

Canberra DBT Group Skills Training Clinical Agreement

Client Name:_____

Primary Therapist Name_____

The Canberra DBT Group offers skills training as an essential part of our DBT program. We are providing this DBT program to individuals from the Canberra community who have a mental health diagnosis and commit to participate in our program. While the program is based on experimentally validated research, we continue to refine and develop the program based on effectiveness.

To make group skills training a successful experience, it is essential that group members are under the care of a DBT trained primary therapist who they will see for weekly sessions, while participating in the skill training program. Skills training and phone coaching are not a substitute for the treatment provided by the primary therapist. It is also very important that each treatment provider for each client understands and agrees to the client's participation in the DBT skills training group (this may include your GP and psychiatrist). Each client has responsibilities, described below, that must be met if the skills training is to be helpful.

Skills Training Agreement

The treatment consists of weekly group skills training to help with applying new skills to everyday life. Participants are encouraged to be open-minded to suggestions and to be open to activities, try them and participate.

Three sets of skills – how to regulate intense emotions, interact effectively with others, and tolerate distress, in ways that are not harmful to oneself or others- are taught in three separate six-week modules. Mindfulness skills involve effective awareness and learning to control attention. Since mindfulness is at the core of all skills, mindfulness skills are taught for two weeks before each six week module of emotion regulation, interpersonal effectiveness, and distress tolerance. Thus, it takes six months (minimum) to complete all skill training modules one time. Most people learn the skills most effectively if they complete the full set of skills modules two times. The DBT group agrees to provide you with the opportunity to participate in the full set of skills training modules

for 6 months (minimum) from the date of your first skills training session. Group sessions are each Monday from 6:30pm to 8:45pm. You may be offered a morning group time, however the availability of the morning group is dependent on referral numbers. The morning group may be discontinued, requiring you to change to the evening group.

Group participants agree to the following:

To attend the skills group on a regular basis

To avoid coming to group under the influence of drugs or alcohol

To not discuss past (even if immediate) suicidal, self-harm behaviours, drug use, or other impulsive behaviours with other clients in group or outside of group

To keep information obtained during sessions, as well as the names of other group members, strictly confidential

To call the group leaders ahead of time when you will arrive late or miss a group

To not form sexual relations, or other private relations, with other group members

To pay the non refundable fee by the first group session (Participants may, under certain circumstances, be placed on a “vacation” from the DBT program for a period of time. As there is no refund for group sessions, please discuss this with your primary therapist)

To make phones inaccessible during the entirety of skills group unless absolutely necessary

Crisis Planning Agreement

The primary therapist for the client agrees to assume and maintain full clinical responsibility, including handling clinical emergencies such as suicide crises. The therapist develops a crisis plan with the client and agrees to notify the skills leaders ahead of time if the therapist’s availability to handle crises becomes interrupted for any reason. The skills group leaders will advise the client to call the therapist if the client says they intend to inflict self-injury. The skills group leaders may call the emergency contact or emergency services if the client self-injures during the group.

Consultation Agreement

If a conflict arises between the client and their primary therapist and is brought up during a skills session or phone call, group members, including the leaders, might provide consultation to the client on strategies for resolving that conflict or problem. One goal of skills training group is to support clients in developing skills that will strengthen their relationships and self-confidence. Ultimately, group members and leaders cannot resolve issues that are between clients and therapists although they will encourage clients to do so.

If a client has a conflict with a DBT skills leader or trainee, they are encouraged to practice using interpersonal effectiveness skills in resolving it. The primary therapist may be a useful source of support and information about this. It will be most helpful when the primary therapist provides the client with consultation to the client on how to work most effectively with the skills leaders. While this may sometimes be difficult, the expectation is that this stance on these matters will be empowering to the client.

The skills trainers agree to consult with colleagues on the treatment team each week/fortnight for the purpose of getting help in being as effective as possible in conducting skills group. This will take place during Consultation Group Meetings.

With my signature and date, I acknowledge that I have read and accept the agreements for services stated above.

Signature

Date

Client _____

Primary Therapist _____

Skills Group Leader _____

Skills Group Leader _____