

Statement of Understanding for Consent for Therapy at Dialectical Behavior Therapy Center of San Diego (DBTCSD)

Before beginning therapy at DBTCSD, it is important to fully understand what therapy will involve and the policies and procedures of the clinic. Please read this and ask for clarification if necessary before you sign.

Our Approach to Psychotherapy

Our therapy approach is cognitive-behavior therapy (CBT), which is a particular kind of therapy that involves the application of findings from psychology research to help individuals change in ways they would like to change. CBT is very present-focused, based on the belief that the current environment is very important in affecting our present emotions and behavior. The procedures used in CBT are intended to improve the person's well-being and quality of life by expanding the person's skills, abilities, and independence, and by improving abilities for managing emotions and the situations that trigger them. There is an emphasis in CBT on monitoring and evaluating the individual's progress to determine how effective the intervention is. Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) is a specific form of CBT we utilize that helps you tolerate and change your emotions, control your behavior, improve relationships, and build a meaningful life. You will also practice expressing yourself fully and behaving in ways that will create better relationships. In doing so, it is important for us to focus on the interactions between us because they are often similar to how you interact with other people, which allows you to experiment with different ways of relating, and then to take it to your relationships outside of therapy.

Our Treatment Team

Milton Brown, Ph.D. is the head of the DBTCSD treatment team. Dr. Brown received ten years of training in DBT from Marsha Linehan at the University of Washington. Currently he teaches therapy classes at the California School of Professional Psychology at Alliant International University.

DBT is a team-based treatment approach, and the team consists of staff therapists (paid employees) and clinic associates (therapists who are not employees of DBTCSD). The treatment team meets at least once per week to discuss current cases, and all therapists are available to all clinic patients when the primary therapist is needed but not available, for example in case of emergencies or out of town travel. DBTCSD staff therapists and clinic associates are listed at the end of this consent form and on our website www.dbtsandiego.com.

Confidentiality

All identifying information about your treatment and treatment records are kept confidential. You can submit your personal information through our secure Google web-based intake form (on our website click on "Privacy Notice" to read the ways we protect your private electronically stored information). It is important to be aware that e-mail communication, especially non-encrypted e-mail, can be easily accessed by unauthorized users which can violate your confidentiality. The law requires that we keep your records for at least seven years following treatment.

Because we teach off-site psychology workshops and courses, we occasionally present cases to off-site non-clinic mental health professionals and trainees. We may discuss your case with them without sharing any identifying information. These students/interns are also bound by law and the ethics of our profession to keep all such case material confidential.

There are some exceptions to confidentiality according to state laws:

1. If you tell us, or we suspect, that a child, elderly person, or disabled person is being abused, either by neglect, assault, battery, or sexual molestation, or other forms of maltreatment, we are required by California state law to report our suspicion of such abuse to the appropriate state agency.
2. If you seriously threaten to harm someone else, we have the legal duty to warn that person and the police.
3. If you seriously threaten to harm yourself, we may need to contact the police and/or a family member.
4. If your records are subpoenaed by an attorney, they will not be released without your written consent. However, they must be released if a court order signed by a judge orders us to do so.
5. If you are using insurance, we may be asked by the insurance company for ongoing treatment reports. These would include a diagnosis, a summary of treatment to date, and plans for future sessions.

Services & Procedures

Individual therapy sessions are usually scheduled for 50 minutes, once per week. At times, sessions may be scheduled for 90 minutes or the frequency of sessions may be altered if there are indications that such changes would help reach your goals. Your primary individual therapist, but not your group therapists, will be available via telephone for helping you apply coping skills to challenging life situations.

Fees & Methods of Payment

Intake Session: Our fee is \$350 for the first therapy session, when it is scheduled for 90 minutes, paid in full before the session. The first session focuses on us understanding your goals, struggles, and diagnoses.

We ask that you provide your credit card information to keep on file, and we will charge unpaid fees to your credit card about once per month, without prompt-payment discounts given. If a credit card payment is not possible, we will suspend treatment until the balance is paid. If you end treatment (e.g., no sessions in 30 days) we will charge your credit card for all remaining unpaid charges. The fee for returned checks is \$40.

If your health insurance plan covers psychotherapy, we will provide a statement that you can submit to your insurance company. Unless otherwise specified, we expect you to pay the full fees billed and to obtain reimbursement for the insured portion from your insurance company. Unpaid balances may be reported to a credit bureau, collection agency, or small claims court following reasonable attempts at collection. In most collection situations, we report that an unspecified psychological service was provided to the patient.

Scheduling Sessions

Individual: If you need to change or cancel an individual therapy session leave your therapist a telephone message (see Contact Information section, below). If you do not show up for a scheduled individual session, you will be charged a \$100 fee unless you have canceled it 24 hours in advance. The late cancellation charge for individual therapy sessions will be waived if you cancel due to physical illness or an emergency and you leave your therapist a phone message as soon as possible; however, the fee will not be waived more than once every four months. Cancellations made via email will not be honored and will still incur the \$100 fee. If you are late for a session, the remaining minutes can be used for therapy. If at any point you have not attended a DBTCSD individual therapy session for more than 30 consecutive days, for any reason, we will end your treatment at DBTCSD. In such case, to resume therapy you will need to sign a new consent form, and until you officially resume therapy by attending another therapy session, DBT therapists will not be available to you for skills coaching phone calls or crisis management.

Groups: Payment is required for all missed group therapy sessions, regardless of your reason for missing, even when you notify us in advance of your absence from group. The group therapy fee will not be waived.

Emergencies

Generally, first call your primary individual therapist when emergencies arise. When your primary therapist is out of town or otherwise unavailable for extended periods of time, you can call other DBTCSD therapists (all phone numbers are listed at the end of this consent form). We may not always be available to you immediately by telephone but for emergencies you can expect a call back within about two hours. If you have a clinical emergency, you can also call the Crisis Line at 1-800-479-3339. If you believe you cannot maintain your own safety and life until we are in contact, or it is a medical emergency, we expect you to telephone 911 or go to a hospital emergency room and discuss your current situation and the possibility of admission to the hospital's psychiatric unit. We require that you notify us via telephone of psychiatric emergencies and that you do not communicate emergencies to us via email or telephone text messages.

Therapy Termination

Clients who miss four consecutive weeks of individual therapy sessions (or four consecutive groups) will not be allowed to continue in individual DBT or skills training for a period lasting up to six months. When this happens, clients can apply to reenter our DBT program. We ask that planned absences be discussed with the primary therapist far in advance if the absences will result in missing more than two weeks of therapy.

Audio Recording

Group therapists record their skills lectures at the clinic so that their clients can listen to missed lectures, and to confirm the effectiveness of their teaching. In addition, trainee therapists record individual therapy sessions and phone calls. Other therapists occasionally record their sessions to get consultation from other DBT therapists, but they will not record your individual sessions unless we obtain additional written consent. However, if the DBTCSD clinical team believes that you are at high risk for suicide and you do not consent to audio recording,

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you may not be eligible to receive services at the DBT Center of San Diego and be referred to another DBT program or similar psychological service.

Remote Video Psychotherapy

DBTCSD provides therapy via video communications (telehealth) to increase accessibility and reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Although we use video communications services that meet the requirements Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) for securing electronic patient health information, no video communication is guaranteed to always protect patient privacy. Criminals could gain unauthorized access to your personal information by accessing our HIPAA-compliant audio/video communications. By signing below, you are agreeing to only use our video services if you accept these privacy risks.

Release of Information for Billing Purposes

Our clinic policy is to provide relevant billing information to whoever pays for your therapy, including missed sessions, your identifying information (e.g., date of birth), and diagnosis codes, which helps with insurance reimbursement. By signing this consent form, you are authorizing us to provide your personal information for billing purposes.

Insurance Coverage

We are currently not contracted as an in-network provider with any insurance company. Therefore, we do not generally submit insurance claims or bill insurance companies, and ask you pay the full fee for each session in advance or at the time of service, as specified on page 2. Most insurance companies do not reimburse sessions with unlicensed therapists, and many limit reimbursement for remote sessions delivered through telephone or video (telehealth). It is your responsibility to verify how much your insurance company will reimburse you for your sessions. We do not guarantee any aspect of insurance reimbursement.

Risks of Psychotherapy

There are no guarantees that you will benefit from treatment will that. It is even possible that adverse effects can occur, like some worsening of symptoms or interpersonal difficulties. The length and outcome of treatment is based upon your motivation for and commitment to treatment, complexity of the symptom profile, and other factors. At any time, you may ask us to explain the approach and techniques, or express any concerns you have about your treatment. You may also choose to end treatment at any time – we only ask that you discuss this with us in advance so that we can try to work out any problems between us. If there are other therapists or alternative treatments that might better serve you, we will discuss these with you at that time.

I have reviewed the above information and have had an opportunity to ask questions. I agree to the policies and procedures described above. I have received a copy of this agreement and will read it thoroughly before my second session and ask questions to clarify the conditions under which I consent to treatment.

Furthermore, I give DBTCSD permission to thank _____ for sending me to DBTCSD.

Client's printed name(s): _____

Client's signature: _____ Date: _____

Client's signature: _____ Date: _____

DBTCSD Treatment Team

The DBTCSD treatment team is headed by Milton Brown. Dr. Brown received a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Washington in 2002 and completed two years of post-doctoral training in clinical psychology and behavior therapy at the Behavioral Research and Therapy Clinics (University of Washington). During these positions he received ten years of training in DBT from Marsha Linehan. He completed his clinical internship at the Veteran Affairs Palo Alto Healthcare System, which included training at the National Center for Post-traumatic stress disorder. Currently he holds a position as an assistant professor at the California School of Professional Psychology at Alliant International University, for which he teaches classes on cognitive behavior therapy and DBT. His clinical work and research focus on the evaluation and treatment of anxiety disorders, borderline personality disorder, shame, and self-hatred. He holds active psychology licenses in California (Lic# PSY20785) and New York (Lic # 024873-01).

Staff Therapist Employees

Amanda Gutierrez received a Psy.D. in clinical psychology from Azusa Pacific University in 2009 and completed her post-doctoral training at the Sharp Mesa Vista Hospital DBT Intensive Outpatient Program. 2005-2006 she worked at the DBT program at Harbor Medical Center at University of California at Los Angeles. She holds an active psychology license in the state of California (Lic # PSY23873).

Kristen Dahlin received a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the California School of Professional Psychology. She has extensive experience treating personality disorders, anxiety disorders, self-injury, and eating disorders. She holds an active psychology license in the state of California (Lic # PSY30126).

Jason Weingarten received a Psy.D. in clinical psychology from Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology, Yeshiva University in 2011, completing his pre-doctoral internship at NY Harbor Healthcare, Manhattan VA Hospital and his post-doctoral training at a private practice DBT clinic in Manhattan. He holds an active psychology license in the states of New York (Lic #019647-1) and California (PSY28756).

Rachel Slater received a Psy.D. in school-clinical child psychology from Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology at Yeshiva University in 2020. She completed advanced training at Yale University, School of Medicine, where she treated children, adolescents, and young adults struggling with emotion dysregulation, chronic suicidality, personality disorders, and trauma-related disorders. She has met the licensure requirements in the state of New York, but is not yet licensed in California. Her work is closely supervised by our licensed DBT therapists, and she is registered as a psychological associate.

Cara Dochat received a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from San Diego State University and the University of California in 2023 (SDSU/UCSD joint doctoral program). She is currently registered as a psychological associate is not yet licensed in California. Her work is closely supervised by our licensed DBT therapists.

Andrew Amabile received a Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Washington in 2023. He is currently registered as a psychological associate is not yet licensed in California. His work is closely supervised by our licensed DBT therapists.

Courtney Gingras received a M.A. in clinical mental health counseling from University of San Diego in 2022. She is currently an associate professional clinical counselor and is not yet licensed in California. Her work is closely supervised by our licensed DBT therapists.

Amber Brown is currently a freshman in college, with the goal of eventually becoming a clinical psychologist. She helps with our teen skills group and is closely supervised by the licensed DBT therapists and Dr. Brown, who is her father. She is not licensed.

If you wish to make a complaint about our activities as therapists, you can contact the California Board of Psychology (866-503-3221) or the Board of Behavioral Sciences (916-574-7830 www.bbs.ca.gov).