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Understanding Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)



by **Charisse Hoppe-Ryan, LMSW**
DBT Plus program leader
New Oakland Family Centers

Hello everyone! Happy spring from New Oakland Family Centers.

In this edition of *New Oakland News*, we're excited to share with you the news of our new Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) offering called **DBT Plus™** . . . and some background on what DBT is and how it may be helpful for you.

In a nutshell, think of DBT as a treatment developed to support individuals who experience intense emotional responses, impulsivity and interpersonal instability. Over time, DBT has become a gold-standard for emotion dysregulation across diagnostic categories and levels of care. DBT seeks to achieve a balance between acceptance and change. Individuals are validated in their emotional experiences while simultaneously learning concrete strategies to change behaviors that may not be serving them.

This approach encourages accountability without shame and growth without invalidation, helping individuals feel supported while working toward meaningful change.

Research supports DBT's effectiveness in reducing self-harm behaviors, suicidal ideation, psychiatric hospitalizations and emotional reactivity.

In transitional care settings—such as stepping down from inpatient or PHP programs—DBT provides structure during vulnerable periods when relapse risk may increase. Reinforcing these skills during transitions improves long-term outcomes and strengthens continuity of care.

If you'd like to learn more about our new DBT Plus™ capability, you can visit our website or just reach out to me directly at cryan@newoakland.org. I'd love to hear from you!

In the meantime, enjoy springtime!

 **24-Hour Crisis Hotline**
877-800-1650

face  to face

To learn more about New Oakland's state of Michigan-licensed FACE to FACE Partial Hospital Program, visit us online at www.NewOakland.org

New Oakland Launches DBT Plus™ Program

A Next-Generation DBT Program Supporting Adolescents, Adults and Families

New Oakland Family Centers is proud to introduce DBT Plus, a next-generation Dialectical Behavior Therapy program designed to provide structured, skills-based support for adolescents, adults and families navigating emotional dysregulation, high-risk behaviors and life transitions.

DBT Plus bridges the gap between higher levels of care and traditional outpatient therapy, strengthening long-term stability and resilience. The program supports individuals as they build practical coping strategies and apply DBT skills in everyday life while remaining connected to school, work and family responsibilities.

This innovative program reflects New Oakland's continued commitment to expanding access to effective, evidence-based mental health care within the communities we serve.

Who We Serve

DBT Plus serves:

- Adolescents (ages 12–17)
- Adults (18+)
- Parents and caregivers of at-risk youth in the Parent Academy

The program is appropriate for individuals stepping down from inpatient or partial hospitalization (PHP), as well as those currently engaged in outpatient care who would benefit from structured DBT skill reinforcement.

Setting

DBT Plus is offered in an outpatient setting with hybrid participation options, including both in-person and virtual sessions. The program is designed to function as:

- A step-down level of care from inpatient or PHP
- An adjunct to individual outpatient therapy
- A structured skills-based track for stabilization and relapse prevention

Unique Features

Participants benefit from a comprehensive and structured DBT-based approach that includes:

- A step-down level of care from inpatient or PHP
- Comprehensive DBT skills training (Mindfulness, Distress Tolerance, Emotion Regulation, Interpersonal Effectiveness)
- Behavioral planning and activation strategies
- Monthly individual review sessions
- Phone coaching as clinically indicated
- Parent Academy for caregiver skill-building
- Flexible hybrid format to increase accessibility

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May Training Event to Focus on Mental Health in Schools

On Wednesday, May 20, New Oakland will host the next in its series of continuing education events for professionals at the **Michigan State University Management Education Center (MEC)** in Troy.

Entitled, “**Mental Health in the Learning Environment**,” the session will focus on the ways mental health professionals can work more collaboratively and constructively with educators.

The session will feature presentations from **Dr. Karen Rusniak, PhD, LP, a school psychologist with Oakland Schools and a recognized expert on behavioral health factors in education;** and **Dr. Phillip Pittman, PhD, a career educator, school administrator and currently education consultant with New Oakland Family Centers.**

The May 20 event is approved for 4.0 CEUs by the Michigan Social Work Continuing Education Collaborative. Cost to attend is only \$35 and includes all materials, breakfast and break-time refreshments.

To register, click the “Tickets” button at www.NewOakland.eventbrite.com and click the “Tickets” button; or contact us by phone at **800-395-3223**.

Meet Mara Lipkovitz, LMSW: Oakland County Director of Clinical Services



New Oakland Family Centers is proud to introduce **Mara Lipkovitz, LMSW**, our **Director of Clinical Services**

for Oakland County. Mara brings decades of experience in mental health leadership, clinical care and program development.

Throughout her career, Mara has overseen clinical teams, managing program operations and ensuring high-quality behavioral health services for individuals and families. As Clinical Director at Behavioral Infirmiera Care Solutions, she has managed all aspects of clinical care, including hiring and

credentialing staff, leading clinical trainings, facilitating case conferences, conducting clinical evaluations and providing psychotherapy.

Mara is also the owner and Clinical Director of Behavioral Care Management Group, where she developed an intensive in-home behavioral health program from the ground up. In this role, she established program policies and procedures, coordinated accreditation site visits, managed operations and provided therapy services.

Mara's extensive experience in program development, clinical supervision and direct care helps strengthen the support we provide to clients and staff across Oakland County.

Her leadership reflects a deep commitment to accessible, high-quality services and to fostering strong, collaborative teams.

We're excited to welcome Mara to the New Oakland leadership team!

What is “Emotional Regulation”?



by **Charisse Hoppe-Ryan, LMSW**
DBT Plus program leader
New Oakland Family Centers

Emotional regulation is the ability to recognize, understand and manage our emotions in healthy and effective ways. Everyone experiences a wide range of emotions, these include; joy, frustration, sadness, anxiety, but when emotions feel overwhelming or difficult to control, they can affect relationships, decision-making and overall well-being.

For many people, emotional regulation is a skill that develops over time. Stress, trauma, life transitions, or mental health challenges can make it harder to navigate intense feelings. When someone struggles with emotional regulation, they may feel like their emotions shift quickly, react strongly to stressful situations, or have difficulty calming down after becoming

upset. Learning how to pause, identify emotions and respond thoughtfully instead of reacting impulsively can make a significant difference in daily life.

One evidence-based approach that focuses on building emotional regulation skills is Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). DBT helps individuals develop practical strategies to understand emotions, reduce emotional vulnerability and respond to challenges more effectively. These skills can help people tolerate distress, communicate more clearly and build healthier relationships.

Improving emotional regulation doesn't mean avoiding or suppressing emotions—it means learning how to experience them without becoming overwhelmed by them. Skills such as mindfulness, self-awareness and healthy coping strategies can help people navigate difficult moments while staying connected to their values and goals.

With the right support and tools, emotional regulation can be strengthened over time, helping individuals build resilience and create a more balanced and fulfilling life.

New Oakland locations to serve you

Ann Arbor Center

501 N. Maple Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Center Line Center

26522 Van Dyke Avenue
Center Line, MI 48015

Clarkston Center

6549 Town Center Drive
Clarkston, MI 48346

Clinton Township Center

42669 Garfield Road
Clinton Township, MI 48038

Farmington Hills Center

32961 Middlebelt Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48334

Flint Center

2401 South Linden, Suite A
Flint, MI 48532

Kalamazoo/Portage Center

8225 Moorsbridge Rd.
Portage, MI 49024

Livonia Center

29550 Five Mile Road
Livonia, MI 48154

Okemos Center

2300 Jolly Oak Road
Okemos, MI 48864

Port Huron Center

500 10th Avenue, Suite A
Port Huron, MI 48060

Southfield Center

20505 W. 12 Mile Road
Southfield, MI 48076

Southgate Center

13305 Reeck Road
Southgate, MI 48195

Warren Center

8150 E. 13 Mile Road
Warren, MI 48093

FACE to FACE Crisis Services

877-800-1650
(24 hours/day)

Rewriting the Narrative on Mental Health Stigma



by **Phillip Pittman, PhD**
Education Consultant
New Oakland Family Centers

Far too many people avoid seeking help for mental and emotional health concerns. In fact, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), 1 in 5 U.S. adults experiences mental illness, yet the average person waits a staggering 11 years on average before they get treatment. And, those are the people who actually get care.

Even worse, approximately half of the people with serious mental health challenges are not receiving any form of treatment. In many cases, people fear the negative judgments of their acquaintances, friends and family members for having a mental illness and seeking outside help. They perhaps have been told that they should just try harder and control symptoms, or that they are “going through a phase” that will pass on its own.

This can often lead people to feel shame for having a mental illness. They internalize a negative self-image, viewing themselves as having somehow failed.



These social and self-stigmas are based on misinformation, misconceptions, stereotypes and prejudices. But they can still have a profound limiting effect on people and the decisions they make.

As a society, we do not stigmatize physical health conditions in the same way. Even though the brain is the most important organ in they body, we somehow think that issues that affect our brains are less “real” than our sprained ankles and our common colds.

The good news is that we do not have to give in to stigmas. In fact, we can all play a significant role in undoing the stigmas surrounding mental illness and mental health care.

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Word Search

See if you can find 15 words from this issue of New Oakland News

D R E S P O N S I B I L I T Y
 V X U E C N E I L I S E R P I
 L D I A L E C T I C A L N R B
 C A N O I T A M R O F N I K B
 I S S E N E V I T C E F F E W
 X J H I Z K O K H P I C D U C
 H V R S L O O H C S M H G Z N
 A C C O U N T A B I L I T Y K
 L G R D G N I H C A O C T I E
 V C Y M G N I L U D E H C S N
 E V I T A V O N N I X N S J R
 Y S F L N O I T A C U D E F K
 C X J H G B E H A V I O R A L
 S Y V O K Y P A R E H T W V O
 N I Y L E L B I X E L F R U I

Accountability
Behavioral
Coaching

Dialectical
Education
Effectiveness

Flexible
Information
Innovative

Planning
Resilience
Responsibility

Scheduling
Schools
Therapy

Follow us on



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877-800-1650

Announcing DBT Plus™

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Program Details

Group sessions are offered multiple days per week, including evening options to accommodate work and school schedules. Individual review sessions are scheduled monthly.

DBT Plus includes:

- 6 DBT skills groups per month
- 1 individual session per month
- Intake evaluation and 60-minute baseline assessment
- Optional phone coaching support
- Parent Academy sessions offered virtually
- Private monitored Facebook group

Strengthening Stability

DBT Plus extends traditional DBT by incorporating behavioral activation, measurable life satisfaction tracking and structured follow-up. This approach supports not only symptom reduction but also overall lifestyle stability.

For adolescents, pairing skills training with the Parent Academy strengthens the home environment and helps



reduce repeated crises. For adults, structured skill reinforcement enhances emotional resilience and interpersonal functioning.

By integrating DBT into a flexible hybrid model, DBT Plus increases accessibility while maintaining strong clinical support.

Insurance / Eligibility

Group services are offered on a cash basis. Individual services may be billable through insurance depending on coverage. Participants must complete an intake evaluation to determine clinical appropriateness.

To Refer or learn more, call 800-395-3223 (24/7/365) or email program leader Charisse Hoppe-Ryan at cryan@newoakland.org

Ending Mental Health Stigma

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There are many positive steps you can take to overcome stigma. It's important to show empathy and compassion towards yourself and others. It's also important to educate yourself and others about mental health concerns and the associated treatments.

If you or someone you care about is facing a mental health challenge, help them (or yourself!) get the professional support you need. Connect with positive people and remember that no person is defined by his or her illness.

As caring, trusted members of our communities, we must each take on a leadership role to model acceptance for all people, including those who suffer from mental and emotional health challenges.

We don't always share our own struggles, just like we don't always know the struggles that others are going through. That's why it's so important that we openly communicate our support.

In short, it starts with the courage to talk openly about mental health, whether that means your own needs or those of someone you care about.