

Trauma-Informed DBT Interventions (DBT-TI) for Individuals with Emotion Dysregulation

The DBT-TI Project is a participatory action research project exploring the effectiveness of a trauma informed approach to Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT-TI). DBT-TI was developed by Dr. Peter King from the findings of his PhD research, client feedback and is informed by 20 years' experience in DBT program development and facilitation. DBT-TI utilises many of the skills and structures of Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT-TI) while integrating Somatic Trauma Therapy, Stabilisation Based Therapy and Psychoeducational approaches that highlight the importance of an individuals' stabilisation before engaging in therapeutic processing work.

Intervention Description: This participatory action research study is of a Trauma Informed approach using Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT-TI) informed interventions for individuals aged 17-35 years. An invitation to participate in the DBT-TI program has been distributed to key providers of mental health services to individuals diagnosed with BPD in the metropolitan regions of Melbourne, Victoria. Participants in this study will be allocated to a 30-week Dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT)-informed program. Participants in the 30-week group will receive a DBT-informed intervention which is trauma informed (including weekly 120-minute group skills training sessions, weekly 50-minute individual counselling, and access to optional phone coaching with a DBT informed practitioner). Interventions will be delivered by qualified mental health practitioners, with foundational knowledge of DBT, who are working from the Australian DBT Institute as Associates or Fellows of the Institute.

Rationale: Previous research has predominantly examined the efficacy of DBT in reducing self-harming or suicidal tendencies, emotion regulation and BPD symptoms in adult populations, revealing support in a range of therapeutic settings (Groves, Backer, Van den Bosch & Miller, 2011; Stoffers et al., 2012). Success of the therapy with adult populations has prompted its adaptation to a range of populations including individuals with trauma histories, however, empirical research on DBT's application through a trauma informed lens is limited.

Participants: Participants will be referred to the Australian DBT Institute by local clinicians including clinicians who have attended Australian DBT Institute's CPD programs. Referred participants will be screened by the research team, via telephone, before commencing a two-three session commitment phase. To be included in the research, participants must experience significant emotion dysregulation or meet the criteria for the diagnosis of borderline personality disorder.

Who will deliver the intervention?

Qualified mental health professionals (e.g. psychologists, social workers, counsellors) who are participating in Associate and Fellowship programs at the Australian DBT Institute will deliver skills training, individual therapy and as needed phone coaching. A research assistant employed by the Australian DBT Institute will conduct some initial screening and commitment strategies including clarification of the details of the program, and complete various 'therapy' contracts with the participant

DBT-TI Program

The DBT-TI program consists of three phases of treatment:

DBT-TI Foundational Phase

- 4 sessions of foundational content
 - Assessment & Baseline
 - What is DBT-TI?
 - Setting Treatment Targets

DBT-TI Stabilisation Phase

- 30 sessions of Skills Group
 - Module 1: Mindfulness (2 weeks); Managing Crisis (6 weeks); Review (2 weeks)
 - Module 2: Mindfulness (2 weeks); Managing Emotions (6 weeks); Review (2 weeks)
 - Module 3: Mindfulness (2 weeks); Resources for Relationship; Review (2 weeks)

DBT-TI Review

- Post-testing
- Referral for Processing/Integration work
- Follow-up 3, 6 & 12 months

Timing of DBT-TI Program

- Commitment sessions commence the first week of April 2020
- Skills group and individual therapy sessions commence on Wednesday 24th April 2020
- The DBT-TI program runs over three academic terms with 2 weeks holiday/break in between terms. Each term runs for 10 weeks duration with the following schedule adopted for the research:

Term 1: Starts 22nd April 2020 with Mindfulness & Managing Crisis Situations

Term 2: Starts July 15th 2020 with Mindfulness & Managing Emotions

Term 3: Starts October 7th 2020 with Mindfulness & Managing Relationships

Location of the Research

- Essentia Health/Australian DBT Institute
- 144 Martin Street Brighton VIC 3186

Research Team

Chief Investigator: Dr. Peter King *PhD*

Investigators: Dr. Julie King *DPsych*, Dr. Lilian Nejad *PhD MPsych*, Dr. Natasha Doulgeridis *DPsych*,

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