

Dialectical Behavior Therapy

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A Visual Review



Dialectical Behavior Therapy: A Visual Review Informational Posters

These posters (or handouts) were created by Dr. Steve McCandless, Psy.D and Stephanie Johnston, LCSW of the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System in collaboration with artist Kevin Cates. The project was made possible through a grant from the South Central MIRECC. Please feel free to use and distribute the posters as needed.



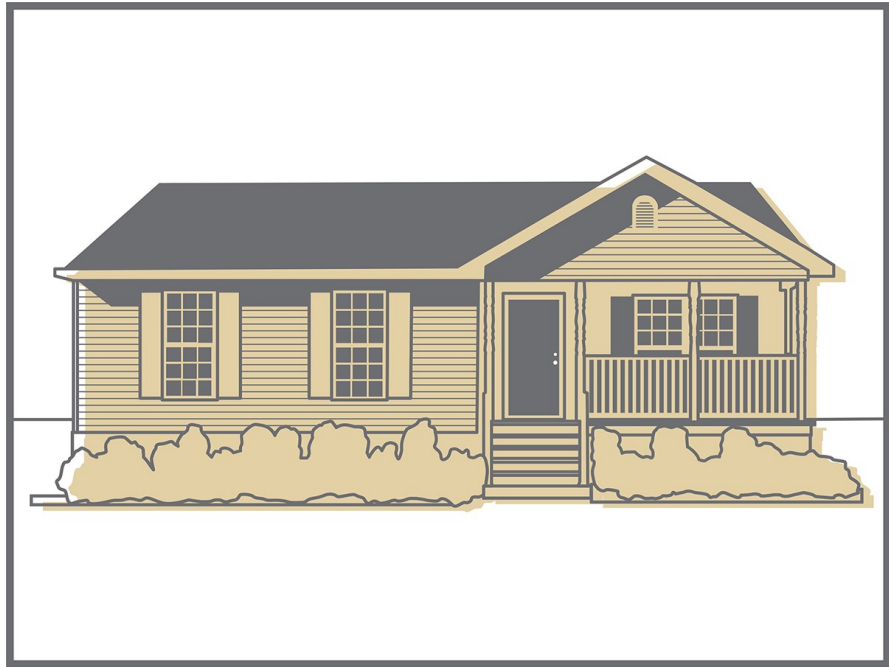
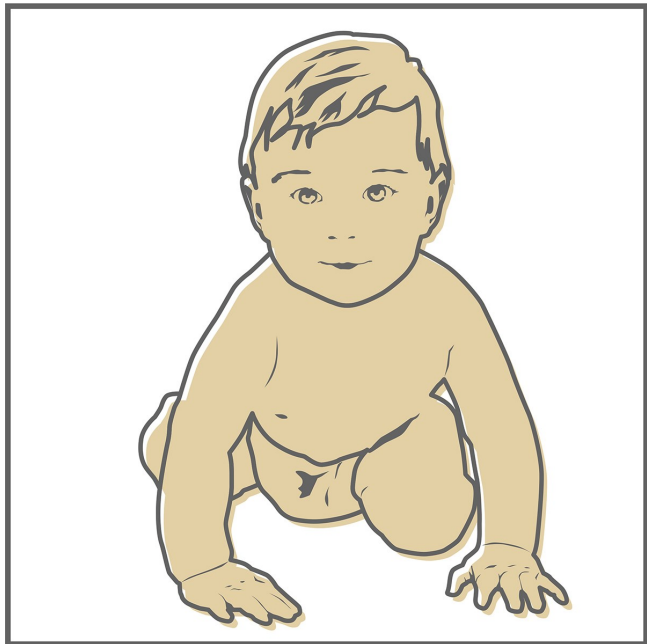
What is
B.P.D.

?



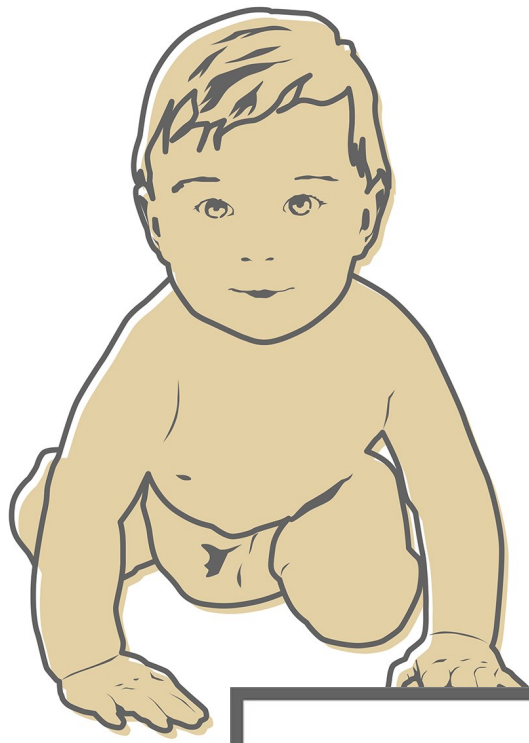
Borderline Personality Disorder is primarily a disorder of mood regulation. Individuals with BPD tend to have a mood that fluctuates rapidly. They experience intense mood states lasting minutes to days often triggered by a person or event. There are 9 symptoms associated with the disorder, 5 of which are necessary for a diagnosis. Individuals are described as having a very reactive mood. They also may express anger frequently, which is thought to sometimes be a way of covering up more painful emotions such as shame and fear. They tend to have a very unstable sense of identity. They may be unaware of their likes and dislikes or they may describe themselves as a social chameleon. Their reactive mood states make it difficult to maintain relationships and they may be particularly sensitive to signs of rejection and abandonment. Intense feelings may lead to impulsive behaviors to alleviate their negative mood states. Perceived abandonment by others might also result in drastic behaviors. Often intense shame and guilt may lead to suicidal behaviors. Physical self-harm behaviors also often occur. These behaviors can be an attempt to distract from painful emotions; as a way of “snapping-out-of-it” when they feel out of touch with reality or dissociating; or as a means of feeling something when they feel emotionally numb. Borderline Personality Disorder is a constellation of biological and learned traits which are (sometimes unhealthy) means to cope with emotional dysregulation.

BioSocial Theory



Biologically sensitive baby,
combined with an invalidating
environment,
can result in an individual with
**Borderline
Personality Disorder.**

Emotional Burn Victim



=



Individuals who are born with strong emotional sensitivity can develop

Borderline Personality Disorder

in which slight emotional triggers can cause excruciating pain.

Invalidating Environment

"You must be hormonal."

**"I'll give you
something to
cry about."**

*"You're being
dramatic."*

*"Cheer up!
You're fine"*

"Shake it off."

"You're overreacting."

"Boys don't cry."



**"You're not
hurt, you
better suck
it up."**

"Just snap out of it."

"Let it go."

"Don't be a sissy."

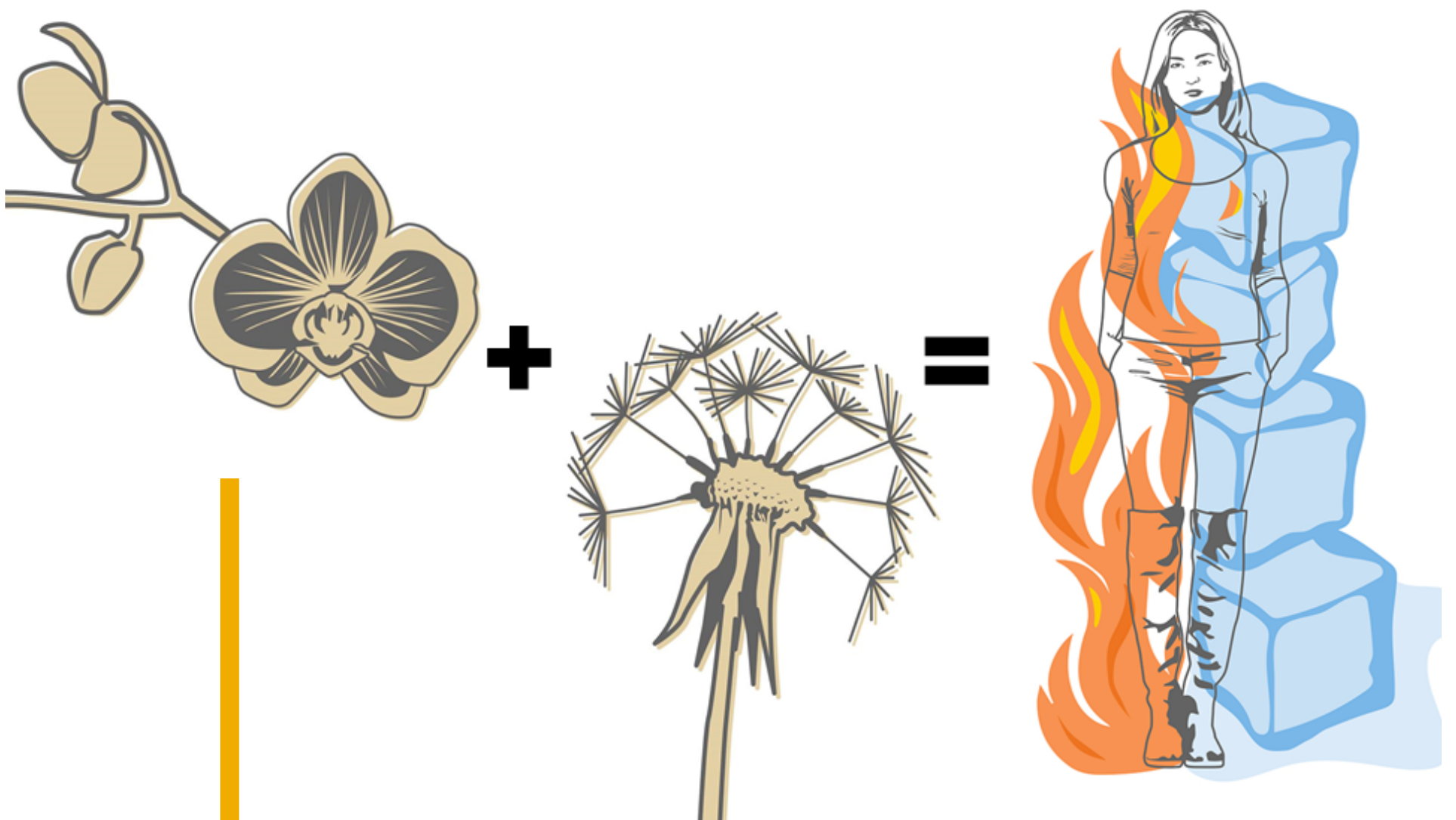
An invalidating environment is one in which communication of private experiences is met by erratic, inappropriate, and extreme responses. Emotions that are expressed can be punished or trivialized. It tells the individual that they are wrong for feeling the way they do, or that their interpretations are inaccurate.

Invalidation causes problems to go unrecognized and unsolved. The child is told to control her emotions without being taught how to do so. Life's problems are oversimplified. These factors combine to cause the child to distrust and misunderstand their own emotional responses.

Extreme emotional reactions are often needed for the child to be attended to. This creates a pattern of intense emotional expression in adulthood that is often misinterpreted as manipulation in

Borderline Personality Disorder.

Poor Fit



Sometimes an orchid child is born to dandelion parents. The parents are unprepared to meet the child's complex needs, this can lead to an invalidating environment and result in

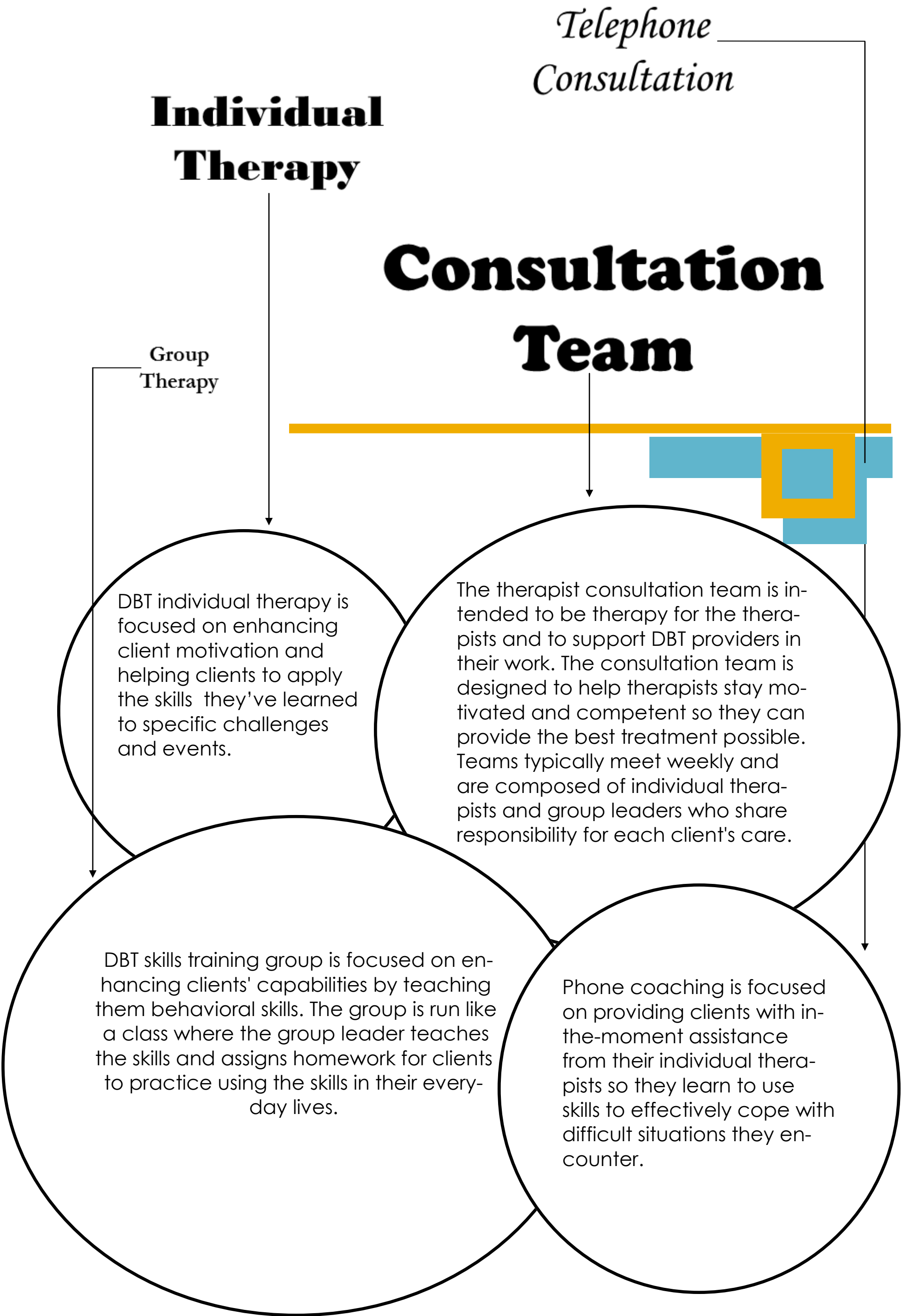
BPD.

What is D.B.T.?

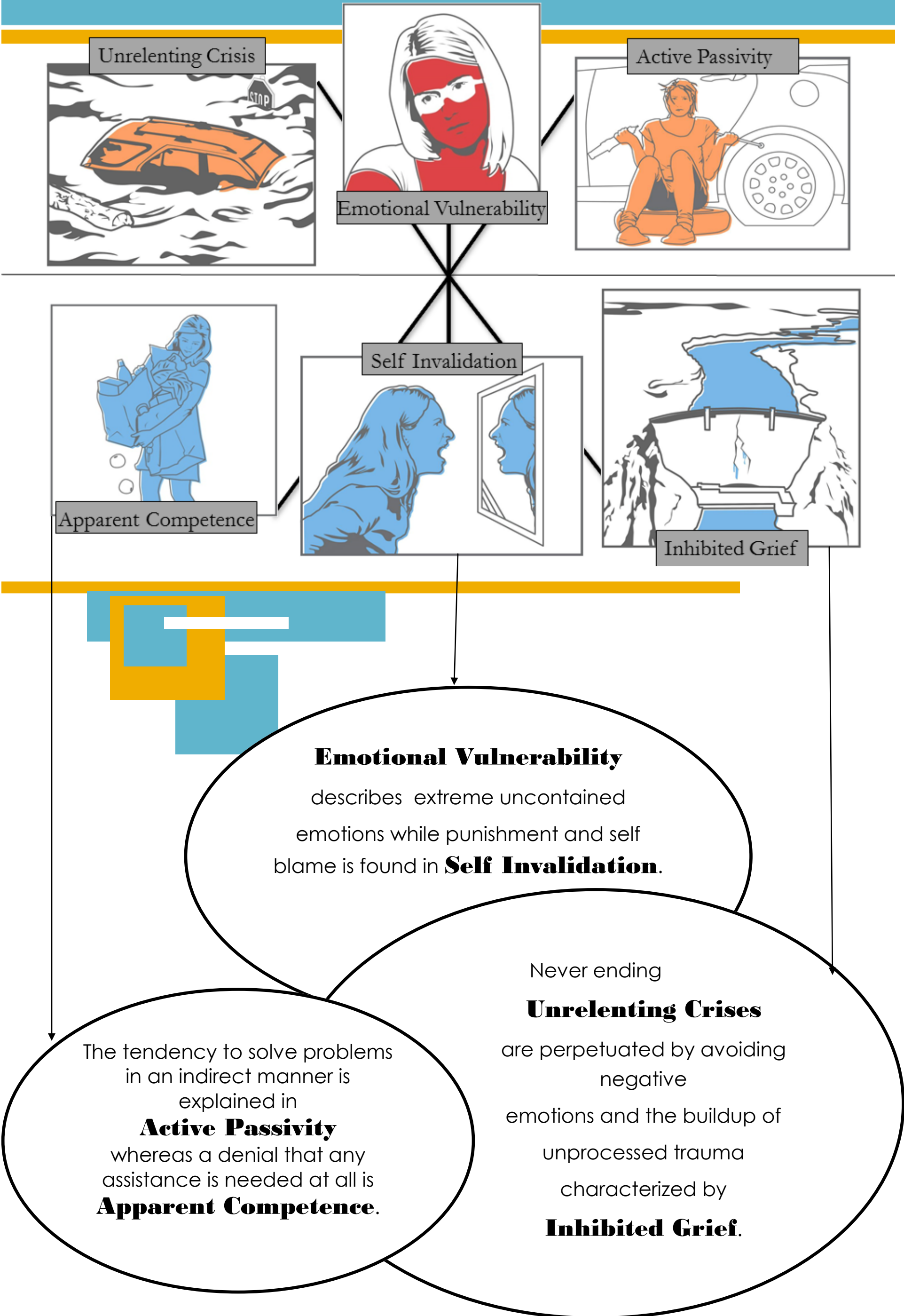


Dr. Marsha Linehan's unique approach combines both person-centered (acceptance) strategies with behavioral (change) strategies and incorporates Zen principles such as mindfulness and dialectics. Dialectics refers to the underlying assumption in DBT that opposite ideas can be combined to come up with a more balanced and indeed a more accurate view of reality. One of the main dialectics in DBT is that an individual both needs to fully accept themselves as they are while at the same time understanding that they must change in order to develop a life worth living.

How DBT addresses BPD



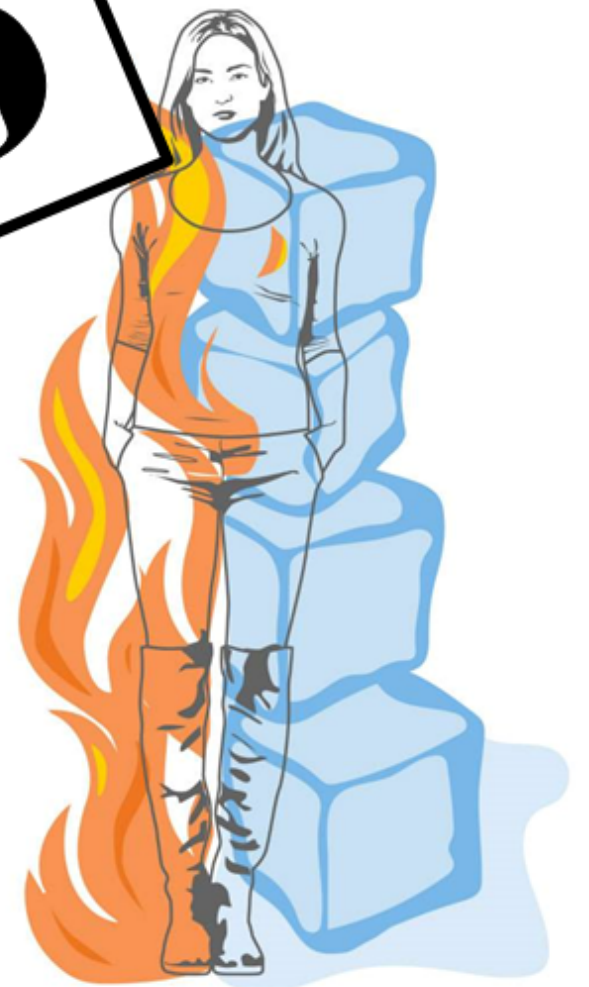
Dialectical Dilemmas



Skills Deficit

1. Fear of Abandonment
2. Chaotic Relationships
3. Identity Disturbance
4. Impulsivity
5. Suicidal or Self-harm
6. Mood Instability
7. Feelings of Emptiness
8. Intense Anger
9. Stress-related Paranoia or Dissociation

5 of 9



At its core, BPD is a dysregulation of the emotional system. This accounts for the intensity of emotional expression and the extreme sensitivity to emotional feelings, in particular negative emotional states. This emotion dysregulation then sets up dysregulation in other areas. Interpersonal Dysregulation includes chaotic social relationships and fears of abandonment. Behavioral dysregulation includes impulsivity and self-harm behaviors that are often seen as ways to regulate emotional states. Self-dysregulation includes problems with identity and feelings of emptiness; and finally cognitive dysregulation includes dissociation or paranoia.

These dysfunctions and dysregulations can be modified by increasing the skillsets of individuals with Borderline Personality Disorder.

Skills Modules

*Emotion
Regulation*

Mindfulness

**Interpersonal
Effectiveness**

Distress
Tolerance

How to maintain
awareness in the
present moment
without judgment.

How to ask for what you
want and say no while
getting what you want
and need, maintaining
your self-respect, and
keeping important rela-
tionships with others,

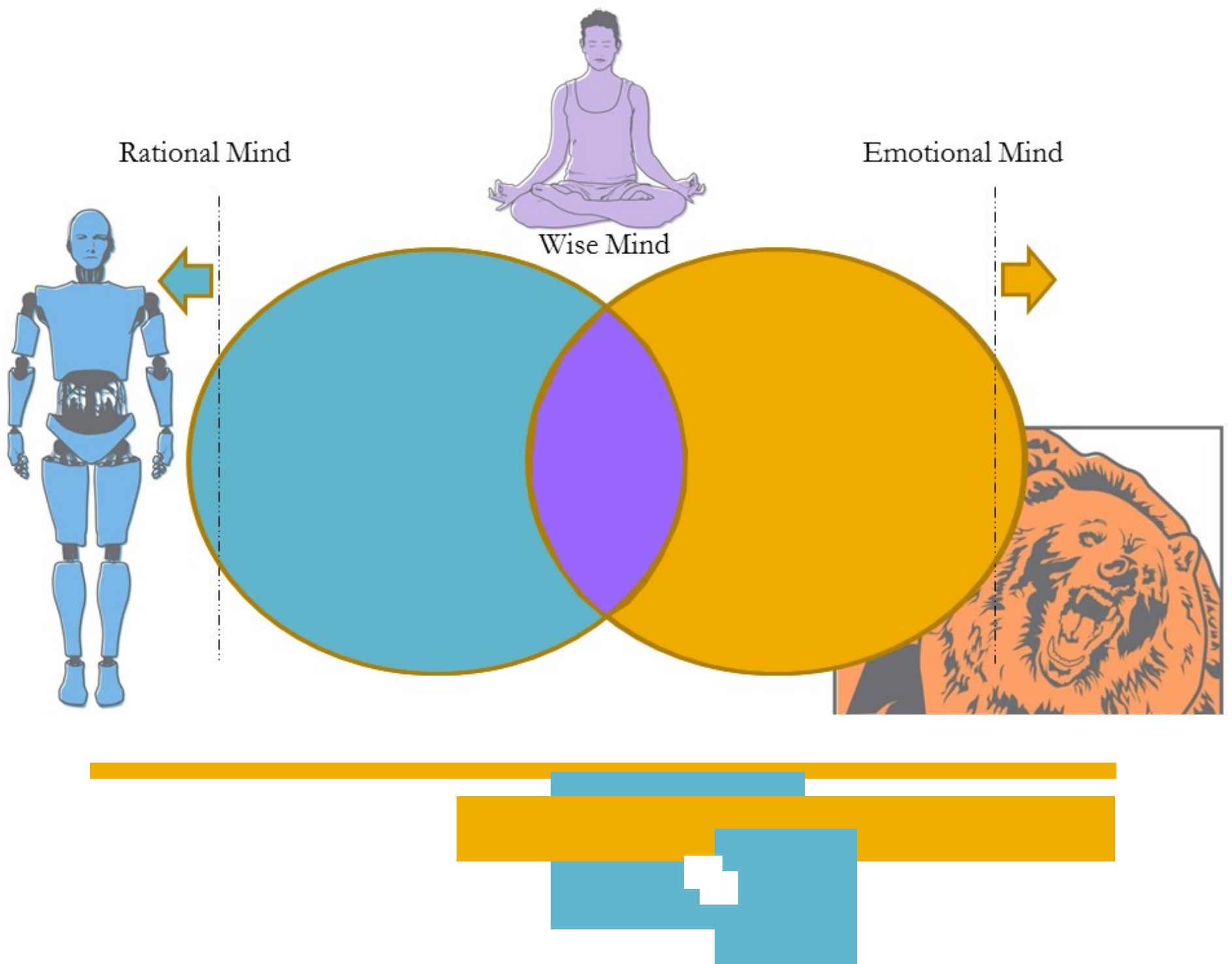
How to tolerate pain in
difficult situations, without
making the situations
worse, until emotions
decrease.

How to decrease the
intensity of emotions
that you want to
change.



Mindfulness skills help individuals acknowledge the present moment without judgment. Mindfulness provides a working base from which any other skill can be applied. It helps other skills be more effective by giving an individual space to better understand problems and time to figure out how to solve them.

Wise Mind



Wise Mind is found at the intersection of one's Emotional Mind (animalistic, raw, hot) and one's Rational Mind (robotic, logical, cold). Either extreme is unhealthy, but both aspects are needed. Emotion mind allows us to be artistic, empathic parents, or supportive spouses. Rational mind helps us pay our bills or solve problems. A combination of both in the middle ground is ideal. At this intersection one uses their logic in congruence with their emotions to maintain balance in a state of Wise Mind.

Distress Tolerance

Skills



Distress tolerance skills help individuals cope with extremely painful dysregulation without making situations worse. Once they have survived the crest of their emotional waves and they have become more regulated, they can employ other skills to solve problems.

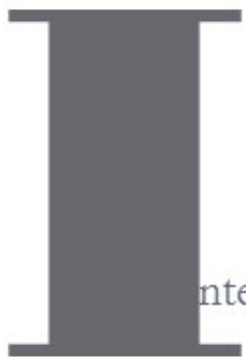
Distress Tolerance - TIPP



Temperature change

T in the TIPP skill stands for Temperature. Holding ice in your hand can create powerful sensations without damaging your body. Relief can also be felt by putting your face in a bowl of ice water. (upon doctor approval) This technique activates an automatic process in the parasympathetic nervous system that causes your blood pressure, pulse, and respiration to decrease which in turn provides a calming sensation.

Distress Tolerance - TIPP



Intense Exercise



The second TIPP skill is Intense Exercise. Sometimes referred to as a runner's high, individuals experience a relaxed and subjectively comfortable state after 20 minutes of intense exercise that raises respiration and pulse rate. The physiological changes in the body help to focus the mind away from emotional distress and can act as a distraction.

Distress Tolerance - TIPP

Breathe in through your nose.



P
aced Breathing

Breathe out through your mouth.

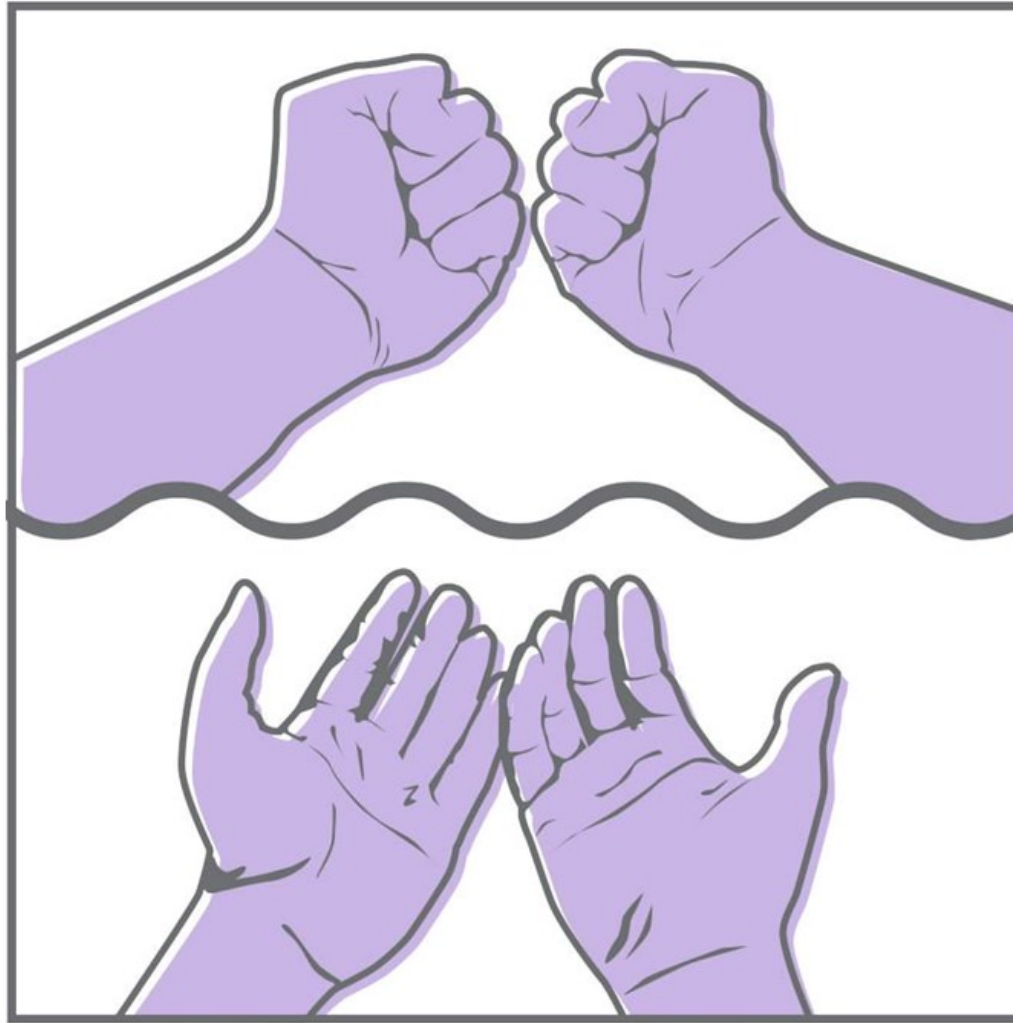


The first P in TIPP stands for Paced Breathing. Controlled breathing with a rhythm in which the out-breath is a second or two longer than the in-breath can initiate a calming feeling in the body. To practice, first breathe in through your nose, like you are smelling flowers. Then more slowly breathe out through your mouth like you are blowing out a candle. This will reduce the excess oxygen in your body and slow the fight or flight response by stopping hyperventilation.

Distress Tolerance - TIPP

P

aired Muscle Relaxation



The final P in the TIPP skill stands for Paired Muscle Relaxation. Muscles become maximally relaxed after a brief period of tension. In this skill one will tense different muscle groups starting with the feet and working the way up to the forehead. After the initial phase of tension the same muscle group is released and a sensation of relaxation naturally occurs. Each muscle group is done twice before moving on to the next muscle group. With gradual practice over time, you can remove muscle groups and attain the same level of relaxation throughout the body by simply tensing and releasing one area, such as your hands.

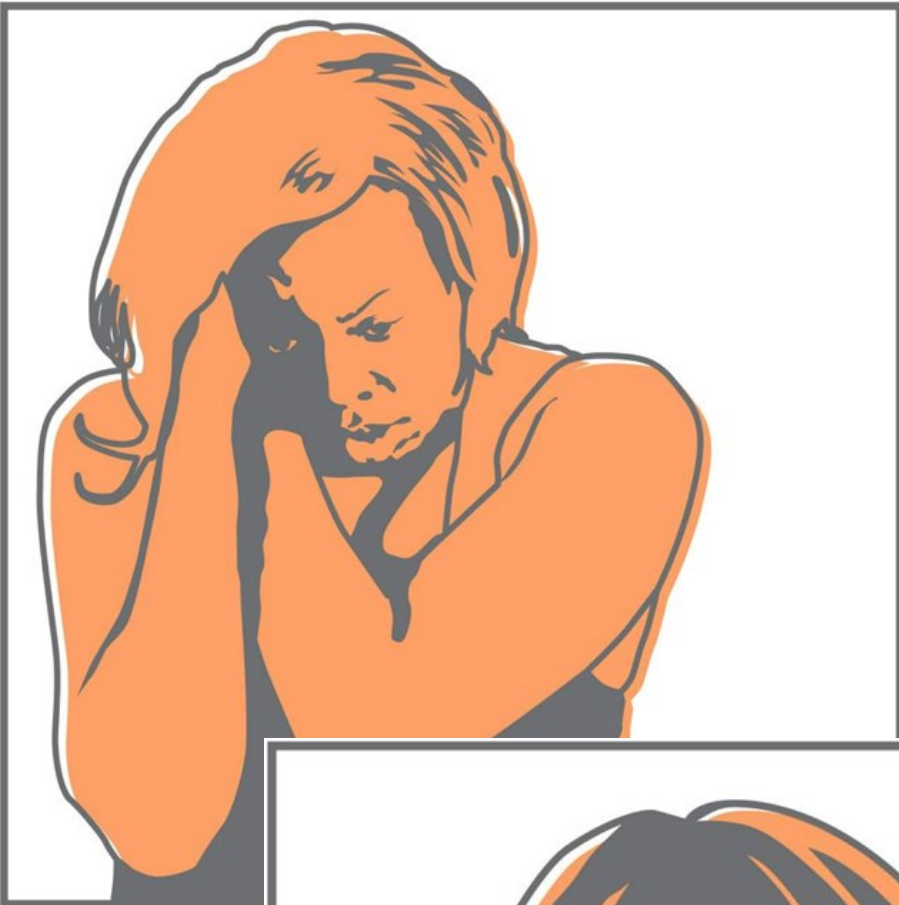
Emotion Regulation



Skills

Individuals may feel as if they are a rudderless ship in the midst of an emotional storm, unable to right themselves against the waves of negative feelings that wash over them. Many individual's emotional systems are acutely sensitive due to exposure to trauma or invalidating emotional environments, genetic differences, or a combination of both. Emotion regulation skills seek to provide individuals with tools so that they may first understand and then modify their extreme emotional states. Though they will always be emotionally sensitive, these tools allows individuals to no longer feel powerless against their emotional reactions. In addition Emotion Regulation skills help reduce vulnerability to unpleasant emotions while increasing the occurrence of more pleasant emotional states.

Shame & Guilt



Justified for:

Violation of Morals



Action Urge:

Hide

Opposite Action:

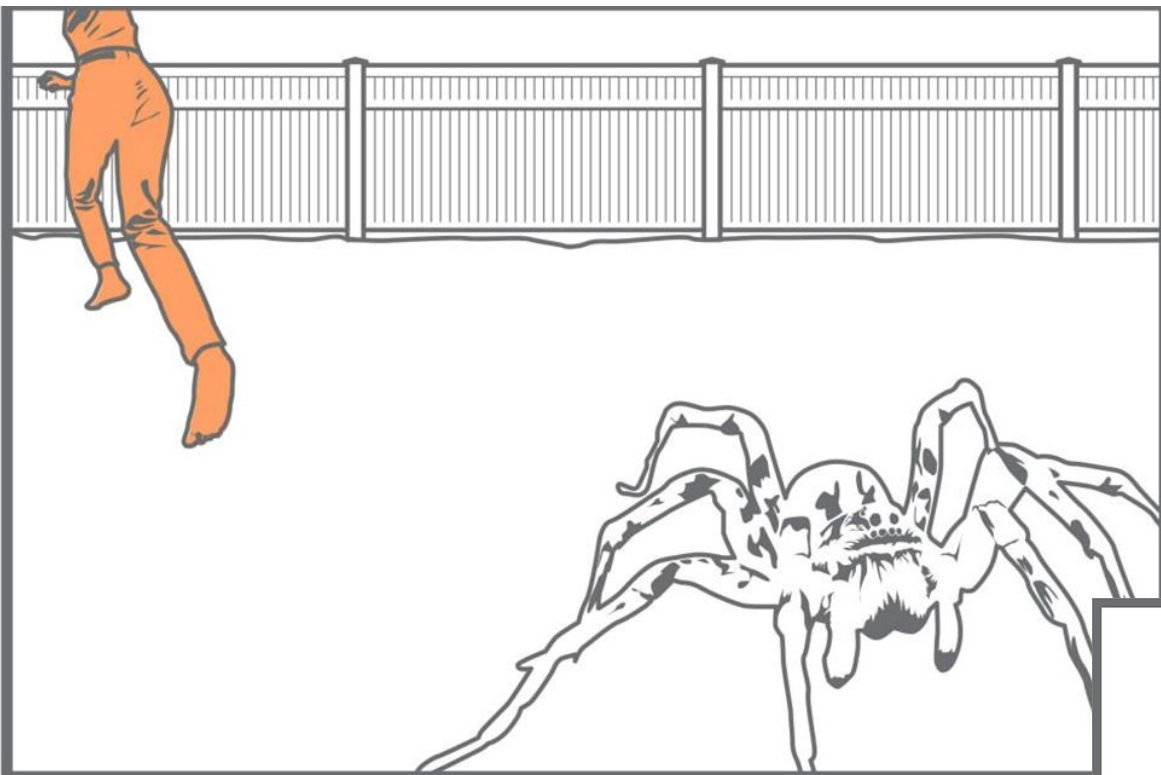
Be Proud!



Fear

Justified for:

Danger

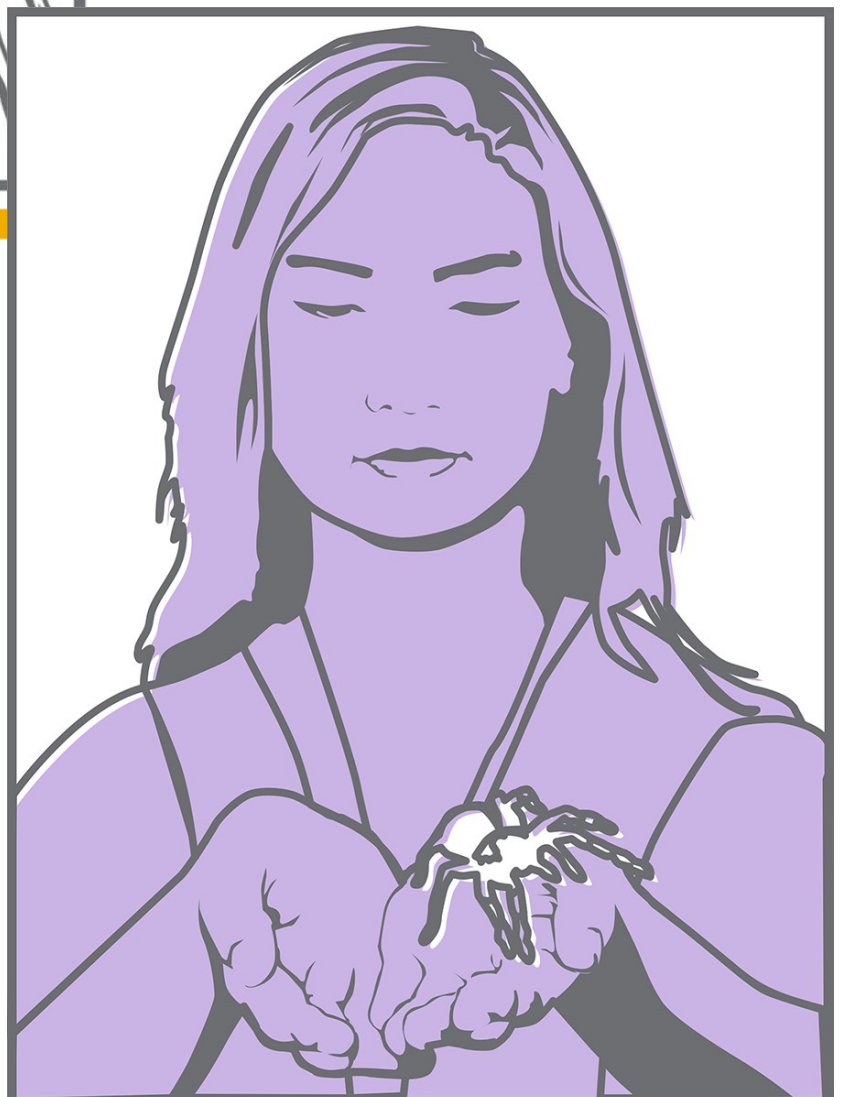


Action Urge:

Avoid

Opposite Action:

Approach



Joy & Love



Justified for:

**Improves
Life**



Action Urge:

Repeat



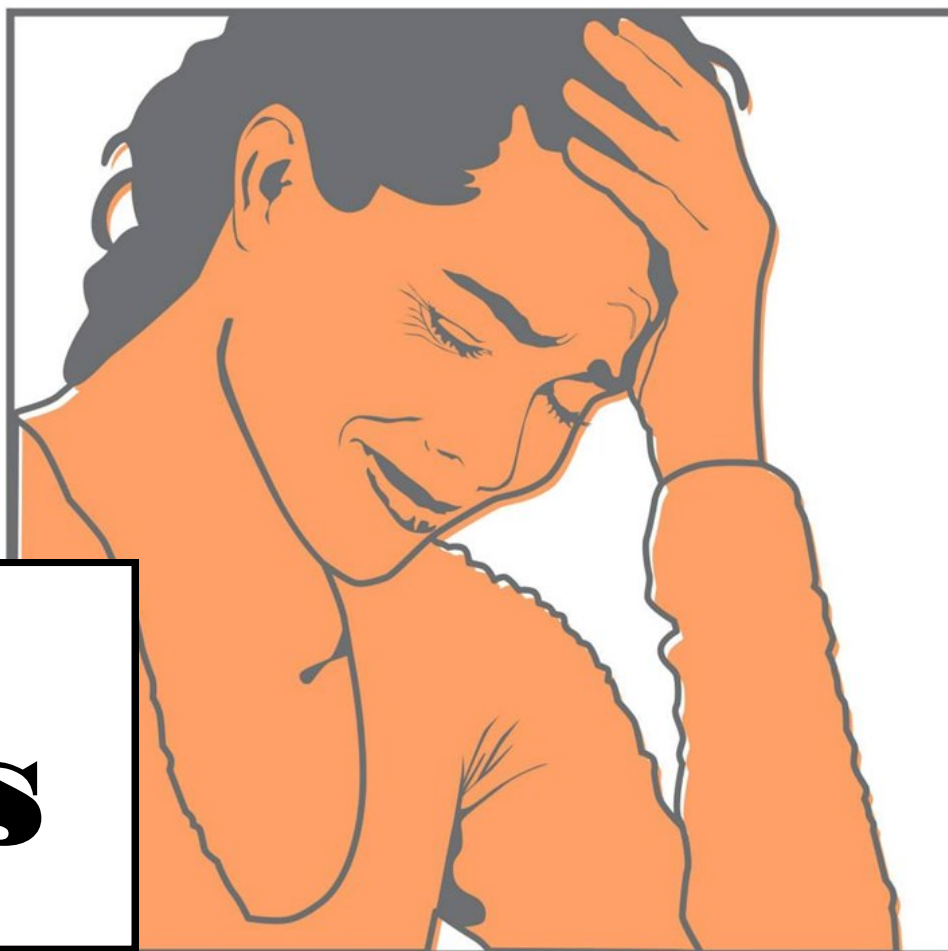
Opposite Action:

Avoid

Sadness

Justified for:

Loss



Action Urge:

Withdraw



Opposite Action:

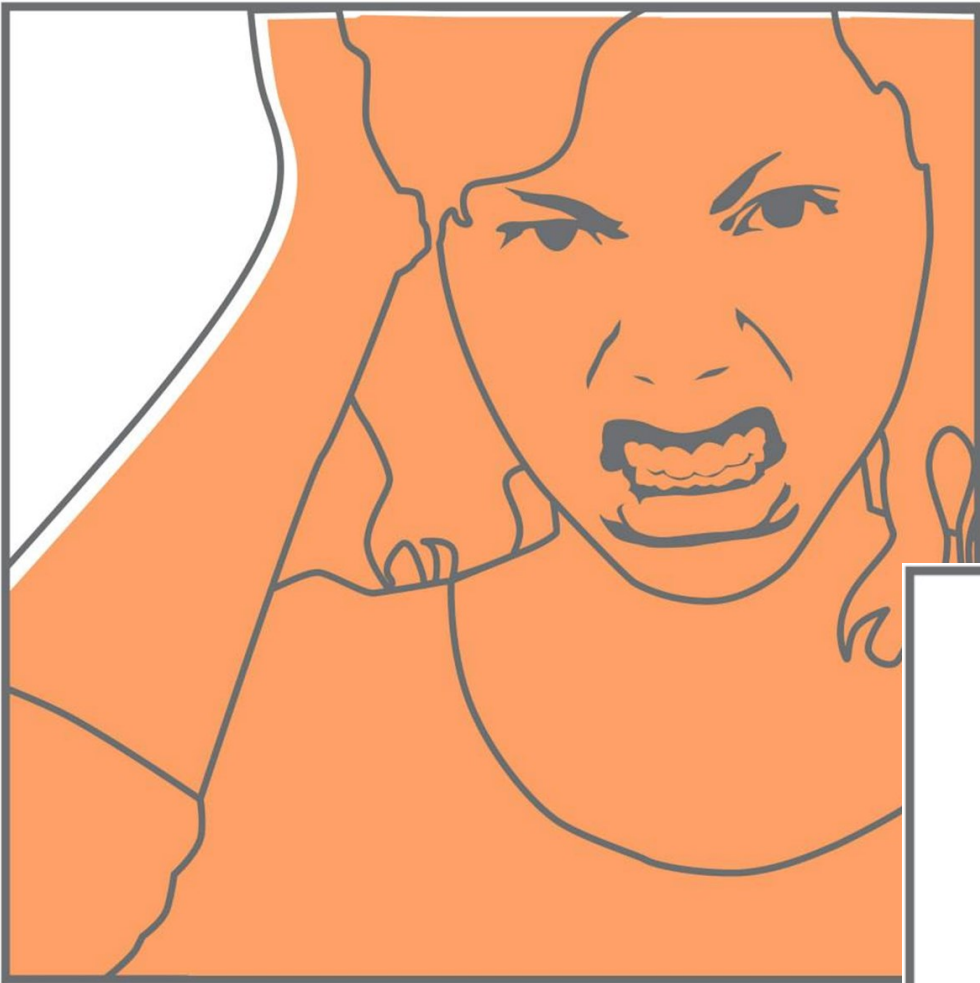
Engage



Anger

Justified for:

**Goal
Blocked**



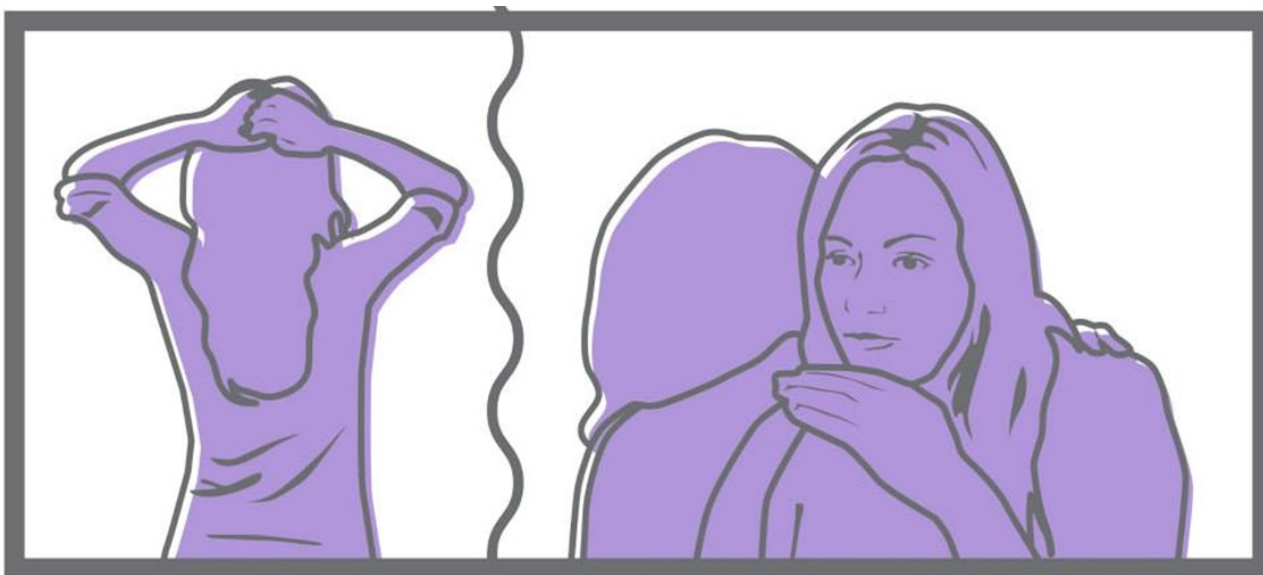
Action Urge:

Attack



Opposite Action:

**Step Back &
Be Kind**



Interpersonal Effectiveness



Skills

When individuals with Borderline Personality Disorder have been wrestling with intense emotions and invalidation all of their lives, they have hardly had time to learn effective people skills. Their invalidating environments likely did not teach them how to relate well with others and their intense emotions have likely gotten in the way of healthy relationships. The Interpersonal Effectiveness module in DBT skills training teaches very concrete methods of interaction so that individuals are more likely to have success in their social worlds.

Interpersonal Effectiveness

Keep your relationships!



Gentle
Interested
Validating
Easy manner

When the goal is to keep a relationship, clients are taught to use GIVE. Using the Give skill teaches individuals to walk lightly and not push others away by being too aggressive and dominant when important relationships are at stake.

Interpersonal Effectiveness

Get what you want with...

D

escribe the situation

E

xpress your thoughts and feelings

A

ssert your needs

R

einforce the
consequences

M

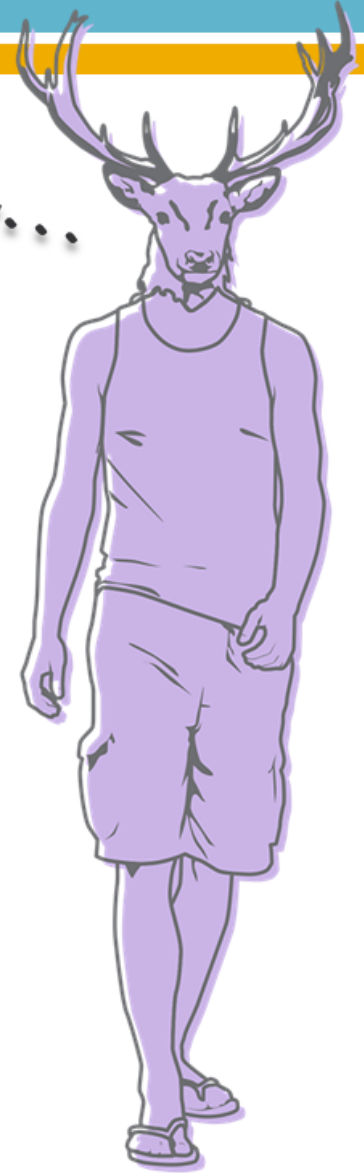
Stay Mindful of your goal

A

ppear confident

N

egotiate



If one's goal is to obtain an objective, the skill of Dear Man is used. It helps individuals to be respectfully assertive in obtaining their wants and needs.

Interpersonal Effectiveness



The FAST skill outlines how to interact with others in a way that will help individuals maintain their pride and integrity. It helps clients identify and validate their own feelings, needs, and wants.