

**Dialectical Behavior Therapy in  
an Inpatient Forensic Setting**

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**Who needs this?**

- Some people really feel like they have no choices. No choice other than to harm themselves or ruin their relationships in order to quell their emotional turmoil. Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) offers a choice between self-destruction and an improved quality of life, then teaches the skills needed to live a better life.

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**Self-harm is...**

- ...a significant risk for individuals in forensic settings. Interventions are often reactive. The emotional toll in the aftermath of self-harm can adversely impact staff and residents and foster the downward spiral familiar to emotionally dysregulated individuals.

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### The strongest correlations...

- ...with self-harm are (1) the diagnostic features of Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) : PC2962 and PC2684

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### Population...

- PC2684 Mentally Ill Inmate (highest by percentage)
- PC2962 Mentally Disordered Offender (highest by number).

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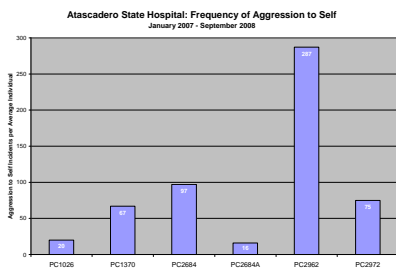
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### Aggression to Self by Commitment Type



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### A Proposed Treatment...

- It is proposed that forensic hospitals pro-actively address this increasing risk by establishing treatment centered in the principles and practices of Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). The American Psychological Association (APA Division 12) endorses DBT as the only effective treatment for BPD.

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### DBT is...

- ...a cognitive behavioral treatment for complex, difficult to treat mental disorders. The theoretical position is based on these assumptions; 1) people with the qualifying features lack important interpersonal, self-regulation and distress tolerance skills, and 2) personal and environmental factors often block or inhibit the use of behavioral skills that individuals have, and subsequently reinforce dysfunctional behavior.

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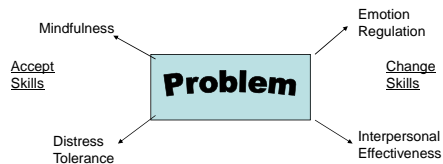
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### Skill Sets



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**DBT Treatment is intended to...**

- Enhance behavioral capabilities
- Improve motivation to change
- Assure that new capabilities generalize to the living environment
- Structure the treatment to support client and therapist capabilities
- Enhance the therapist capabilities and motivation to treat clients effectively.

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**Recovery...**

- ...is enhanced by highly structured treatment in DBT, and includes a Positive Behavior Support (PBS) Plan for each individual. The PBS plan will organize treatment and inform unit staff's involvement.
- ...is partially evidenced by patients minimizing the instances of self-harm, maximizing the ability to self-regulate, and improving their quality of life.

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**DBT Model...**

- DBT-I: Orientation and Commitment
- DBT-II: Skills Group
- Individual Therapy for DBT-II members
- Consultation Group
- 24-hour coverage (unit support)

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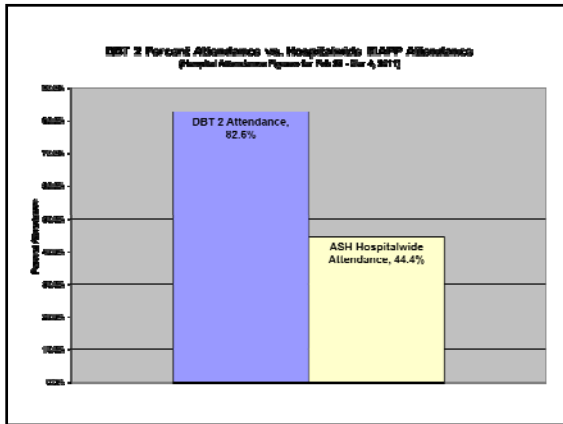
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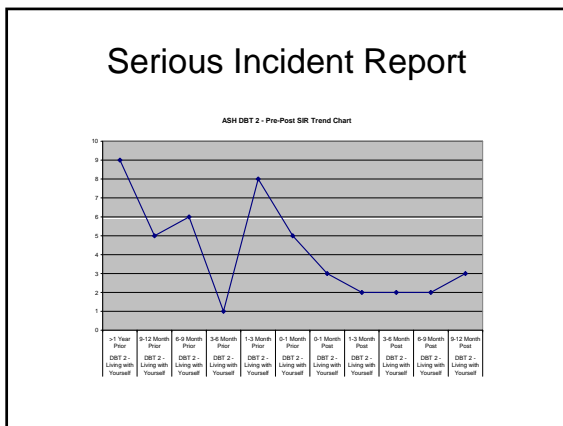
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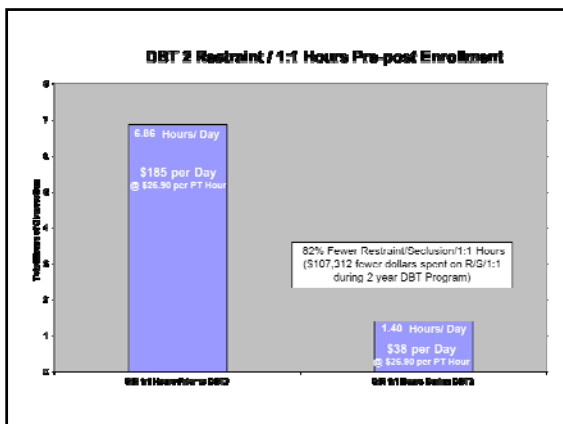
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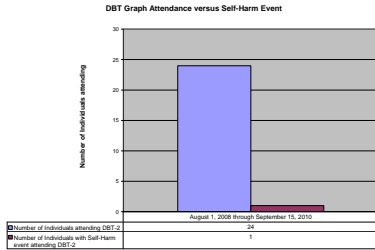
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### Self-harm incident



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### Measures

- Serious Incident Reports, especially those related to self-harm
- Continuity of treatment in DBT-II:Skills
- Quality of Life Measure

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### Quality of Life Measure (QoL)

Michael Tandy, PhD

- Research supports the items below as predictive of progress after a psychological or physical challenge.
- See page 632 of Peterson, C. & Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: a handbook and classification*. New York: Oxford Press.
- **Appreciation of Beauty** (intellectual strength)
- **Hope** (emotional strength)
- **Gratitude** (theological strength)

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### QoL – Strengths of Restraint

- fairness
  - I know some people will always get more than their share.
  - I don't want to cheat anyone.
- humility
  - I don't need a "pat on the back" when I do something good.
  - I understand my strengths and weaknesses.
- mercy
  - I like to help people who need help.
  - I am able to forgive almost anyone and anything.
- prudence
  - I make good use of the few things that I have.
  - I like to make a plan so I can work toward a goal.

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### QoL – Intellectual Strengths

- creativity
  - I can make things out of whatever is in my room.
  - I like to find new ways of doing things.
- curiosity
  - I like to think about new things.
  - I like to try new things.
- love of learning
  - There are things I want to know everything about.
  - I am learning to do some things that I have always wanted to do.
- *appreciation of beauty*
  - I enjoy some things just because of their beauty.
  - I admire some people a lot.

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### QoL – Interpersonal Strengths

- kindness
  - It feels good to do something for someone else.
  - People who are hurting, need help.
- love
  - There are some people that I will always be close to, no matter what.
  - There is someone that I always put before myself.
- leadership
  - A lot of people follow me and make the same choices.
  - My group often asks me to speak for them.
- teamwork
  - I like to work with other people to get something done.
  - I have rights, but I also have responsibilities.
- playfulness
  - Sometimes you just need to have fun.
  - I can usually help my friends cheer up.

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**QoL – Emotional Strengths**

- bravery
  - I can stand up for something if it is important to me.
  - I do the right thing, even when no one else agrees.
- **hope**
  - I think things will be better in the next few years.
  - I usually look on the bright side.
- self-regulation
  - I can control myself when I decide to.
  - I really don't want to do things that are hard.
- zest
  - Sometime I enjoy things and don't hold back.
  - I have plenty of energy for things I want to do.

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**QoL –Theological Strengths**

- **gratitude**
  - People have been kind to me.
  - My life is better because of what other people have done for me.
- spirituality
  - Sometimes I think about a higher power.
- Sometimes I pray.

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