



*Elise Brown, LPC, C-DBT*

### **DBT Skills Creative Arts Groups for Adolescents**

Mindfulness, Distress Tolerance, Emotion Regulation,  
Interpersonal Effectiveness, Walking the Middle Path

#### **What is DBT?**

Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) is an evidence-based treatment that helps individuals live more in the moment, better manage intense emotions, reduce impulsive behavior, and improve their relationships. There are four modules of DBT: Mindfulness, Distress Tolerance, Emotion Regulation, and Interpersonal Effectiveness. A fifth module, Walking the Middle Path, was added specifically for adolescents. You can learn more about DBT by watching this video: [What is Dialectical behavior therapy for adolescents \(DBT\)?](#)

#### **What is the purpose of creative arts in this group?**

The creative arts component to this group serves a few purposes. First, it helps participants feel more engaged in the group because they have something to do and aren't just listening to the teaching. Second, the activities directly reinforce the skills being taught and help participants retain the concepts better. Finally, the process of making art itself is therapeutic, reducing stress and bringing about new personal insights. No artistic experience is necessary to participate!

### **What does a typical session look like?**

Each session starts with a brief mindfulness exercise. We then go over homework from the previous week, which is always to practice the skill that we learned. Next, we cover the new DBT skill and move into a creative arts activity, which is connected to the skill. For example, when I teach about [mind states](#) (emotional mind, rational mind, wise mind), participants may paint and decorate a face mask depicting what “wise mind” means to them. The session wraps up with a time of sharing art and going over the homework for the upcoming week.

### **Who might benefit from this group?**

Participants are often struggling with some level of anxiety and/or depression. This group is ideal for anyone who has difficulty managing intense or extreme emotions, makes impulsive decisions or reacts impulsively, engages in self-harm or self-destructive behaviors, or struggles with conflict at home or at school. Ultimately, this group will benefit anyone who wants to improve how they’re dealing with life and gain new coping skills! *It is important to note that anyone struggling with self-harm or suicidal thoughts must be actively committed to safety in order to join this group.*

### **What if I’m nervous about joining?**

Joining a group can be intimidating because you won’t know completely what to expect or who will be in the group with you until the first day. It’s common to look for reasons *not* to join – because it’s uncomfortable to do new things! At the same time, great personal growth can come from moving out of your comfort zone in this way and giving it a try. What you can count on is that the group will be filled with other adolescents who are in the same place as you, open to trying something new and learning valuable coping skills. Confidentiality is also very important in this group. We all commit to keeping everyone’s identities and any information shared confidential. Finally, there is no pressure to share out loud. While sharing is a part of this group, the focus will be on learning new skills through expressive arts and on self-reflection.

### **How long does the group run and when can newcomers join?**

The full group is 16 weeks, allowing time to cover all of the modules and key skills. It is an ongoing group and new members may join at the beginning of any module, as long as there is space. A commitment to being on time and attending every group is critical to successfully master the material.

### **Why do I need to be in individual therapy to participate?**

This is primarily a skills group. There is sharing in the group, but it is limited. The focus is more on practicing skills vs. dealing with a crisis going on that week. Research shows

that DBT is the most effective when there is dedicated time to learning the skills (i.e. this group) in conjunction with individual therapy to provide more personal support and reinforcement. *It is important to note that the adolescent's individual counselor is still the primary contact for any crises or emergencies.* I will ask for a release to be signed so that the counselor and I can work together as needed. There is an additional cost for any phone conversations lasting more than 15 minutes.

### **How does payment work?**

Payment is made in full before the group begins. Please note that refunds will not be given for any sessions that the individual cannot attend.

### **Do you accept insurance?**

CBT Denver is an out-of-network provider. We can provide you with a statement to submit for reimbursement for out-of-network coverage. Every insurance company handles reimbursement differently and it is incumbent on the client to facilitate this process with their respective insurance company. The CPT code for group therapy is **90853**.

### **How can I join?**

If we are not already working together through individual therapy, we will schedule a 50-minute intake session that will include me, the adolescent, and at least one parent/guardian. We will pick a start date based on when the next module begins.

### **Parent Workshops**

During the group, I offer a few opportunities for parents to come together and learn DBT skills, discuss themes coming out of the group, talk about how to reinforce the skills at home, and support each other in parenting.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me (Elise Brown) at 774-823-0053 or [elise.brown@cbsdenvr.com](mailto:elise.brown@cbsdenvr.com)