

INTRODUCING DBT TO THE DRUG AND ALCOHOL TREATMENT SETTING: IT'S AS EASY AS ABC? RESULTS OF A 12 MONTH PILOT OF DBT GROUP TREATMENT IN WESTERN SYDNEY

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Introduction / Issues: Patients seeking treatment for drug and alcohol issues frequently have a complex history of psychological trauma. They do not always respond well to conventional CBT and drop out early or become 'revolving door' patients. DBT is an evidence-based treatment, first developed for the treatment of borderline personality disorder but also with emerging research suggesting it can be helpful in treating other psychological conditions including those underlying substance use.

Method / Approach: The Psychology team adapted the DBT treatment manual for substance-using clients and undertook consultation and supervision with a focus on group-delivered DBT. All completed accredited DBT training. Patients were recruited from the psychology service referrals and offered the pilot DBT group treatment if they: presented with difficulties in emotion regulation, distress tolerance or difficulties in interpersonal relationships.

Three skills groups were conducted-distress tolerance, emotion regulation and interpersonal effectiveness. Each group ran for seven weeks.

Key Findings: Participant measures completed before and after treatment include: substance use, self-harm and suicidal ideation, health-service access, DASS 21, outcome rating scale, DBT ways of coping scale. Patient utilisation of the DBT skills taught in group was also monitored by patient self-report between sessions.

Discussions and Conclusions: Patients reported a high level of satisfaction with the program. Early results suggest that DBT is a promising treatment in Drug and Alcohol treatment settings. Results for the three modules will be presented at APSAD.

Disclosure of Interest Statement: *The authors received a grant from the Health, Education and Training Institute (HETI, NSW Health) for the DBT consultation and supervision. No pharmaceutical grants were received in the development of this study.*