

Helping Clients Heal from Self-Harm: A DBT Approach for Teens

Self-harm, or non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) is most common among adolescents and young adults. Although NSSI typically decreases in late adolescence, this behavior is one of the strongest antecedents of suicide in youth; and those who engage in repetitive NSSI seem to be at high risk for continuing to use dysfunctional emotion regulation strategies, even after discontinuing NSSI. People engage in NSSI for a wide array of reasons (including a diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder, or BPD), but usually this involves an inability to manage emotions in some way, making Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) an ideal treatment for this population.

While most mental health clinicians will encounter NSSI at some point, there is still a paucity of research about this behaviour and why it happens; and education programs rarely teach about this behaviour and how to work with clients who are engaging in it. This workshop will help you understand NSSI, factors to consider when assessing and working with clients, and will take a DBT approach to helping clients eliminate this behaviour.

Target Audience

Psychologists
Therapists

Social Workers
Psychiatrists

Counselors
Nurses

Course level: Intermediate

Learning Objectives

At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:

1. Define Non-suicidal Self-Injury and some of the statistics related to this
2. Identify ways to avoid over-reacting to self-harming clients.
3. Educate your client and their family about self-harming behaviors.
4. Conduct an assessment of self-harming behaviors.
5. Identify interventions to reduce self-harming behaviors.

Seminar Schedule

Typically begins at 10:00 AM and ends at 5:00 PM Eastern time. There are two 15 minute break at 11:30 AM and 3:30 PM. There is a half hour lunch break at 1 PM. However, check the webinar schedule.

Outline

Begin 10 AM ET

What is NSSI, and what do we know about it?

Why do people self-harm?

How to not freak out when you discover your client is self-harming

Break 11:30-11:45 AM ET

How to effectively assess for NSSI

Conceptualizing NSSI through the DBT Biosocial Theory and The Experiential Avoidance Model (EAM)

Lunch Break 1-1:30 PM ET

Overview of treating NSSI from a DBT-informed perspective:

The Behavioral Analysis

Distress Tolerance Skills:

F-TIP skills to regulate emotions quickly

Pros and Cons

Dialectical Abstinence

Alternate Rebellion

Break 3:30-3:45 PM ET

Distract, self-soothe, and IMPROVE the moment

The role of Mindfulness in eliminating NSSI

Emotion Regulation Skills:

Nonjudgmental Stance

Radical Acceptance

Self-validation

Opposite to Emotion Action

End 5 PM ET

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Continuing Education Credit

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The Presenter

Sheri is a registered Social Worker who has been working in the mental health field since 2000, both at a community hospital outpatient clinic and now in her full-time private practice. Sheri works with clients aged 16 and older who are experiencing severe mental health problems; she has had extensive training in mindfulness and dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) and has been running DBT-informed groups since 2004.

Sheri is the author of eight DBT books for both adults and teens, the focus of which is to teach clients how to use DBT skills to help them live emotionally healthier lives. She has also written *DBT Made Simple*, the aim of which was to make DBT more accessible to therapists working with diagnoses other than borderline personality disorder; and she has been presenting extensively in Canada and abroad with this goal as well. Sheri is the winner of the R.O. Jones award for her research on using DBT skills with bipolar disorder, presented at the Canadian Psychiatric Association Conference in September, 2010.

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