

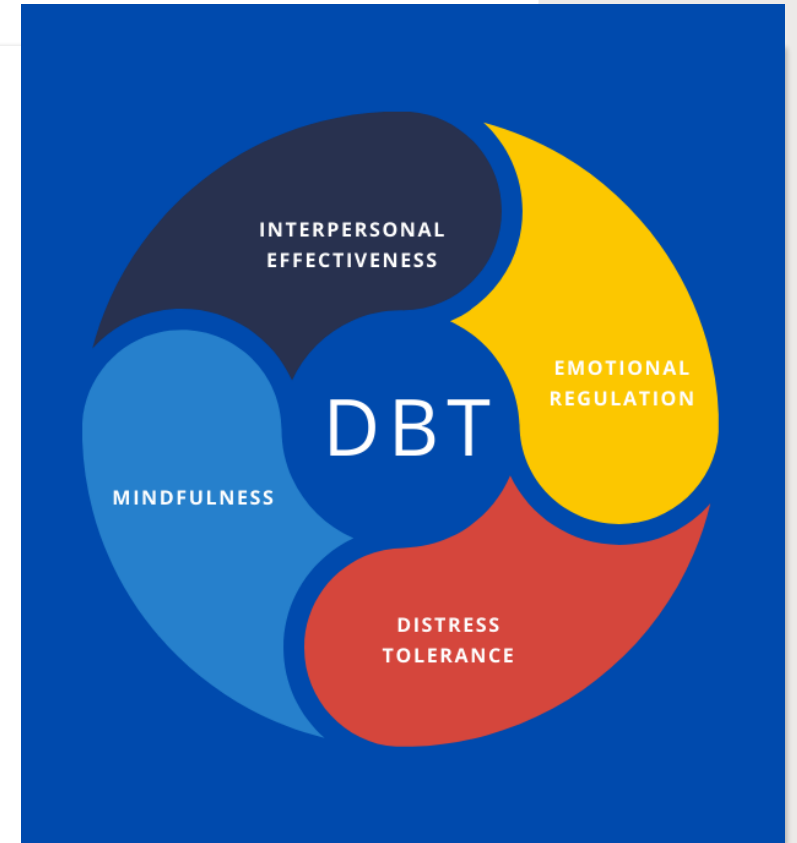
# Dialectical Behavioral Therapy – Radical Acceptance

January, 2025



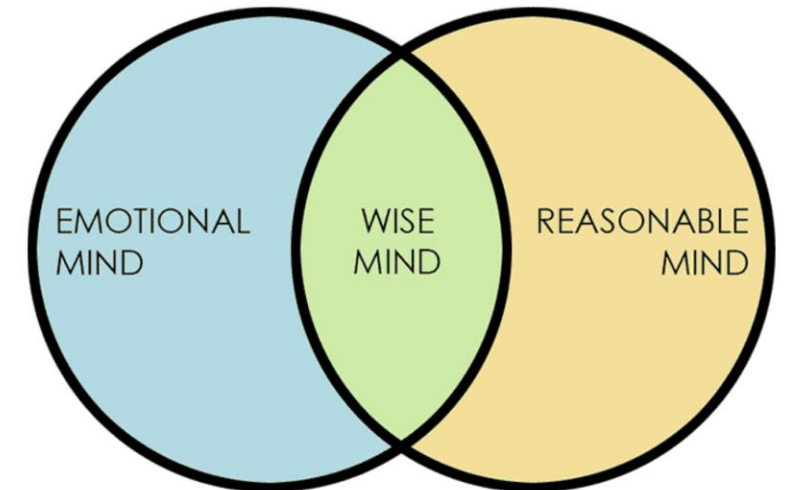
# DBT

- Definition: Everything is fundamentally comprised of **opposites** – and the healing comes in exploring the middle spaces in the **dialectic**
- Purpose: designed to help us better cope with **extreme sets of emotions** - very repetitive – necessary for rewiring our brain
- Very research-based, commonalities with **CBT**...but when the **stakes are higher** and reframing of thoughts is **too difficult**



# DBT

- Starting point is **Wise Mind**, between reasoning mind and emotional mind – at our best when we're able to access both and not be ruled by either
- Most of the skills involve taking a **pause**
- Helps **disarm** the thought that we're a horrible person (that people may have been reinforcing our entire life) - or that other people are horrible people
- **Most useful:**
  - when we need to buy time,
  - to prevent things come getting worse,
  - to help when our emotions are telling us to do something extreme - something we'll later regret



**DBT SKILL:**

# **RADICAL ACCEPTANCE**



# Radical Acceptance Overview

Changing reality requires us to first accept reality **as it is**.

Radical acceptance means: **accepting, fully and completely, without judgement.**

- This includes accepting things that hurt, that are awful, that are painful/embarrassing/unfair.
- By accepting things that we can't change in this moment, we **free ourselves** to explore what we can change for the future (paradox).

RA is a **practice**. It is something that you need to work on regularly, but mastering this is, IMO, a key to happiness.

NOTE: Starting with "**Radical Acknowledgment**" may help you on the path to "Radical Acceptance."



Marsha  
Linehan, DBT  
Founder

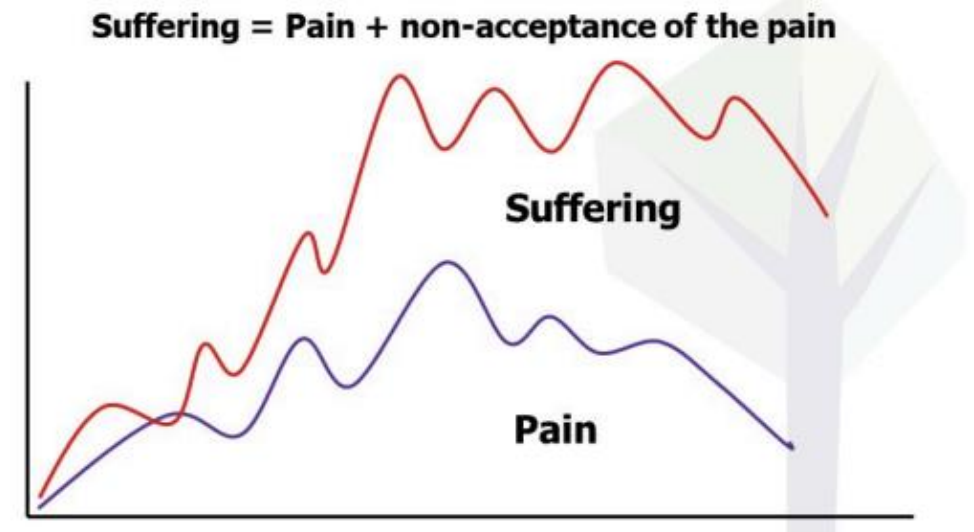
# What is Radical Acceptance?

“Suffering usually relates to wanting things to be different than they are.” -  
Tiny Buddha

Radical means all the way, complete and total.

RA is accepting your current situation (reality) in your mind, your heart, and your body.

“It’s when you stop fighting reality, stop throwing tantrums because reality is not the way you want it, and let go of bitterness.” – Marsha L.



# RADICAL ACCEPTANCE



## QUARANTINE

this sucks. I cant concentrate on my work. the grocery store is out of my favorite snack. i'm so sick of being stuck inside. i cant do this any longer! is this going to ruin my entire summer?



## QUARANTINE **AND**

this sucks, ~~but~~ i'm doing my best and taking it one day at a time.



# Radical Acceptance does NOT mean...

---

Accepting that what happened was OK or fair, or that what someone else did or did not do was **OK, justified, or reasonable**.

Saying that what happened **does not matter, does not affect you**, and that it did not shape you and how you experience the world.

**“Letting go” of love or grief** for people, things, relationships, abilities we may have lost.

**Denying** the validity or legitimacy of **our emotions** (all of them).

**Forgetting** what happened.



What can we  
learn to accept?

---

**Reality** is as it is (the facts about the past and the present are the facts, even if you don't like them).

---

There are **limitations** on the future for everyone (but only realistic limitations need to be accepted).

---

Everything has a **cause** (including events and situations that cause you pain and suffering). We may not be able to ever understand why things happened.

---

Life can be worth living **even with painful events in it.**



# "AND..."

---

We have power to **improve** our lives.

We can only use this power if we accept that we have **both power** and **responsibility**, but there are **limits** to this power.

We can have a role in something that occurred. It does **NOT** mean it is **our fault**.

Our current situation (physical, emotional, occupational, relationships) **does not define us** or our future.

# Radical Acceptance and Serenity

Guilt and “sleuthing” are anchors that keep us stuck in grief and regret. Raging over what isn’t fair or what isn’t working keep us from accepting our power to change our lives in the future.

The serenity prayer is an example of “dialectical” thinking, holding truth of two opposite ideas.

**GRANT ME  
THE SERENITY**  
TO ACCEPT THE THINGS  
I CANNOT CHANGE,  
THE COURAGE TO CHANGE  
THE THINGS I CAN, AND  
THE WISDOM TO KNOW  
THE DIFFERENCE.  
  
-NIEBUHR-

No power  
No responsibility  
Not my fault  
"I'm helpless"



**TRUTH  
SERENITY**



All powerful  
Need to be perfect  
All my fault  
"Never good enough"

# Tips for practicing Radical Acceptance

<b>Tip</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Acknowledge the present without judgment.</b>	Paying attention to what you notice right now it in a non-judgmental way – not good or bad; it just is.
<b>Ask yourself if you can control or change the situation.</b>	It can be painful to acknowledge that you're not always in control, but it can also be freeing.
<b>Breathe.</b>	Whenever you are fighting reality, your body may get tense in parts such as the shoulders, face, or stomach. So take deep breaths for a few moments and focus on them and meet your fear where it's at instead of resisting it.
<b>Practice patience.</b>	Choose to practice radical acceptance in small ways on a daily basis - understanding it takes time to become a habit (and will get easier).
<b>Celebrate wins.</b>	Celebrate your attempts to accept (or acknowledge) reality and small victories achieved along the way.

# Reflection & Small Group Discussion

---

1) What is something that you would like to work on accepting more fully?

---

2) If you could “radically accept” this, what would it allow you to focus on that is under your control?

---

3) What actions/conditions make it more likely for you to practice Radical Acceptance?