

Distress Tolerance and Skills Building Group for Adolescents



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Division of Child & Adolescent Mental
Health Services
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Disclosures

- No funding or financial supports were or have been received



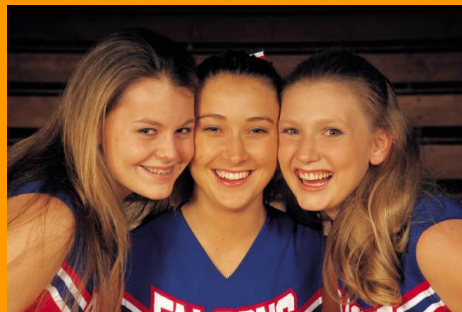
Today's Objectives

- Summary of the Distress Tolerance Group
- The Audience will engage in Mindfulness Activity and Practice
- Demonstration and practice of Coping Strategies and a list of Resources will be provided



What is The Distress Tolerance and Skills Building Group?

- Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) informed Group that has been modified to meet the needs of Adolescents and Teens
- DBT was developed and created by Marsha Linehan to Work with Adults with Borderline Personality Traits (BPD)



Dialectical Behaviour Therapy

- Created to include a Zen Buddhist experience to a Cognitive Behaviour Approach to Treatment
- People are doing the best that they can in the context of their lives and they need to do better by learning skills
- Acceptance and validating one's life situations and using that to create change for oneself are core components of DBT. This allows for supporting and working with Individual with chronic or pervasive emotion dysregulation

- Many of the teens referred have a diagnosis of BPD



- Patterns in their everyday life that are or may be consistent with some BPD traits
- These may include, maladaptive, unsafe and unhealthy coping, patterns of unstable relationships, impulsive and possibly risky behaviours, and emotion dysregulation.

Everyone gets Distressed!





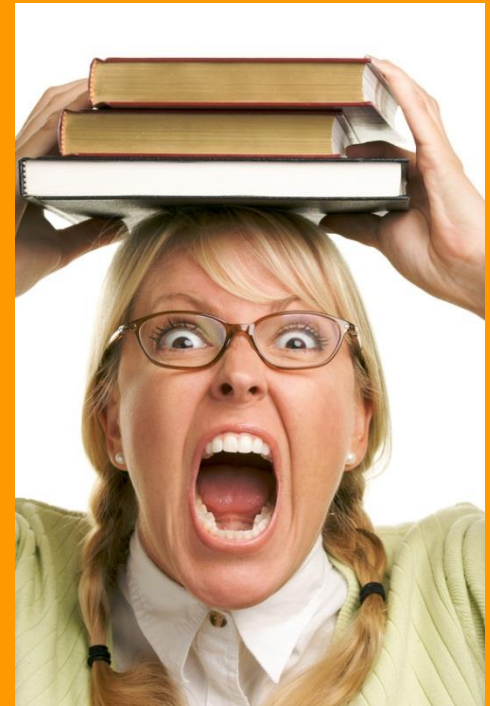
Who are the Teens that come to Group?



- Adolescents from 13-18 yrs
- Adolescents who may engage in self harming behaviours including, cutting, scratching, skin picking and biting and possible overdoses
- Teens who have difficulty regulating their emotions and exhibit more chronic emotions dysregulation
- Poor, unsafe and unhealthy coping strategies
- Problems with their interpersonal relationships, patterns of unstable and chaotic relations
- All of the teens attending group have a Mental Health Disorder diagnosis, this can include (but are not limited) anxiety disorders, depressive disorder/mood disorders, substance abuse, eating disorders, Attention-deficit/Hyperactivity and conduct disorders.
- Some of the teens also may have Learning disabilities or low intellectual functioning

The 4 main Topics Covered are:

- Mindfulness
- Managing Emotions
- Taking Care of Relationships
- Distress Tolerance Strategies



What are teens doing in group?

- Mindfulness Practice
- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
- Relaxation Strategies
- Communication Styles
- Crisis Management



Starting your own group

- Know your Resources
- Practice the skills yourself first
- Keep the groups Small, 8 teens and under
- 2 facilitators is ideal
- Prescreen the Teens for Motivation, Reasons for attending group and compliance to Rules and confidentiality.
- Keep the group length at 2 hours or under
- Feed the Teens
- Provide Practice sheets/Homework each session
- Include the parents/guardians if possible



What to include in a group?

Mindfulness Practice each session

- Mindfulness helps children and adolescents learn to become more self-aware of their thinking, their emotions and any physical changes
- Improves and increases concentration, memory and focus
- Helps teens stay with the present moment, rather than worrying about the future or ruminating about the past
- Mindfulness practice each week allows them to become more attuned to interactions with peers, family, strangers
- It helps them to think more carefully about their own emotions and how they *could* react versus how they *would* react.

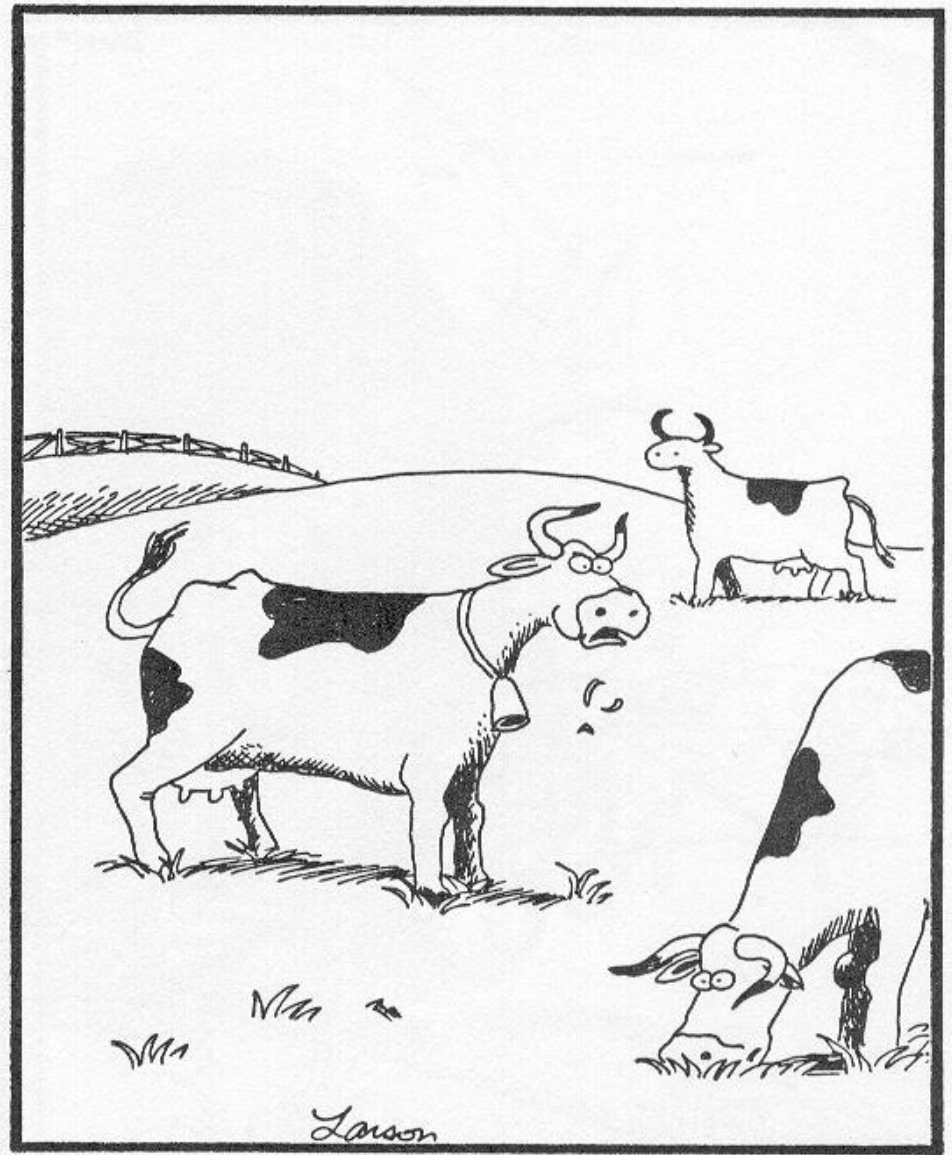
Ideas for Mindfulness with Children and Teens

- Mindful eating (raisin, chocolate)*
- Mindful observation and non-judgmental (magazine faces)
- Mindful breathing (body scan)
- Mindful drawing (coke can, Pepsi)*
- Mindful writing (writing with dominant hand and then non-dominant hand)
- Mindful relaxation (Progressive Muscle relaxation)



Practice

Mindful eating



"Hey, wait a minute! This is grass! We've been eating grass!"





Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

- Useful in helping teens understand that emotions are not separate entities and are very much influenced and linked to our thoughts
- CBT helps children and teens to learn to identify and work through negative distortions or thinking patterns, in a mindful manner.
- CBT helps the teens challenge any automatic (hot thoughts) or negative thinking patterns.
- CBT helps teach the teens that they in fact are accountable for their actions and have the power to change their pattern of thinking
- CBT helps teens focus on the here and now, opposed to dwelling on past issues to gain insight into their emotional state of mind
- Use either real life examples if a teen wants support with it, or an example that would fit with a teen's current life situation.

Relaxation Techniques

- Complete at least one strategy per session and do the technique with them
- Helps to identify physical changes in their body when there are relaxed vs stressed/not-relaxed
- Gives them different tools to use in different situations
- Encourages the use of different tools to manage stress
- A variety of tools for kids/teens are recommended to keep them engaged, interested and gives them options for which strategy works better for them
- Relaxation often doesn't require equipment and teens can be encouraged and convinced to use these techniques virtually anywhere

Examples: Guided Imagery, tense and release, 3 senses, Body scan, calm breathing



Naming, Managing and Regulating Emotions



- Increases children and teens feeling words/vocabulary
- Helps the children and teen to start connecting the emotion with urges and reactions and possible outcomes
- Awareness of one's emotions and ability to name them, allows more opportunity to manage the emotions in a healthy and safe manner
- Increases the ability to communicate to others what he/she is feeling
- Teens learn that emotions have a function/job and are normal experiences and expressions throughout life
- Increases the chances of a more stable interaction or relations with others
- Better sense of self (decreases the sense of feeling emptiness, not knowing who she is, Linnahan 1993)

Example: Have kids list out all emotions
Practice sheet to decipher between emotion, thought and reaction



Practice

Managing Emotions

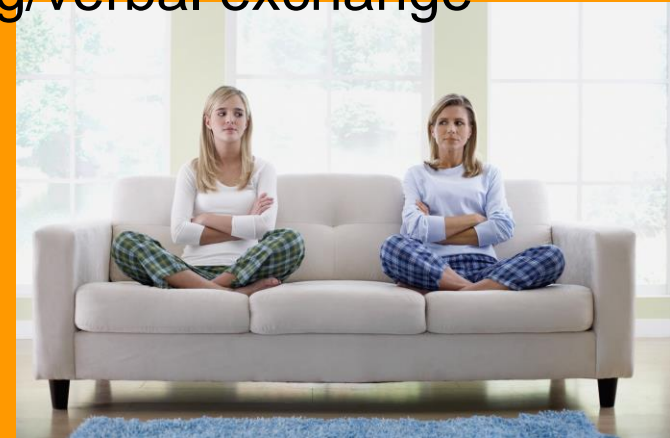
Progressive Muscle Relaxation



Communication Styles

- Identifies what form of communication is being used generally (passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive or assertive)
- Decreased stress: Stress can be better managed with assertive communication (setting up boundaries, limitations) and recognizing “need to do” vs “want to do”
- Teens have an opportunity to express their feelings and thoughts and to also engage in meaningful conversation with others
- Develop self-control: Learn how others communicate in a constructive and effective manner rather than leading with emotions and having regrets
- Teach the importance of attending behaviours, eye contact, body language, tone of voice and verbal tracking/verbal exchange

Example: role play scenarios,
How do you communicate Sheet



Distress Tolerance/Coping Skills

- Basic idea is to learn how to make it through a bad situation without making it worse. Learning how to tolerate Stress and accept “what is”
- Recognize that no matter how bad it feels, they will survive
- Using distraction in the moment of crisis, gives them time to cool down and think more clearly and logically through the situation
- Can help prevent teens from following through with urges that are unhelpful
- 5 senses (vision, hearing, taste, touch and smell)
- Self-soothing Skills (relaxation, visual imagery etc.)
- Listing out the Pros and Cons and Engage in Pleasant events



Distress Tolerance/Coping Skills

Con't



- Distracting with activities, contributing, thought stopping, pushing away
- Improve the Moment: With imagery, relaxation, finding some meaning in the current situation, mindfulness (one thing in the moment) and immediate items to help self-sooth (listen to music, read a book etc)
- Create and develop a Coping/Soothing Box

Examples: Pleasant event list
Pros and Cons sheet



What's in your Box??



- Items used to soothe and manage distress
- Items that are safe and healthy
- Magazines, CD's
- Telephone numbers
- candy, treats, hot chocolate, teas
- Books, movies
- Pictures of friends, family, pets etc..

Limitations of the group

- Length and frequency of the sessions
- Maintenance Treatment after group termination
- Parent group
- Co-morbidities (eating Disorders, Learning Disabilities, ADHD etc Family Environment)
- Availability of Therapist for Individual work and Facilitator Burnout

Group Session Sample #1

Group 1 Mindfulness

1. Introductions and ice breakers
2. Goal Setting
3. Pre-test Measure
4. Introduce Mindfulness
5. Mindfulness eating (raisin, Chocolate)
6. Non-Judgmental practice. (magazine with faces)
7. Mindfulness Reading (Row your boat, Yellow Bird)
8. Body Scan
9. Introduce Coping/Soothing Box
10. Homework for next week (7 day mindfulness Tracking)

Group Session Sample #2

Group 4: Taking care of Relationships and Introduction to Distress Tolerance skills

1. Attendance, Check in , Homework and goals
2. Mindfulness Reading (row row your boat, the Yellow bird)
3. Current Relationships, why is this important and who are they
4. Typical way of thinking sheet
5. Communication Styles sheet, which one are you?
6. Scenario examples (role play)
7. Mindfulness Visual Imagery
8. Mindfulness Drawing (Pepsi or Coke Can)
9. Introduction to Distress Tolerance Skills (self-soothing skills)
10. Coping Box Reminder
11. Homework-Managing relationships Sheet

Example Scenarios for Role Play

- You mom has asked you for one week to clean your room but you haven't. You want to go to the party tonight but you mom says you can't go because you haven't cleaned your room.
- You find out that two of your good friends went out to the movies last night without you.
- Your sister keeps borrowing your clothes from you room without asking you.
- You purchased a new top at the store and you get home and realize that you were overcharged. What would you do?
- You ask your sibling to go to the movies with you and he/she says no.
- You're feeling overwhelmed with school work and having arguments or disagreements with you girlfriend/boyfriend. You come home really upset and stressed out and your parents ask you to help out by setting the table for dinner

Row, Row, Row your
Boat gently down the
the stream, merrily,
merrily, merrily, merrily,
merrily life is but a dream



The big and bright red
bird flew through
through the orange
curtains into the blue sky



What is your Communication Style?

- I try to push my feelings away rather than express them to others
- I worry that expressing myself will cause others to be angry with me or to not like me.
- I often hear myself saying “I don’t Care” or “It doesn’t matter to me” when I do care and it actually does matter to me.
- I try not to “rock the boat,” keeping quiet because I don’t want to upset others.
- I often go along with others’ opinions because I don’t want to be different.

Total:

- I am concerned with getting my own way, regardless of how it affects others.
- I often yell, swear, or use other aggressive means of communicating
- My friends are often afraid of me.
- I don’t really care if others get what they need as long as my needs are met.
- I’ve heard others say that I have an “it’s my way or the highway” attitude.

Total:

What is Your Communication style continued...

- I have a tendency to be sarcastic in conversations with others.
- I tend to give people the silent treatment when I am angry with them
- I often find myself saying one thing but really thinking another.
- I'm generally reluctant to express my emotions in words, resorting instead to aggressive behaviours, like slamming doors.
- I try to get my message across in more subtle ways for fear that expressing myself will cause other to be angry with me or to stop liking me.

Total:

- I believe that I have the right to express my opinions and emotions
- When I am having a disagreement with someone, I can express my opinions and emotions clearly and honestly
- In communication with others, I treat them with respect, while also respecting myself
- I listen closely to what other people are saying, sending the message that I am trying to understand their perspective
- I try to negotiate with the other person if we have different goals, rather than to focus only on getting my own needs met

Total:

Resources

- Skills Training Manuel for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder By Marsha Linehan
- Cognitive Behavioral Treatment of Borderline Personality disorder By Marsha Linehan
- Don't let your emotions run your life for teens By Sheri Van Dijk
- Stopping the Pain: A workbook for Teens who cut and Self-injure. By Lawrence Shapiro

Resources

- When Your Child is Cutting. A Parent's Guide to Helping Children Overcome Self-Injury. By Merry E McVey-Noble. Spny Khemlani-Patel and Fugen Neziroglu.
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills, 101 Mindfulness Exercises and other Fun Activities for Children and Adolescents. By Kimberly Christensen, Gage Riddoch and Julie Eggers Huber
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy with Suicidal Adolescent. By Alec Miller, Jill Rathus and Marsha Linehan
- Dialectical Behaviour Therapy for At-Risk Adolescents
By Pat Harvey and Britt H. Ratnone.

Questions??

If you don't know,
ASK QUESTIONS!

