

# Building Lives Worth Living

Strategies for Emotional Dysregulation,  
Reactivity and Interpersonal Challenges  
for people with ADHD and other  
conditions

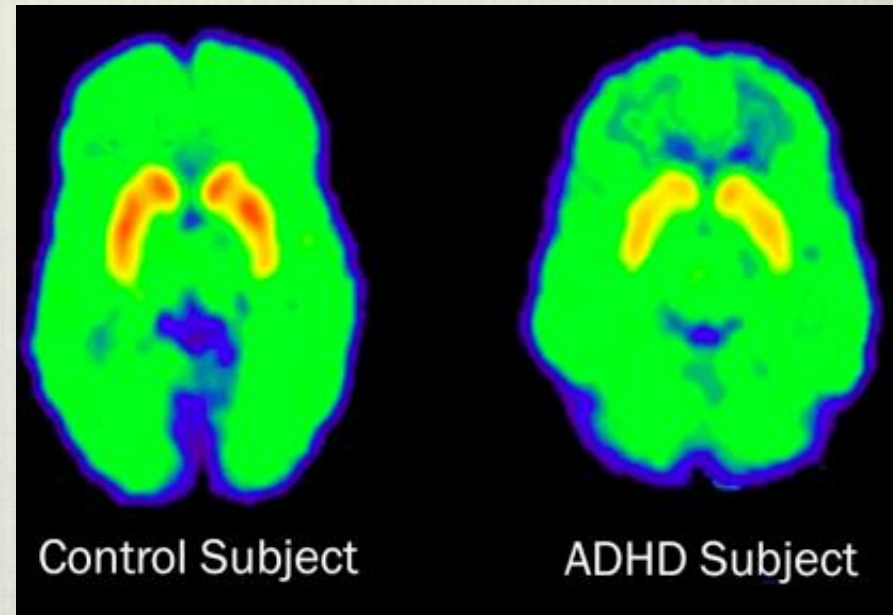
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# ADHD is

A neurological processing disorder which affects cognitive, emotional and behavioral processes

Distinguish:

- ❖ Executive Function Disorder
- ❖ Emotion Regulation Disorders



# Adults

- ❖ Disruptive, Impulse Control issues
- ❖ Intermittent Explosive Disorder
- ❖ Bipolar Disorders



# Children and Adolescents

## **Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder**

- ❖ Chronic irritability
- ❖ Severe temper outbursts
- ❖ Out of proportion in intensity or duration to the situation



## **Oppositional Defiant Disorder**

- ❖ Angry, irritable mood
- ❖ Argumentative and defiant behavior
- ❖ Vindictive behavior
- ❖ Out of proportion as to what the situation calls for

# What do we mean by Emotional Vulnerability?

- **High Sensitivity**

- Immediate reactions
- Low threshold for emotional reaction

- **High Reactivity**

- Extreme reactions
- High arousal dysregulates cognitive processing

- **Slow return to baseline**

- Long-lasting reactions
- Contributes to high sensitivity to next emotional stimulus

# What do we mean by **Inability to Modulate Emotions?**

- ❖ Difficulty managing inappropriate behaviors related to strong emotions
- ❖ Difficulty acting in a way that is not mood dependent
- ❖ Difficulty self-soothing
- ❖ Difficulty refocusing attention in the presence of a strong emotion

# The Story of Emotion

- ❖ Feelings don't come out of nowhere, or directly follow an event. Not caused by something that happened, or by someone else.
- ❖ FEELINGS ARE CAUSED BY A PERSON'S BELIEF SYSTEM/BY A PERSON'S INTERPRETATION ABOUT SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED.
- ❖ Prompting event → Belief or Interpretation of the Event → Emotion/Feeling Thoughts → Feelings → Behaviors

# We trigger each other!

- ❖ The aftereffect of the behavior of the parent may be a trigger for an adolescent and vice versa
- ❖ The behavior of a partner may be a trigger for the other partner





# Our effectiveness depends on being mindful of

- ❖ Being vulnerable – both - parent and child, each partner
- ❖ The triggers – both - for parent, child, each partner
- ❖ How to interpret events – what's your mindset?
- ❖ Non-verbal cues - and verbal cues
- ❖ Using “Wise Mind”



# Biological Dysfunction in the emotion regulation system

## Problem Areas

1. Confusion about self
2. Impulsivity
3. Emotional Instability
4. Interpersonal Problems
5. Adolescent-Family Dilemmas

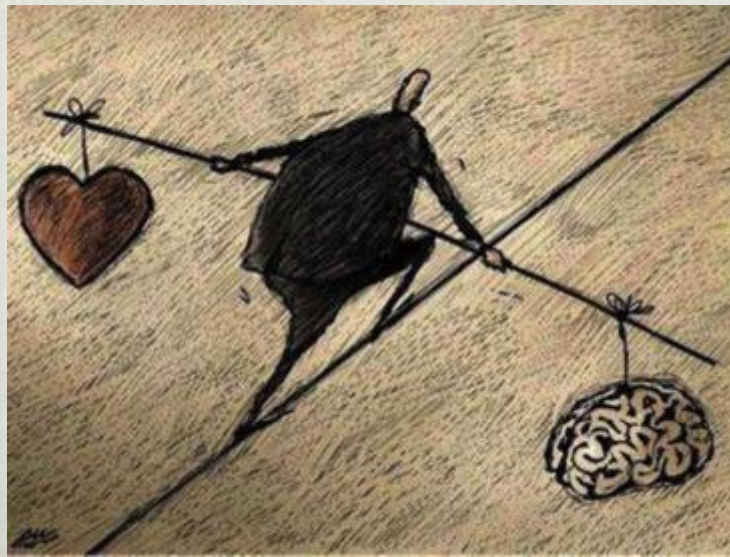
## Skills

1. Mindfulness
2. Distress Tolerance
3. Emotion Regulation
4. Interpersonal Effectiveness
5. Walking the Middle Path

# DBT – Dialectical Behavior

# Therapy

- ❖ type of cognitive behavioral therapy
- ❖ Emphasis on validation
- ❖ Dialectics – balance between acceptance and change
- ❖ Curriculum of modules of strategies and skills



# DBT Modules

## 4 Critical Skills to Learn From Dialectical Behavior Therapy

### Distress Tolerance

Cope with painful events

### Mindfulness

Experience the present moment

### Emotion Regulation

Recognize feelings

### Interpersonal Effectiveness

Set limits & negotiate solutions



Middle Path

# DBT Skills Training

CORE MINDFULNESS \* EMOTION REGULATION \*  
DISTRESS TOLERANCE \* INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Taught in skills groups



Developed  
over time

Like building  
muscles



Will eventually become  
integrated into everyday  
life

# Benefits of DBT

- ❖ Increase self-awareness
- ❖ Manage impulsivity
- ❖ Decrease dysfunctional behavior patterns
- ❖ Increase new coping skills
- ❖ Increase social skills

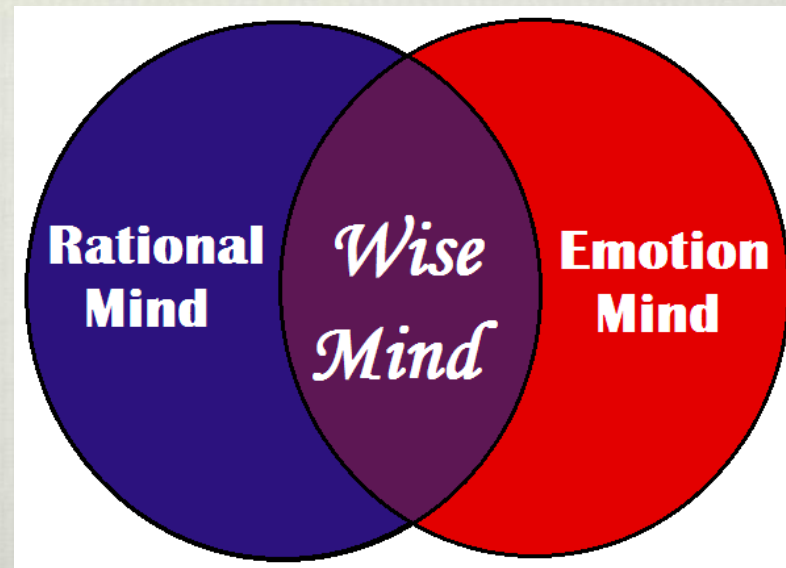


# Mindfulness

**Foundation for practicing all skills and strategies**

Practicing Mindfulness means:

- ❖ Increase nonjudgmental awareness
- ❖ Improve attentional control
- ❖ Three states of mind:



# Mindfulness is

- ❖ Meditation and Guided imagery
- ❖ Yoga
- ❖ Deep breathing
- ❖ Progressive relaxation
- ❖ Non-judgmental thinking
- ❖ Observe, Describe, Participate





# Distress Tolerance

Learn to bear pain skillfully and to tolerate and accept distress

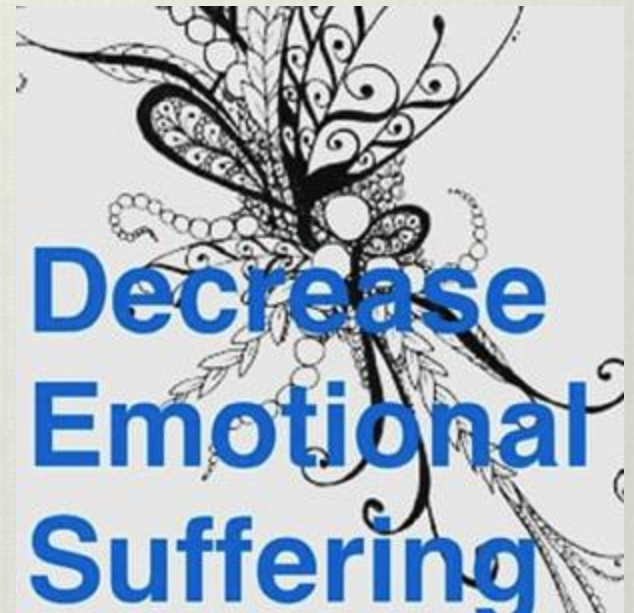
Distress Tolerance Skills and Strategies: Crisis Survival:

1. Distracting – Wise Mind ACCEPTS
2. Self-Soothing
3. Improving the Moment
4. Thinking of Pros and Cons



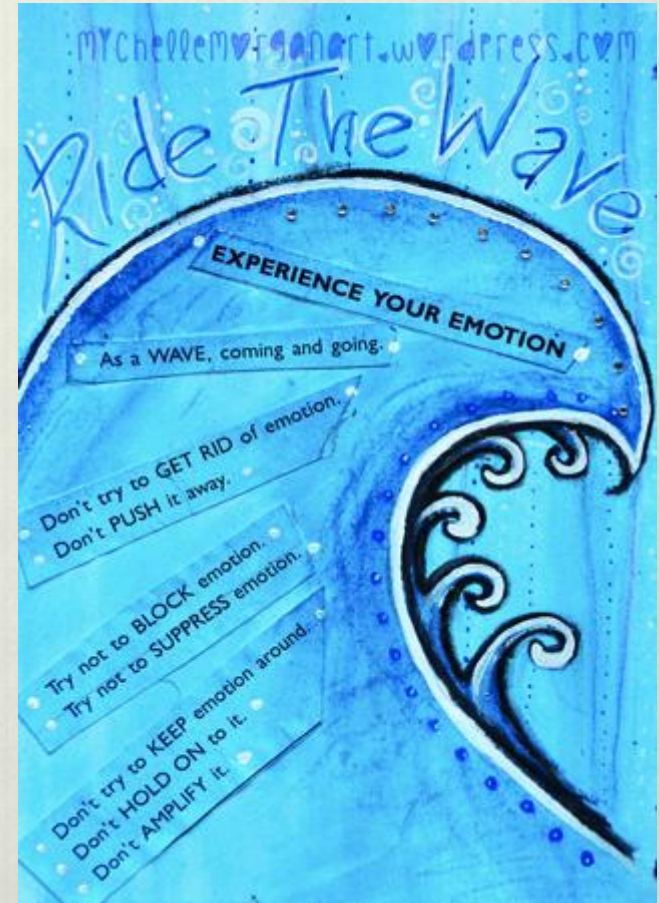
# Emotion Regulation

- ❖ PLEASE MASTER:
  - ❖ Treat Physical illness
  - ❖ Balance Eating
  - ❖ Avoid mood-Altering drugs
  - ❖ Balance Sleep
  - ❖ Get Exercise
  - ❖ Build MASTERY



# Emotion Regulation

- ❖ Build Mastery and Cope Ahead
- ❖ Ride the Wave
- ❖ Opposite Action to Change Emotions



# Interpersonal Effectiveness

- ❖ GIVE Skill
- ❖ DEAR MAN Skill
- ❖ FAST skill

**GIVE**

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(Be) **G**entle

(Act) **I**nterested

**V**alidate

(Use an) **E**asy Manner

Pride in Madness, 2015

# Walking the Middle Path

- ❖ There is more than one way to see a situation or to solve a problem
- ❖ Balance Acceptance and Change
- ❖ Validation is key

## **Four Options for Painful Problems**

1. Solve the problem
2. Change how you feel
3. Accept it
- 4. Stay miserable**

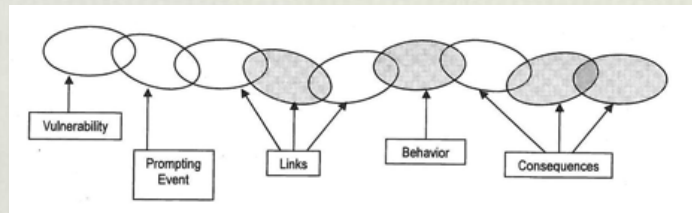
# The Formula

- ❖ Check in with yourself and observe
- ❖ Non-judgmental stance – it is what it is
- ❖ Become aware of your own thoughts/feelings
- ❖ Stay calm/focus on calming down
- ❖ Explore options – what is the right strategy?

# Resources

## On-line Resources:

- ❖ Behavioral Tech, LLC (Marsha Linehan):  
[www.behavioraltech.org](http://www.behavioraltech.org)
- ❖ DBT Self-Help: [www.dbtselfhelp.com](http://www.dbtselfhelp.com)



## Self-Help Workbooks:

- ❖ Don't Let Emotions Run Your Life by Spradlin
- ❖ Don't Let Emotions Run Your Life for Teens by Van Djik

# More books:

- ❖ Parenting a Child Who Has Intense Emotions: DBT Skills to help your child regulate emotional outbursts and aggressive behaviors, Harvey and Penzo
- ❖ Parenting a Teen Who Has Intense Emotions: DBT Skills to help your teen navigate emotional and behavioral challenges, Harvey and Rathbone
- ❖ The Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Workbook, McKay, Wood, & Brantley

**For more information you can contact:**

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