



3139 41st St NW
Rochester, MN 55901
(507) 923-7321

Adolescent Dialectical Behavior Therapy Program Guide

Welcome to our Adolescent DBT program! Riverstone provides a comprehensive DBT program; we have developed this guide to inform you and help you understand and get the most out of Riverstone's six-month program.

What is DBT?

DBT was developed by Marsha Linehan, Ph.D., who wanted to help people who experience intense emotions, chaotic or problematic relationships, depression, anxiety, anger or impulse control difficulties, trauma, eating disorders, and substance abuse problems.

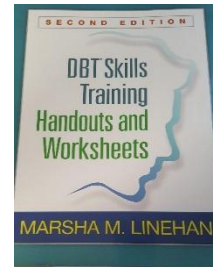
While no single treatment can solve all of these problems, DBT helps many people overcome difficulties like the ones listed above and build a "life worth living." Marsha Linehan believes (along with a large and growing number of researchers) that one of the main reasons people experience the symptoms listed above is that they have not yet learned effective strategies for coping with strong, painful emotions. In DBT treatment, we focus on these painful feelings and work to help you tolerate them better or even change them, rather than avoid them, and we teach you specific skills for doing so.

The Adolescent DBT Program is made up of four parts:

Part 1. Multi-Family Skills Group (MFSG)

**Held weekly on Mondays 4:00-5:30 pm
(times and dates are subject to change)*

Multi-family skills groups are classes led by group facilitators and involve clients and their parents or caregivers. These classes are designed to teach coping strategies for relationships, emotions, and crisis situations. Each week we have exercises for practice and weekly assignments from the book, DBT Skills Training Handouts and Worksheets, Second Edition by Marsha Linehan. *(You must purchase the book for the class. They are available in our office, on Amazon, or at Barnes and Noble for approximately \$30).* While we will talk about your assignments and how to use the skills with specific situations, we will not talk in detail about individuals' symptoms or behaviors that would be considered "emotionally contagious," such as self-harm. These skills groups are held once weekly for 1 ½ hours. The skills training curriculum offers a large variety of skills; as such, it takes six months to complete the curriculum.



Parents and family play an important role in helping clients change their behavioral patterns. We have discovered that the adolescents we work with have the best results and show improvement faster when their parents or caregivers are as involved in the process as their child. Although adolescents' behaviors are often what brought them into our program, the family system as a whole has been affected and may need to learn how to change communication/behavior patterns together in order for things to improve. As part of the MFSG, clients and parents/caregivers attend group together each week (parts of the class are held together and separate). We understand this is a big commitment for families and hope you will see it as an investment in your family's future. Parents/caregivers are required to attend the MFSG with their adolescent during the entire time that they are in our program. MFSG sessions are billed to adolescents' insurance and subject to our financial agreement. Should there be a reason you need to miss group, please discuss that with the co-facilitators.

Part 2. Individual Therapy

**Scheduled weekly with your individual DBT therapist (typically 1 hour)*

Individual DBT therapy sessions are designed to help apply skills and coping strategies you learn in group to your specific situation. In individual sessions, you will discuss your symptoms in detail, looking at what triggered ineffective behavior and what skill(s) to use to prevent it in the future. You will also keep track of skills use and progress on a daily diary card.

In terms of the adolescent's privacy and responsibility in treatment, DBT takes an approach that is different from many other treatment models. The adolescents' role is to fully engage and take responsibility for their progress and to increase *their* ability to communicate their needs and wishes to others. As such, the individual therapist will not communicate with parents, social workers, non-DBT therapists, psychiatrists *without the adolescent present*. In fact, we will encourage the adolescent to initiate and do the communicating. In any exchange of voicemails or emails or texts, the adolescent will be included. Parents will have the opportunity to get support, feedback, and coaching from one of the therapists co-facilitating the MFSG.

Part 3. Phone Coaching

**Available as needed after office hours (brief phone calls or text messaging exchanges)*

During the time you are enrolled in the comprehensive DBT program, skills coaching is provided by all DBT therapists on the DBT team 24 hours a day. Each therapist has different limits they set around phone coaching, and you will need to talk with your individual therapist about the limits and expectations if they do not answer when you call. The DBT therapists and skills group facilitators have been trained to help you think about and use the skills that will most help you when you need help coping with challenging situations.

Part 4. Consultation team

**DBT Therapists' meet weekly for about 1 ½ hours*

The DBT treatment team meets in order to obtain consultation, training, and help from others on the team in order to maintain the most effective approach in our work. We find that this team meeting helps keep the therapy effective and your progress ongoing.

Attendance Policy and Commitment

We strive for the best outcome for you and reinforce the importance of growth, learning, and change. Consistent attendance and practice are required for new skills to develop. If four group sessions or four individual sessions are missed in a row, according to the DBT rules, your participation will be discontinued and will not be eligible to re-enter the program until your original DBT contract expires (six months from your signed contract date). The “4-miss rule” applies to both clients and parent/caregiver unit.

We require a 6-month commitment to our Adolescent DBT program. It takes six months to complete all of the skills training units. Most individuals find it helpful to repeat the units, and this will be assessed by you and the individual therapist when you are nearing the end of the six months.

There are a lot of “moving parts” in the Adolescent DBT program, lots of skills to learn, and lots of guidelines. If you have any further questions or need for clarification, please contact our office administrator, Ari, or one of the Riverstone therapists.



CONSENT TO ADOLESCENT DBT

Your signature below indicates that you have read this *Adolescent DBT Program Guide* and understand its contents. Your signature indicates your consent to participate in Riverstone’s comprehensive adolescent DBT program.

Client’s Name	Signature	Date
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Your signature below indicates that you have read this Adolescent DBT Program Guide and understand its contents. Your signature indicates your consent to have your child participate in Riverstone’s comprehensive DBT program and your commitment to engaging in the parents/caregiver component of the program (Multi-Family Skills Group).

Parent/Guardian’s Name	Signature	Relationship to Patient	Date
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