Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) Telephone Skills Coaching information for patients
This leaflet gives you information on...

• What telephone coaching is and why it is an important part of DBT

• When and how you can access telephone coaching

• What you can expect from a telephone coaching session

• How you can prepare for a telephone coaching session

Your clinician’s name:

..............................................

Tel. .................................
What is phone coaching?

Phone coaching is one of the important aspects of Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT). It is available to help you practice and use your skills between sessions so that you can apply them to your day-to-day life.

Phone coaching is not....

About 'offloading' and they are not additional therapy sessions.

They are not meant for talking through a crisis in great detail. They are to help you in getting through the crisis without using behaviours such as self-harm. Talking in detail and problem solving can be done in the next therapy session.

What can I expect from a call?

Calls are brief and focussed on skills. They usually last between 5 to 10 minutes.

You will usually be asked to give a brief description of the current situation, then the therapist will discuss the skills you have tried and review other skills that might help.

We can call you back so that you do not have to pay for the phone call. Please ask the therapist this when you speak with them. Alternatively you can text us to receive a call.

Please be aware however, that calls and texts will not always be immediately responded to and you may need to wait until your therapist is free to speak to you.
When should I call?

• If you are in crisis and need help to prevent self-harm/suicidal behaviour or other behaviours you are working on in therapy. You are expected to call for coaching before you engage in any self-harm behaviours and be willing to work on using skills instead.

• If you are having difficulty using the skills in a certain situation. You may just need clarification or to ask a question. There may not be a crisis present.

• If you have experienced a difficulty or breakdown in your relationship with your therapist and need to repair this prior to the next session.

• Or you have used your skills effectively and want to share this with your therapist!

When can I not call?

In DBT there is a ‘24-hour rule’, which states that clients cannot call for coaching if they have self harmed within the past 24 hours. The rule is meant to encourage you to reach out for help and support before a crisis and before you may self harm.

If you do call during this time, this will be discussed in the call, and you may be encouraged to call elsewhere.

Who do I call?

You will be given your individual DBT therapist’s work mobile number when you start work together. They will discuss the times they are around and when you can and can’t call.

DBT phone coaching is not available on weekends or evenings. Most DBT therapists work 9am-4pm and will accept calls or texts within these times.
What if I can’t get through?

Your therapist will not always be available immediately and we encourage you to use your Distress Tolerance Skills (which you will be learning) at these times.

You can also call our office number on 01908 607501 between Monday-Friday 9am-4pm. If no-one is available here you can leave a message and a member of the team will get back to you at the earliest convenience.

If you are feeling at risk of suicide or deliberate self-harm and feel you cannot keep yourself safe and cannot wait for telephone coaching, you can access emergency mental health services via the A&E at Milton Keynes Hospital.

What do I need to do before calling?

Before you call we expect that you will have completed the ‘DBT Phone Coaching Worksheet’ which you will have received from your therapist, which asks you to do the following:

• Describe the problem or difficulty
• Describe what skills you have already used
• Describe what specific skills you need help with
• Describe what other skills or supports you can use if your therapist is not immediately available
Want to find out more about Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) Skills?

This is a website belonging to another CAMHS team who offer DBT. They have developed a great DBT resource called the 4D Toolkit. There are lots of useful downloadable DBT PDF’s and video clips also explaining concepts such as Mindfulness.

2. “dbt112” - an app
This is a free app, which outlines all the main skills in DBT and has sections to complete yourself, like a crisis plan.

3. “Stem 4/ Calm Harm” - an app
This is a free app designed to help young people resist the urge to harm themselves using comfort, distract, express and release strategies.

4. “Mindfulness” - an app
Another free app with lots and lots of mindfulness exercises to try

5. YouTube
There are lots of clips and information about DBT on YouTube. You also might want to search for “What the heck is DBT?”, which is a fantastic short animation about what to expect from DBT
Feedback, complaints and compliments

We are always pleased to hear what you think about our services. Sharing your views and experiences can help us to make improvements. If you have received good treatment or service and would like to thank the staff involved, please let us know by contacting the Patient Support Service (PSS) by email on feedback@nhs.net or call 0300 013 4799. They will make sure that your feedback is passed onto the service or individual as quickly as possible.

If you are unhappy with any part of the care you received from the Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) DBT service please speak to the Service Manager or your DBT therapist in the first instance. You can also contact the Patient Support Service if you wish to make a complaint.

Tell us, we’re listening!

We also collect feedback, complaints and compliments online. Tell us what you think at www.cnwl.nhs.uk/feedback then we’ll share and learn from your feedback.

Contact details

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