

# Mental Health Monthly

The monthly newsletter to help you fortify your mental wellness.

*Volume 8*



## A note from the Editor

While identifying our feelings and understanding our emotions is a lifelong expedition into your self, so is learning how to best respond to them. As previously noted, it is important to reflect on and gather information about these emotions before immediately pushing them away- is this giving me some insight into my circumstance or environment? Or is this a familiar feeling that needs soothing and healing? Notice what comes up, but then be intentional about finding the most effective ways to help our mind and body return to homeostasis, or the mind and body's natural state of balance to best function properly.

"The mind naturally prefers well-being to suffering, no matter how much we rationalize that certain forms of suffering are good for us", says Dr. Deepak Chopra.\* However, at times we focus so hard on getting rid of unpleasant experience, we actually exacerbate it. According to Harvard trained and published neuroscientist Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor, "When a person has a reaction to something in their environment, there's a 90-second chemical process that happens; any remaining emotional response is just the person choosing to stay in that emotional loop." \*\*

So, find the balance of noticing, reflecting, and regulating your emotions. Read on to see what this looks like and for tools to support you on your journey...

### DBT

DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOR THERAPY

#### Accept

##### Mindfulness

Focuses on improving the ability to accept and be present in the current moment

#### Change

##### Emotion Regulation

Covers strategies to understand, manage and change intense emotions that are causing problems in a person's life

##### Distress Tolerance

Strives to increase tolerance of negative emotions rather than trying to escape from them with problem behavior

##### Interpersonal Effectiveness

Consists of techniques to communicate with others in a way that is assertive, maintains self-respect and strengthens relationships

*The 4 modules of DBT; The Children's Health Counsel, Palo Alto, CA ([www.chconline.org](http://www.chconline.org)).*

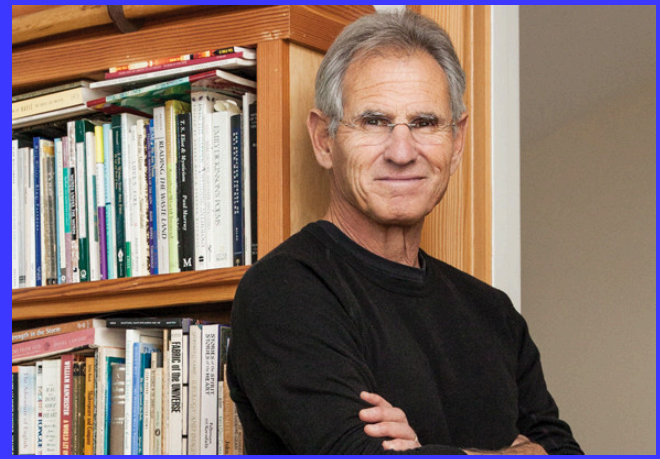
**"Instead of resisting any emotion, the best way to dispel it is to enter it fully, embrace it and see through your resistance."  
-Deepak Chopra**

\*Chopra, D. (2019, September 2). How your mind seeks balance. *Medium*. <https://deepakchopra.medium.com/how-your-mind-seeks-balance-813885f1cbf6>

\*\*Robertson, Bryan E., April 26, 2020. "The 90 Second Rule that Builds Self Control", *Psychology Today*. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-right-mindset/202004/the-90-second-rule-builds-self-control>



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# Psych 101

**Dialectical Behavioral Therapy**- dialectic refers to the existence of opposing ideas; in this case, balancing acceptance with change.

## What does that even mean?

**Dialectical Behavioral Therapy**, or **DBT**, is an evidence-based psychotherapy approach originally based on the work by psychologist and author, Dr. Marsha Linehan, to help multi-problematic, suicidal clients build a "life worth living".\* DBT has since been widely accepted and used to treat a variety of issues connected to emotional dysregulation including depression, anxiety disorders, substance use disorders, eating disorders, and self-harming behaviors.

The approach is based on two important concepts; first, in order to achieve happiness, people must accept things as they are. Based on the four noble truths of Buddhism, it is a long accepted concept that the resistance of pain leads to suffering. Secondly, Linehan noted that change is necessary for growth. Yale Medicine summarizes "The overall goal of DBT is to help people with significant emotional regulation problems change patterns of behavior, emotion, thought, and interpersonal interaction associated with problems in their daily lives." ([www.yalemedicine.org](http://www.yalemedicine.org))

There are 4 modules in DBT; mindfulness and distress tolerance which promote acceptance, and interpersonal effectiveness and emotion regulation, which promote change. We will explore mindfulness and emotion regulation on the next page, but we'll dive deeper into distress tolerance and interpersonal effectiveness in future newsletters!

## Noteworthy Clinicians Spotlight

Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D. is Professor of Medicine emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, where he founded its world-renown Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Clinic in 1979, and the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society (CFM), in 1995. He is a best-selling author, speaker, and the creator of several in-person and virtual guided meditation programs and retreats.

## Resources

[\*Wherever you go, there you are\* book by Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D.](#)

[DBT's Adult Pleasant Events Schedule](#)

[Healthline's 32 Mindfulness Activities to Find Calm at Any Age](#)

\*Linehan, M. M., & Wilks, C. R. (2015). The Course and Evolution of Dialectical Behavior Therapy. *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 69(2), 97–110. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.psychotherapy.2015.69.2.97>

# How do we put it into practice?

According to Jon Kabat-Zinn, the developer and founder of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), **Mindfulness** is awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally. Practicing mindfulness can help one to realize that they are whole, and at the same time, part of and interwoven into larger circles of wholeness. Mindfulness asks you to:

- Observe** your experience using your senses instead of analytical thinking.
- Describe** your experience in great detail.
- Participate Fully** and notice all aspects of the experience.
- Be Non-judgmental**; don't label or evaluate your experience.
- Focus on one thing at a time** by noticing when you've naturally drifted and gently return to observing the moment.



## Emotion Regulation Tools

### Set yourself up for success!

DBT suggests using the **PLEASE** acronym to remind us of the mind/body connection:

- PL:** *Treat Physical Illness*
- E:** *Eat Healthy*
- A:** *Avoid Mood-Altering Drugs*
- S:** *Sleep Well*
- E:** *Exercise*

### Try doing the opposite!

Emotions activate us to respond in a biologically wired way. The **Opposite Action** skill allows us to choose to respond differently, which can help to change the emotion.  
**Instead of...Try...**

- Fighting...walking away...
- Isolating... calling a friend...
- Avoiding... doing it anyway!

### Pay attention to positive events!

It is human nature to place more value on negative events than on positive ones. Focusing on positive aspects of an event or adding in positive activities will add up and create more happiness. You might try:

- Gardening**
- Listening to music**
- Taking a walk**
- Having a picnic**
- Visiting a museum**
- Going on a bike ride**

Check out more ideas on the Adults Pleasant Events link in resources!

### Check your facts!

It can be easy for our emotions to influence our perceptions and make things seem worse than they are. Stop and check the facts to reduce the intensity of the emotion.

- 1) What just happened that triggered my emotion?**
- 2) What assumptions and I making about the event?**
- 3) Do my emotions and it's intensity match the facts about the event?**