

Helping children with ADHD to cope



Medication and psychotherapy, occupational therapy and social skills training are often offered to help children with ADHD to manage. For many children, these treatments are effective and enable them to cope academically and to have healthy relationships. For many others, these treatments just don't seem to help enough and families and parents struggle along while the child themselves is often left feeling worthless and hopeless.

Recently, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy has been used to help people with ADHD learn skilful ways to cope. In research conducted in Europe (Hesslinger et al, 2002), it was found that after completion of a DBT group process, participants had a significant improvement in their ADHD symptoms and had significantly improved performance on neuropsychological tests of selective and split attention.



So what is DBT ?

Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) was developed by Marsha Linehan to help people who struggle with intense emotions to find the “middle way”. DBT equips people with the tools to be able to recognise and accept that two (sometimes opposite) things can be true at the same time. Learning to tolerate emotional ambiguity and complexity has been shown to minimise the distressing flight between intense, opposing emotional responses.

How can DBT help children with ADHD?

Children with ADHD often struggle to :

- ⤴ *stop and think*
- ⤴ *consider consequences*

- ⤴ *take a long-term view*
- ⤴ *imagine what someone else might think and feel*
- ⤴ *organise and plan*
- ⤴ *feel confident about making skilful decisions*

DBT is a skill-based therapy which offers children with ADHD tools to begin to work with some of these difficulties. DBT can equip children with ADHD with ways to make skilful, effective choices by developing the skill of deferring “instant-gratification” in favour of long-term well-being

DBT can help children with ADHD find their own “middle way”: a space to *pause* before acting that allows to make choices that build a healthy, reality-based experience of their own mastery and success.



Frequently Asked Questions

How does DBT work?

DBT is a group therapy. Each group is no larger than eight people. Groups are an hour and a half each and are held twice a week for six consecutive weeks.

What happens in a DBT group?

During each session, new skills are presented and practised. Each person is given an opportunity to grapple with and makes sense of the DBT tools for themselves. Group interaction is an important part of the learning process and the group situation gives each person a “real life” situation in which to rehearse the skills he or she is learning. At the end of each session, each participant is given exercises which are to be prepared by the participant him or herself for the following session.

Is it safe?

Yes. The group is run by a qualified psychologist with experience in the fields of ADHD and DBT. Participants are given a safe space to think about their experience in a honest and skilful way.

What are the costs?

The group sessions are R220.00 per session (twelve sessions). Before commencement of the group, each participant and their families are required to attend a preliminary introductory session in order that the participant's particular needs/ difficulties can be better understood and planned for in the relevant group he/she will be

attending.

Contact Us

You can find out more about our practice at www.claremontneuropsych.co.za or contact us via email on kim.rooney@lantic.net for more information.