

UTILIZING DBT IN SCHOOLS

Colorado Safe Schools Summit

Mindful Moment

Half smile:

- Mindfulness activity that uses accepting reality skills
- Can be used during a distressing situation and when you are not
- Utilizes the mind-body connection

Let's Practice!

- Get into a comfortable position and release any tension
- You can think of a distressing situation you have been struggling to accept or choose to practice without a situation in mind
- Once ready allow a half smile to form with a relaxed face
- Use a serene facial expression

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this training series, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the foundational principles of DBT
2. Describe ways that DBT can be incorporated in the school setting
3. Utilize at least one applicable DBT skill

DBT TRAINING PROGRAM

- 6-week training with one session a week for 1.5hrs
 - Ongoing office hours
- Focus on integration and application of DBT skills
- Start each module with a mindfulness activity and a review of the previous module & homework
- Didactic overview of approach followed by collaborative application and integration of skills

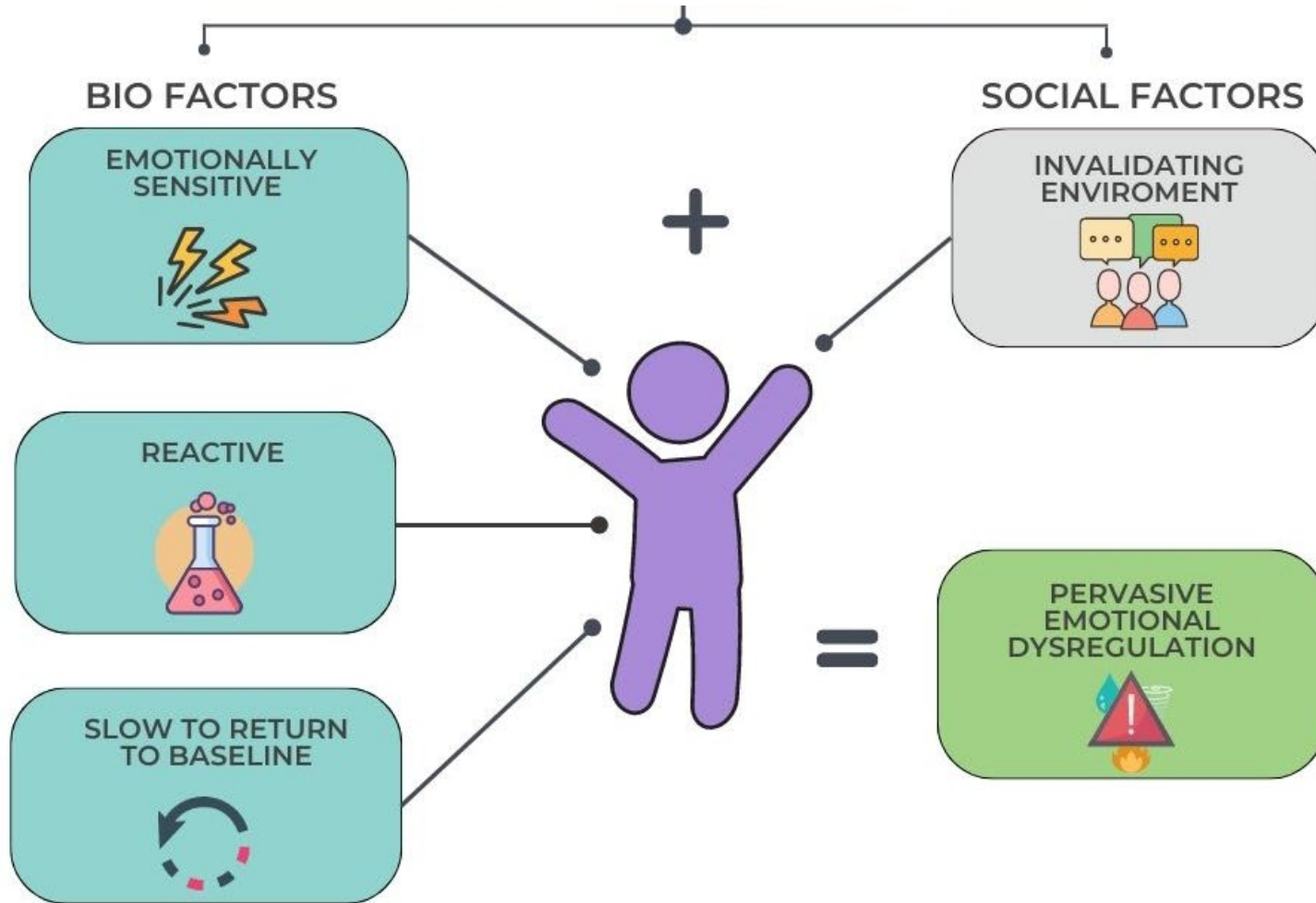
DBT BACKGROUND

- Marsha Linehan developed DBT in the 1980s
- Skills based therapeutic approach originally created for the treatment of highly suicidal patients but has been shown to be helpful for the treatment of depression, bipolar disorder, eating disorders, PTSD, and substance abuse
- Adapted for use with teens experiencing impulsivity, suicidality, managing emotions, staying in the moment, and maintaining healthy relationships
- Curriculum available for integration into school environments and with special populations

BUILDING A LIFE WORTH LIVING

*“DBT was, and is, my best effort
to date at keeping that vow.”*

BIOSOCIAL THEORY



- Does not need to be abuse
- Could just be poor fit
- No blame model
- EX: A child that is lactose intolerant is born into a family of dairy farmers.
 - The child is not at fault for being lactose intolerant
 - The family is not abusive
 - They are a mismatched pair

DIALECTICS

**DIALECTICAL
BEHAVIORAL
THERAPY**

CORE ASSUMPTIONS

- People are doing the best that they can.
- People want to improve.
- People must learn new behaviors both in “therapy” and in the context of their day-to-day life.
- People cannot fail in DBT.
- People may not have caused all of their problems, but they have to solve them anyway.
- People need to do better, try harder, and be more motivated to change.
- The lives of people who are suicidal are unbearable as they are currently being lived

BALANCING VALIDATION AND PROBLEM SOLVING

- Validation - confirming that a person's thoughts, feelings, actions are understandable within their current life circumstances or situation
 - Its is not necessarily agreeing with the action or behavior
 - Ex: A student fails a test because they did not study. You can validate the disappointment and not validate the lack of studying
- Problem solving - helping someone figure out a solution
 - Involves skills training
 - Validation is often needed BEFORE problem-solving

How might a person's reaction differ if we jump into problem-solving without validation?



BALANCING RECIPROCAL AND IRREVERENT COMMUNICATION STYLES

- Reciprocal communication - directly responsive, it takes the persons agenda and wishes seriously. It is friendly, warm, validating, and accepting.
 - Ex: A youth has been having a hard week but participated in class you may say “Wow, I know you have been having a tough time, so I am especially proud of how you engaged in class today”
- Irreverent communication - intended to “push people off balance”, used to get someone's attention, or shift a response. It is change oriented and useful when someone is stuck.
 - Ex: Using silence when the class is talking and side-tracked. Eventually students start to notice and stop talking and re-engage.



Balancing Patient Consultation with Environmental Intervention

- Patient consultation - teaches the person how to interact with their environment
 - Ex: A student fails a test and is upset. You coach the student to use interpersonal effectiveness skills to discuss it with the teacher
- Environmental intervention - this is used when the person is overwhelmed or lacks the skills to intersect with their environment in a safe way thus calls on others to support the engagement
 - Ex: A student gets in a verbal altercation with a teacher. The student is too upset and overwhelmed to remedy the situation so a caregiver or other staff mediates the situation



WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

“Paying attention; On purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.”

- Jon Kabat Zinn

Full Awareness:

- Being aware of the present moment without judgment
- Immersion in the experience
- Avoid clinging to the past or wishing for the future

Attentional Control:

- Staying focused on one thing at a time
- Being in control of your mind

WHAT & HOW SKILLS

“WHAT” SKILLS

- Observe
 - Just noticing - inside and out
 - Teflon mind
- Describe
 - Put words to the experience
 - Only observations not interpretations
- Participate
 - Be fully present
 - Willingness vs willfulness

“HOW” SKILLS

- Non-judgementally
 - Notice not evaluate
 - Harmful vs helpful
 - Quiet the critic
- One mindfully
 - Focus on one thing at a time
- Effectively
 - Focus on what works
 - Don't let emotions control your actions



OBSERVE & DESCRIBE



OBSERVE & DESCRIBE



ACTIVITY:

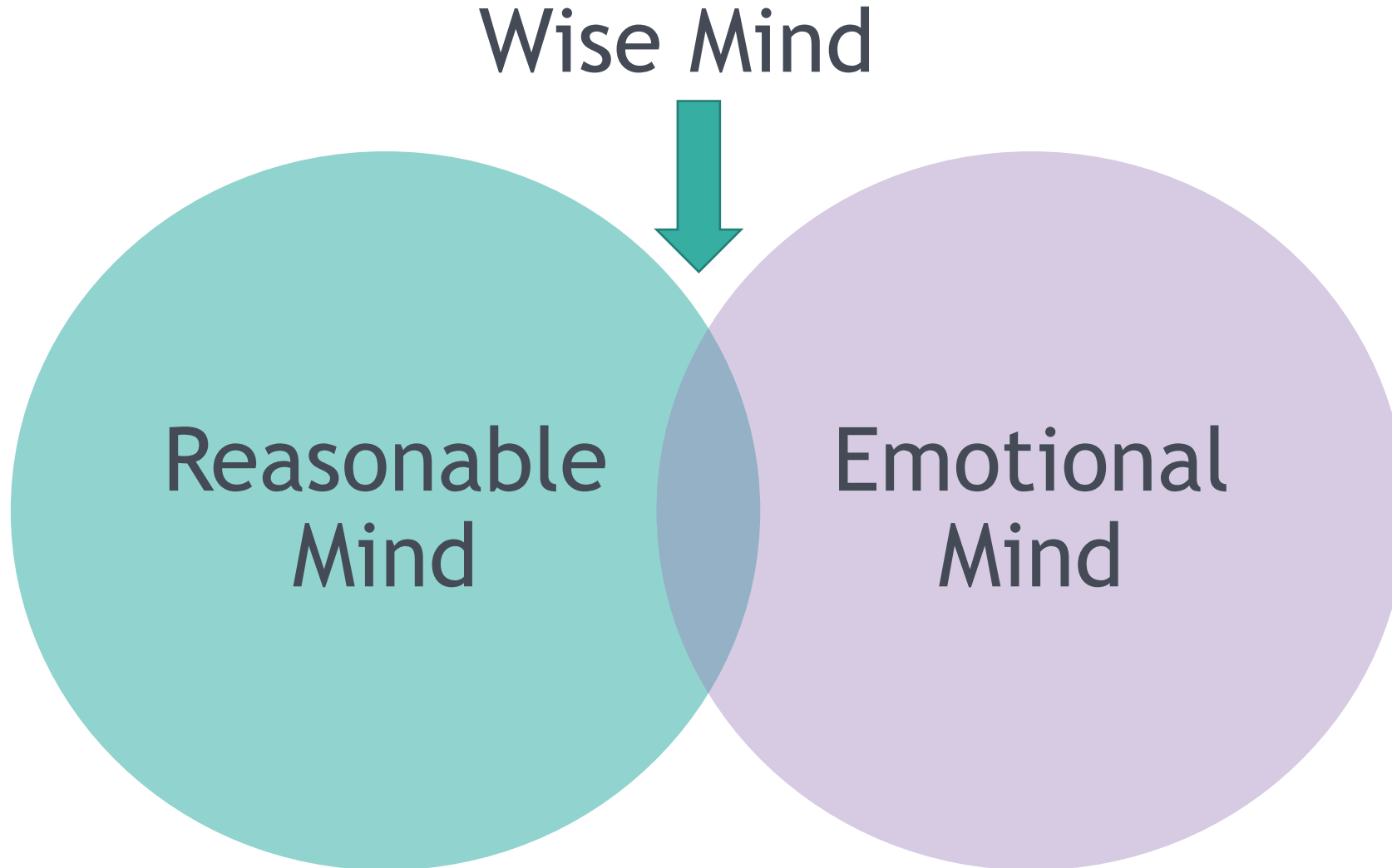
Observe &

Describe

DEBRIEF:

- What did you notice?
- Was it difficult to avoid interpretations?
- What judgments came up for you?

SKILL: WISE MIND



EXAMPLE - Elementary

Education Standard: First Grade, Standard 3. Writing & Composition - Recount real or imagined, sequenced events that include details and a sense of closure.

Students can develop a story about a character that uses only their emotion mind interacting with a character that only uses their reasonable mind to solve a problem that needs a wise mind solution.

- Example: The class is prompted to create a short story booklet with one picture and one sentence per page. The plot should include an obstacle that two friends need to overcome. One character will embody the reasonable mind and the other should represent the emotional mind. Together, they must come up with a wise mind solution.

The standard can be accomplished while practicing the mindfulness skill of Wise Mind



TIPS FOR TEACHING MINDFULNESS TO YOUTH

Find concrete and tangible ways to explain and practice the concepts

- Draw it out
- Use sensory tools and aids for mindfulness

Engage in story-telling and practice

- Use characters from popular films or books as examples of Wise Mind
- Use real-world situations to discuss Wise Mind

Encourage youth to be creative and find what works for them. Plan for “failure!”

Prepare youth to use these skills in the real world

- Teach the entire family
- Prepare the environment
- Plan for multiple ways to practice



THANK YOU!

Connect with us!

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- Check out our training calendar:
<https://pcmh.org/training-center/>
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