

The use of Dialectical Behavioural Therapy strategies for children in crisis in an Occupational Therapy setting

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Keywords: Coping strategy; Dialectical Behavioural Therapy; Children

Aim of Presentation

To provide opportunity to consider utilising Dialectical Behavioural Therapy to enable occupational therapy preventative intervention with children.

Background

4th year BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy Student

2nd Year 6 week **Paediatric** placement

3rd Year 8 week **Dialectical Behaviour Therapy /
Outpatient Mental Health** Placement

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Children in crisis

Crisis : *'A time of danger or greater difficulty'*

(WHO 2014)

- ▶ **0-16** – The age when children and young persons will be within child services in the UK.
- ▶ **1 in 10** – children in every classroom has a diagnosable mental health disorder.
- ▶ **1 in 5** - young adults show signs of an eating disorder
- ▶ **1 in 12** - deliberately harm themselves
- ▶ **80,000** - estimated number of children and young people suffer from severe depression
- ▶ **45%** - of children in care have a mental health disorder - these are some of the most vulnerable people in our society
- ▶ **95%** - of imprisoned young offenders have a mental health disorder. Many of them are struggling with more than one disorder
- ▶ **50%** - of all adults with mental health problems were diagnosed in childhood.

(Young Minds 2014).

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Early intervention is vital.

(Young Minds 2014)



Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT)

'DBT strengthens a person's ability to handle distress without losing control or acting destructively.'

(McKay et al. 2007 p.1)

ACCEPTANCE

CHANGE



- ❖ Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) (Linehan 1993) was developed for women with Borderline Personality Disorder who struggle to regulate their emotions (MIND 2014).
- ❖ Utilises validation strategies.

(Shenk and Fruzzetti 2005)

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Year of the Brain 2014

❖ **Dialectical Behavioural Therapy uses cognitive strategies to enhance functioning in activities of daily living.**

- ▶ Primary emotion – Anger, Happiness, Sadness
- ▶ Secondary Response: Guilt, Shame, Anxiety

❖ **Executive Function**

- Goal setting and planning
- Organization of behaviours over time
- Flexibility
- Attention and memory systems that guide these processes (eg working memory)
- Self-regulatory processes such as self-monitoring (Meltzer 2007 p.1-2)

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Adapting for children

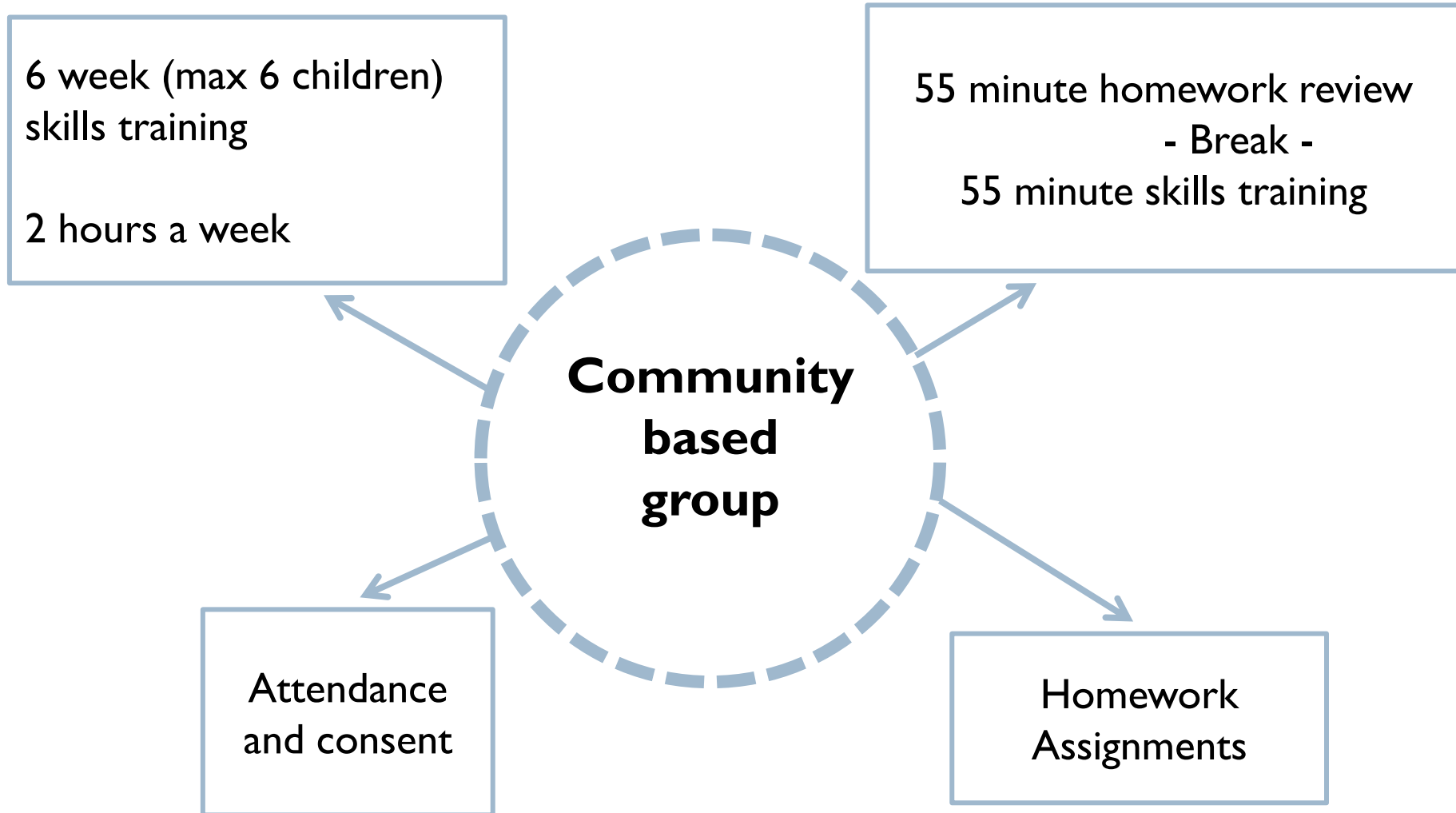
‘The adaption of DBT for children requires change to accommodate their developmental level’

- Retain core concepts using play activities to promote engagement and motivation whilst sustaining interest and learning of new skills -

(Perepletchikova et al. 2011)



Therapy Format



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Mindfulness

‘Mindfulness is paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally’

Strategies:

(Kabat-Zinn 1990)

- ❖ ‘WHAT’ skills
 - ❖ Observe
 - ❖ Describe
 - ❖ Participate
- ❖ ‘HOW’ skills
 - ❖ Non-Judgemental
 - ❖ Focus
 - ❖ Effective

Mindfulness with children can reduce anxiety and increase child engagement and participation.

(Britton et al 2014; Perplechikova et al. 2011; Semple and Lee 2014; Whitaker et al. 2014)

❖ **Activities:**

- ❖ Helicopter View
- ❖ 5 Senses
- ❖ Story Telling
- ❖ Writing SLOWLY

Distress Tolerance

‘Surviving intense emotions without engaging in some type of ‘problem’ behaviour’

(Greco and Hayes 2008)

❖ **Strategies:**

- ❖ ACCEPTS
- ❖ Self-soothe
- ❖ IMPROVE
- ❖ Pros and Cons

❖ **Activities:**

- ❖ ‘Survival Skills’ List (Greco and Hayes 2008)
- ❖ 5 Senses – Self Soothing Kit

Emotion Regulation

‘The processes we use to decrease, maintain, or increase an emotion or aspects of an emotion’

(Werner and Gross 2010; Van Dijk 2012)

❖ **Strategies:**

- ❖ PLEASE
- ❖ Build positive experiences
- ❖ Crisis strategies
- ❖ Emotion Diary

❖ **Activities:**

- ❖ Fishing
- ❖ Charades
- ❖ Storyboard
- ❖ Survival Guide
- ❖ Levels

Emotion Regulation influences:

- ❖ Psychosocial function
- ❖ Biological influences
- ❖ Environmental factors

(Zeman et al. 2006).

Interpersonal Effectiveness

'Asking for what one needs, saying no, and coping with interpersonal conflict'

(Linehan 1993)

❖ **Strategies:**

- ▶ DEAR-MAN
- ▶ GIVE
- ▶ FAST

❖ **Activities:**

- ❖ Practice scenarios
- ❖ Intensity chart
- ❖ Boxes

Further Occupational Therapy Practice and Dialectical Behavioural Therapy

- ❖ Provides evidence based practice to support therapists in practice.
- ❖ Uses goal setting, adaption and needs identification.

*‘You can’t stop the waves, but you can learn
how to surf’*

(Kabat-Zinn 2004)

Q&A

Thank you for listening!

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