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Joanna Pomykala

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# Effectiveness of DBT Radical Acceptance on Stress, Anxiety and Depression.

Joanna Pomykala, RIC

DBT - Dialectical Behavioral Therapy

**RADICAL ACCEPTANCE** - completely and totally accepting in mind, heart, and body; even when it is not desirable, while letting go of bitterness.

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## RELATED SKILLS:

• Taking Control of Your Mind - "WHAT" Skills:

**Observe** - paying attention on purpose to present moment, controlling attention, but not what is seen

**Describe** - labeling what is seen while ungluing interpretations and opinions from facts

• Taking Control of Your Mind - "HOW" Skills:

**Nonjudgmentally** - seeing without evaluation, acknowledging without judgement

## REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH:

DBT skills have been found to be effective for:

**Depression, Anger, Emotion Dysregulation, Anxiety** (Neacsiu et al., 2014); and **Experiential Avoidance** (Berking et al., 2009).

Research suggest that **DBT increases clients' ability to use effective coping skills, like strategies for expressing, experiencing, and regulating intense emotions.** (Behavioral Tech, 2021)

## REFERENCES:

Behavioral Tech. A Linehan Institute Training Company; 2021 "DBT Research Updates". Source: <https://behavioraltech.org>  
 Berking et al., 2009; "The impact of experiential avoidance on the reduction of depression in treatment for borderline personality disorder." Source: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19477434/>  
 Linehan, M.; 2015. "DBT Skills Training Handouts and Worksheets"  
 Linehan, M. 2015. "DBT Skills Training Manual"  
 Neacsiu, et al 2014; "Dialectical behavior therapy skills for transdiagnostic emotion dysregulation: a pilot randomized controlled trial". Source: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24974307/>

## CLINICAL PROBLEMS :

- **MDD**, recurrent, severe
- Hx of Significant **Loss & Trauma**
- Somatic Sx's consistent with **Anxiety, Insomnia, IBS**
- **Restricted Emotional Affect**
- Wary of pharmacological and therapeutic interventions
- Feeling Socially Isolated, reports having difficulties w/ trust

## PSYCHOMETRIC MEASURES

Client scored high on:

- **Avoidance, Relational Distress, Perfectionism, Rumination** (CAMS)
- **Emotional Expression Inhibition** (Over Controlled Trait Scale)
- **Stress, Anxiety and Depression** (DASS-21)

## CASE CONCEPTUALISATION DIAGRAM



## SKILLS IMPLEMENTATION

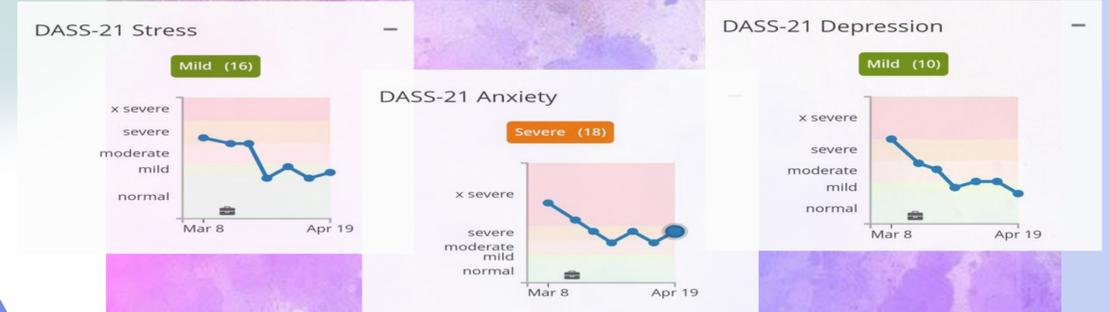
In sessions 1-2 we reviewed symptoms and discussed potential interventions (explored CBT cognitive restructuring and ACT cognitive defusion)

In sessions 3-6 implemented DBT Radical Acceptance :

- Client was instructed to **acknowledge the moment**, as it was.
- Client was supported in identification of **judgmental statements** and in **reframing**.
- Client was encouraged to **use humor to defuse self-judgment** and to gain perspective
- Client was prompted to use **grounding and self-soothing skills**, as needed.

## OUTCOME MEASURE:

- **Depression, Stress and Anxiety** were measured with **DASS-21 Scale**
- Measurement was administered at baseline (Mar 8th), and then following 6 consecutive therapy sessions (last: Apr 19th).



## THE DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS :

- DBT Radical Acceptance was chosen as an intervention for this client due to his difficulties accessing emotional / cognitive content.
- Client struggles with trust, and tends to become defensive, dismissive or shuts down when anxiety provoking issues are directly addressed. He has poor insight into this and has not been open to explore the therapy process.
- He has remained motivated to use the DBT skills, which has been effective, as his **symptoms of stress** (change from: Severe to Mild), as well as **depression** (Ext. Severe to Mild) - **stabilized**, and his **symptoms of anxiety** (Very Severe to Severe) - **decreased**.