

DBT Skills for Couples

Carolina Integrative Psychotherapy, Carrboro, North Carolina

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Skills for Couples provides perspectives and strategies to more effectively cope with intense emotional patterns and disagreements, to communicate accurately with needed validating behaviors, and to deepen the intimacy we desire in our most important relationships.

Where/When: These classes are typically offered two times a year in the TADBiT Group Room, 200 W. Weaver St, Carrboro, NC on Tuesday evenings, 6:30-8:45pm, unless there is a need for a larger venue.

Learning Objectives: A description of the key learning objectives for each week of the DBT Family Skills Training can be found at www.dbtfamilyskills.com/dbt-skills-for-couples.html

Purpose: We have all experienced times of emotional vulnerability and sensitivity and can benefit from becoming more skillful. This is especially true when we are experiencing a negative emotional state, such as anger, fear, sadness or shame. Sharing a life with an emotionally sensitive loved one can be delightful as well as challenging. Partners often find their own feelings stirred up and then find it difficult to remain connected and caring. Partners may find that they seem to take turns at being the most emotionally sensitive.

These classes teach skills that can help break the negative emotional patterns, often stemming from disagreements and misunderstandings, that prompt criticism, self-blame, or defensiveness. Each class provides couples with skills to more effectively respond and support each other.

The DBT Skills for Couples course is based on Alan Fruzzetti's *The High Conflict Couple: A DBT Guide to Finding Peace, Intimacy and Validation*. The 12-week course, DBT Family Skills Training, is not a prerequisite, yet can provide an added foundation of skills understanding and practice.

Format: Members receive a binder with handouts for each class. Every session begins with a mindfulness exercise, followed by each participant's report on practicing the previous week's skills with brief feedback/coaching by the group leader(s). After a short break, we have the teaching and exercises for the new skills. **This is the format of a class**, rather than a therapy group which features interpersonal processing between group members or members of a family. The focus is on becoming more skillful, rather than processing the events of the week. Participants tend to be diverse across a range of age, race, gender, therapy experience, and interpersonal styles/levels of struggle. All seek to learn, to become more skillful, and to actively apply the skills from each class.

Cost: The fee for participating in the DBT Skills for Couples 12-week course is \$720 for each individual (like a typical DBT class rate of \$60/session) and payment can be made in 3 monthly payments of \$240 (\$480 per couple). A sliding scale fee is available (*I do not want the fee to prevent interested members from participating*). If you need a reduced fee, please let me know. Because these are psycho-educational classes, they are not billed to insurance. A recording of the new lesson is available for classes that are missed.

Contact: For more information or to register, please contact John Mader, LMFT at jmaderlmft@gmail.com.