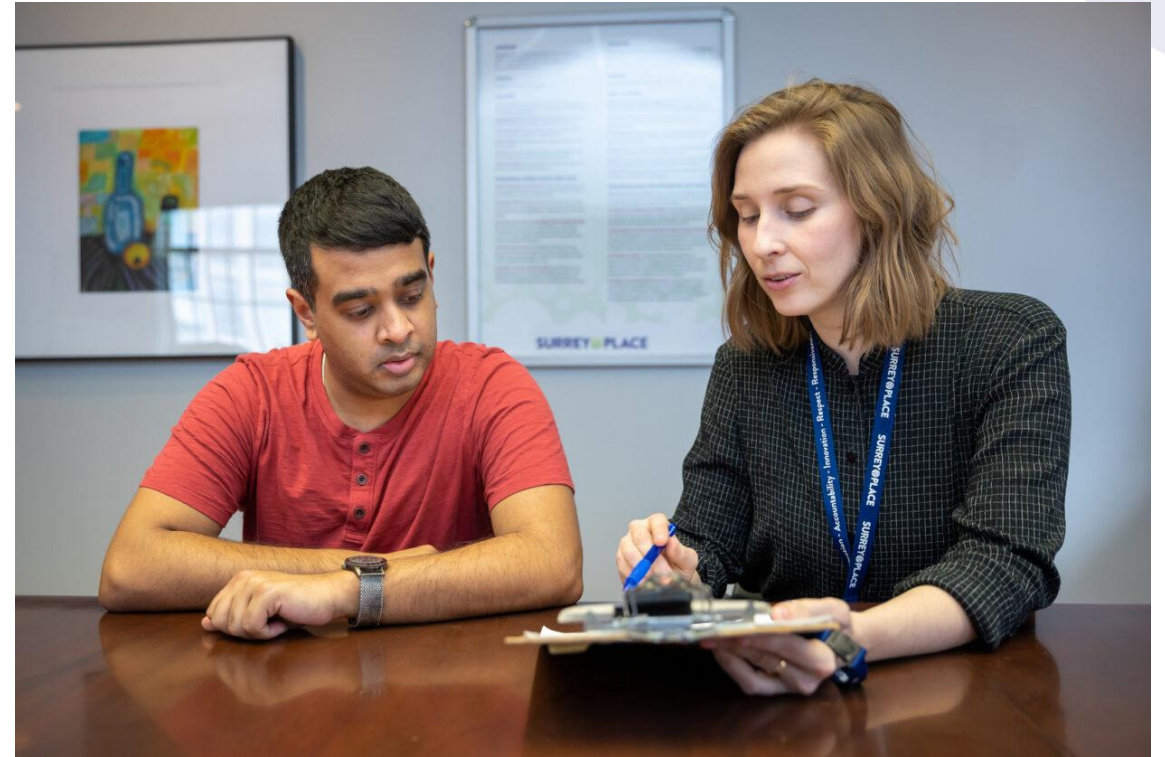
<https://skillssystem.com/>

Mindfulness Breathing Activity



DBT Group Adaptations

- ▶ Many visuals
- ▶ Accessible language
- ▶ Higher ratio of facilitators to clients
- ▶ Individual break room for dysregulated clients
- ▶ Emphasis on concrete, practical strategies
- ▶ Repetition, repetition, repetition
- ▶ Consistent lesson structure



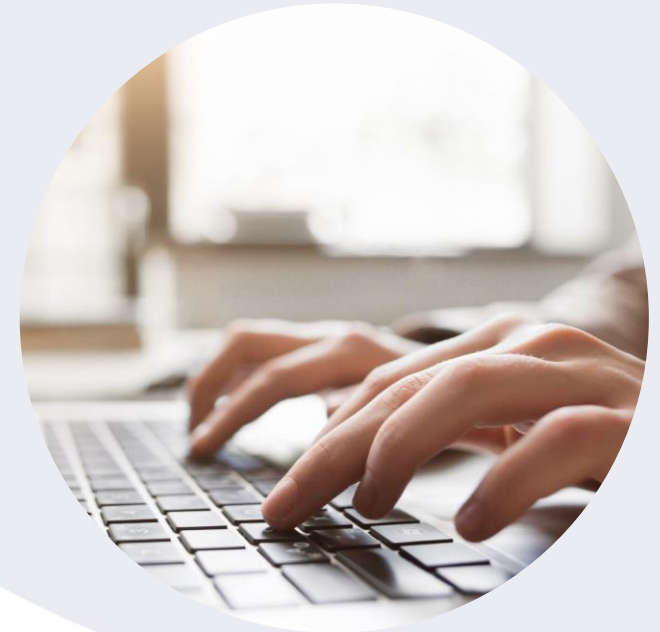
DBT Group Details



- ▶ 12 weeks, in person at Surrey Place
- ▶ 90-minute sessions with breaks
- ▶ Weekly individual coaching sessions
 - Generalize skills learned in group sessions
 - Support homework completion
 - Problem solving
- ▶ TTC tickets and gift cards
- ▶ Provided letter to the courts upon completion

Program Evaluation – Client Information

- ▶ 6 original clients, with 4 completing the group
- ▶ All clients had ID and had matters before the courts
- ▶ Gender: 3 men, 1 woman
- ▶ Age range: 36-60 years



Program Evaluation – Behavioural Data

- ▶ At least 75% attendance rate (9 out of 12 sessions) for clients that completed the group
- ▶ When clients were present, they consistently:
 - attended/oriented to the group
 - engaged in class discussion
 - followed class instructions and the group rules

Program Evaluation: Outcome Monitoring

- ▶ Outcome monitoring using the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS)
 - 36 item self-report measure about how clients relate to their emotions

- ▶ Administered in Group at Week 1 and Week 12
 - Items read out loud, definitions of words explained

Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS)

Instructions:

Please press the response that is most true for you.

	Almost Never	Sometimes	About half the time	Most of the time	Almost always
1 I am clear about my feeling	5	4	3	2	1
2 I pay attention to how I feel	5	4	3	2	1
3 I experience my emotions as overwhelming and out of control	1	2	3	4	5
4 I have no idea how I am feeling	1	2	3	4	5
5 I have difficulty making sense out of my feelings	1	2	3	4	5
6 I am attentive to my feelings	5	4	3	2	1
7 I know exactly how I am feeling	5	4	3	2	1
8 I care about what I am feeling	5	4	3	2	1
9 I am confused about how I feel	1	2	3	4	5
10 When I'm upset, I acknowledge my emotions	5	4	3	2	1
11 When I'm upset, I become angry with myself for feeling that way	1	2	3	4	5
12 When I'm upset, I become embarrassed for feeling that way	1	2	3	4	5
13 When I'm upset, I have difficulty getting work done	1	2	3	4	5
14 When I'm upset, I become out of control	1	2	3	4	5
15 When I'm upset, I believe that I will remain that way for a long time	1	2	3	4	5
16 When I'm upset, I believe that I'll end up feeling very depressed	1	2	3	4	5
17 When I'm upset, I believe that my feelings are valid and important	5	4	3	2	1

Outcome Monitoring Results

Slight decrease in clients experiencing difficulties with emotion regulation overall.

Clients reported:

- Slight increase in not accepting their emotional responses
- Slightly better at engaging in goal directed behaviour
- Slightly better ability to control their impulses
- Slightly increased emotional awareness
- Slightly less access to emotion regulation strategies
- Slightly increased emotional clarity

Feedback

Feedback from clients

- Post group client comments:
 - "Program could be longer"
 - "I feel like this program helped me"
 - "I got mad and I realized"
 - "Breathing exercises were helpful"

Feedback from courts

- This group has assisted individuals with achieving a better criminal outcome:
 - Charges withdrawn
 - Charges stayed
 - Probation instead of jail time
 - Peace bond instead of jail time

What worked?

- Use of clear visuals
- Simple language
- Concrete/practical strategies
- Using examples related to clients' own experiences
- Interactive discussions
- Mindfulness techniques
- In-person rather than online
- 1:1 coaching sessions
- Providing TTC tickets

Next Steps

- ▶ We are currently running an a DBT group using a different curriculum:
 - Modified version of *Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Training: Adapted for Special Populations* by Eric J. Dykstra and Margaret Charlton

Questions and Answers



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Thank
You



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