



Questions to Ask When Selecting a DBT Program

Below is a list of questions to ask your provider before entering into a DBT Program.

1. Does the program have treatment service modes that address all five (5) DBT Functions?

** The five (5) DBT Functions include: increasing client motivation, enhancing client capability, ensuring generalization of skills to the natural environment, structuring the environment to support DBT treatment, enhancing therapist motivation/capability in treating DBT clients. These are often formatted as such:*

- DBT individual therapy (weekly)
- DBT skills training class (generally 1.5 – 2 hours weekly)
- Phone Coaching (as needed after hours, provided by individual DBT therapist)
- DBT Consultation Team (1.5 – 2 hours per week for DBT therapists and Skills trainers)

2. Are there clearly defined inclusion/exclusion criteria for the DBT program?

3. Is the DBT program voluntary (for clients and staff)?

4. Is treatment time-limited (vs. open-ended)? Does the program use a renewable time-limited approach?

5. During the pre-treatment and before a client is “enrolled” in the DBT program, is he/she fully oriented to DBT? Are goals and treatment targets identified and agreed upon by the client and primary DBT provider?

6. Is each client assigned an individual DBT primary therapist who ultimately has control (along with the client) over the treatment plan?

7. Is the program structured to allow for two (2) rotations through the DBT Skills modules (approx. 12 months)?

8. Are DBT clients provided diary cards to track their use of DBT skills and their primary target behaviors? Are they tailored to specific client targets?

9. Does the DBT program apply the Four-Miss Rule? (If a client misses any combination of four Individual DBT sessions or skills classes in a row, they have discharged themselves from the DBT program.)

10. Do DBT therapists attend DBT Consultation Team on a regular weekly basis? Is the focus of this meeting to help therapists monitor and improve DBT treatment skills?

11. Does the DBT program apply the 24-hour rule for suicidal and non-suicidal self-injurious behaviors for adult programs (does not apply to adolescent or pre teen programs)?

12. Does the DBT program collect outcome data and actively monitor its outcomes?

Adapted from Portland DBT Institute website. Permission to use. Thanks Dr. Dimeff. Further information regarding upcoming certification for DBT providers and programs can be found at www.dbt-lbc.org/.