1. Predicting dropout in outpatient dialectical behavior therapy with patients with borderline personality disorder receiving psychiatric disability

**Background**
Rates of treatment dropout in outpatient Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) in the community can be as high as 24% to 58%, making dropout a great concern. The primary purpose of this article was to examine predictors of dropout from DBT in a community mental health setting.

**Methods**
Participants were 56 consumers with borderline personality disorder (BPD) who were psychiatrically disabled participating in a larger feasibility trial of Dialectical Behavior Therapy-Accepting the Challenges of Exiting the System. The following variables were examined to see whether they predicted dropout in DBT: age, education level, baseline level of distress, baseline level of non-acceptance of emotional responses, and skills module in which a consumer started DBT skills group. These variables were chosen based on known predictors of dropout in consumers with BPD and in DBT, as well as an interest in what naturally occurring variables might impact dropout.

**Results**
The dropout rate in this sample was 51.8%. Results of the logistic regression show that younger age, higher levels of baseline distress, and a higher level of baseline non-acceptance of emotional responses were significantly associated with dropout. The DBT skills module in which an individual started group did not predict dropout.

**Conclusions**
The implications of these findings are that knowledge of consumer age and pretreatment levels of distress and non-acceptance of emotional responses can impact providers’ choice of commitment and treatment strategies to reduce dropout. Future research should examine these strategies, as well as the impact of predictor variables on outcome and reasons for dropout.


Regulating emotions, refraining from impulsive, maladaptive behavior, and communicating effectively are considered primary treatment needs among jail inmates. Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT; Linehan, 1993a) skills address these deficits and have been implemented in long-term correctional settings, but have yet to be adapted for general population inmates in short-term jail settings. This study assessed the feasibility and acceptability of a DBT skills group in a jail setting, as well as its utility in improving coping skills and emotional/behavioral dysregulation. Male jail inmates participated in an 8-week DBT skills group and completed pre- and posttest assessments of coping skills, emotional/behavioral dysregulation, and measures of treatment acceptability. Out of 27 who started therapy, 16 completed it, primarily due to involuntary attrition such as transfer to another correctional facility. Although several logistical issues arose during this pilot study, preliminary results suggest that a brief DBT skills group is
feasible and acceptable in a jail setting, and may improve coping skills and reduce externalization of blame among general population jail inmates. This study lays the groundwork for larger, controlled trials of abbreviated DBT skills groups for general population inmates in short-term jail settings.

3. **A Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Group Case Study on Mothers With Severe Emotion Dysregulation**
   CG Martin, LE Roos, M Zalewski, N Cummins - Cognitive and Behavioral Practice, 2016

Parenting is an emotionally demanding endeavor, which can be particularly challenging for parents who struggle with psychopathology and lack the regulation skills to manage their own emotional lability. Although dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) is an effective treatment that directly targets emotion dysregulation, little is known about whether DBT might also improve parenting behaviors. A DBT skills group was employed to examine whether DBT skills are utilized by mothers in their parenting and whether skill use improves parenting. Four mothers with severe emotion dysregulation who met diagnostic criteria for at least one Axis I disorder were part of a case study, in which they completed a DBT skills group for mothers, and two of the mothers participated in an in-depth exit interview regarding their use of DBT skills in their parenting. The mothers reported substantial changes in their parenting during the exit interview and modest improvements were found for parenting in pre- to posttreatment parenting assessments. This paper describes the various parenting contexts in which DBT skills were used and discusses maternal emotion regulation as a potential pathway from DBT skills to improved parenting.

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**Other Articles Relevant to DBT & BPD**

4. **Ethical Issues and Practical Challenges in Suicide Research: Collaboration With Institutional Review Boards.**
   Hom, Melanie A.; Podlogar, Matthew C.; Stanley, Ian H.; Joiner, Thomas E.

*Background:* Research with human subjects represents a critical avenue for suicide prevention efforts; however, such research is not without its ethical and practical challenges. Specifically, given the nature of research with individuals at elevated risk for suicide (e.g., increased concerns regarding participant safety, adverse events, liability, difficulties often arise during the institutional review board (IRB) evaluation and approval process. *Aims:* This paper aims to discuss IRB-related issues associated with suicide prevention research, including researcher and IRB panel member responsibilities, suicide risk assessment and management ethics and procedures, informed consent considerations, preparation of study protocols, and education and training. Points to consider and components to potentially include in an IRB application for suicide-related research are additionally provided. *Method:* Literature relevant to ethics in suicide research and suicide risk assessment and management was reviewed and synthesized. *Results:* Suicide research can be conducted in accordance with ethical principles while also furthering the science of suicide prevention. *Conclusion:* Despite the challenging nature of suicide prevention research, empirically informed solutions exist to address difficulties that may
emerge in interfacing with IRBs. There remain areas for improvement in the IRB approval process that warrant further investigation and work.

5. **Cognitive and affective processing of social exclusion in borderline personality disorder and social anxiety disorder**
   L Gutz, S Roepke, B Renneberg - Behaviour Research and Therapy, 2016

Causal attributions of social events are crucial for understanding emotional responses. Aim of the study was to identify appraisal processes in response to social exclusion in borderline personality disorder (BPD) and social anxiety disorder (SAD). Twenty-five patients with BPD, 25 patients with SAD and 25 healthy controls played Cyberball, a virtual ball-tossing paradigm that experimentally induces social exclusion. Causal attributions, subjective feelings and action tendencies in response to social exclusion were assessed. Both clinical groups showed more internal attributions and less control attributions than the control group, reported a higher increase in self-focused negative emotions, along with more escape tendencies and less intent to engage in pleasant activities. But only the BPD group reported higher hostile-intent attributions and more aggressive action tendencies compared to healthy controls.

6. **A neurobiological model of borderline personality disorder: systematic and integrative review**

Abstract: Borderline personality disorder (BPD) is a severe mental disorder with a multifactorial etiology. The development and maintenance of BPD is sustained by diverse neurobiological factors that contribute to the disorder’s complex clinical phenotype. These factors may be identified using a range of techniques to probe alterations in brain systems that underlie BPD. We systematically searched the scientific literature for empirical studies on the neurobiology of BPD, identifying 146 articles in three broad research areas: neuroendocrinology and biological specimens; structural neuroimaging; and functional neuroimaging. We consolidate the results of these studies and provide an integrative model that attempts to incorporate the heterogeneous findings. The model specifies interactions among endogenous stress hormones, neurometabolism, and brain structures and circuits involved in emotion and cognition. The role of the amygdala in BPD is expanded to consider its functions in coordinating the brain’s dynamic evaluation of the relevance of emotional stimuli in the context of an individual’s goals and motivations. Future directions for neurobiological research on BPD are discussed, including implications for the Research Domain Criteria framework, accelerating genetics research by incorporating endophenotypes and gene × environment interactions, and exploring novel applications of neuroscience findings to treatment research.

7. **Borderline Personality Disorder and the Effects of Instructed Emotional Avoidance or Acceptance in Daily Life**
This study examined the effects of avoidance- versus acceptance-oriented emotion regulation instructions among individuals with borderline personality disorder (BPD; \( n = 48 \)), major depressive disorder (MDD; \( n = 54 \)), and non-psychiatric controls (NPC; \( n = 50 \)) using ecological momentary assessment. Participants were randomly assigned to either accept or avoid negative emotions, and monitored their moods, urges, and distress tolerance several times per day over 6 days. Avoidance instructions resulted in reduced negative affect and urges for maladaptive behaviors uniquely among BPD participants. Together with past research, and consistent with treatment approaches emphasizing the short-term use of skills to avoid or distract from emotions (e.g., DBT; Linehan, 1993b, 2015), these findings suggest that avoidance of negative emotions may have temporary benefits for individuals with BPD. Acceptance-oriented strategies may take longer or may require more extensive training to be beneficial for emotional functioning in everyday life in BPD.

8. **Attention to emotional stimuli in borderline personality disorder— a review of the influence of dissociation, self-reference, and psychotherapeutic interventions**

D Winter - Borderline Personality Disorder and Emotion ..., 2016

Interactions between attention and processing of emotional stimuli shed light on both sensitivity to emotional stimuli as well as emotion dysregulation. Both of the latter processes have been proposed as central characteristics of altered emotion processing in those with borderline personality disorder (BPD). This review first summarizes the conflicting behavioural, psychophysiological and neuroimaging evidence for the hypothesis that emotional dysregulation should be reflected by higher distractibility through emotional stimuli in those with BPD. Dissociation, self-reference, as well as symptom severity modulated by psychotherapeutic interventions are proposed to help clarify divergent findings. Data suggest an association of dissociation with impaired task continuation during the presentation of interfering emotional and neutral stimuli, as well as high recruitment of neuronal attention networks together with a blunted emotional response. Considering self-reference, evidence suggests that negative rather than positive information may be more self-relevant to those with BPD. This may be due to a negative self-concept and self-evaluation. Social or trauma-relevant information attracts more attention from individuals with BPD and thus suggests higher self-relevance. After psychotherapeutic interventions, initial evidence may indicate normalization of the way attention and emotional stimuli interact in BPD. When studying attention-emotion interactions in BPD, methodological heterogeneities regarding sample, task, and stimulus characteristics need to be considered. When doing so, dissociation, self-reference, and psychotherapeutic interventions offer promising targets for future studies on attention-emotion interactions in those with BPD. This could promote a deeper insight into the affected individuals’ struggle with emotions.

9. **A systematic review of risk factors prospectively associated with borderline personality disorder: Taking stock and moving forward.**

SD Stepp, SA Lazarus, AL Byrd - Personality Disorders: Theory, Research, and …, 2016

There is an urgent need to identify signs that harbor onset of borderline personality disorder (BPD). Advancement in this area is required to refine developmental theories, discover etiological mechanisms, improve early detection, and achieve our ultimate goal of prevention. Though many studies have supported a wide range of factors that increase subsequent risk for BPD, this literature has yet to be critically evaluated, and there are no comprehensive reviews that examine and integrate these findings. To address this limitation, we conducted a systematic
review to summarize and synthesize the current literature. Electronic databases were systematically searched for prospective, longitudinal studies that examined risk factors of subsequent BPD outcomes (features, symptoms, diagnosis), resulting in a total of 39 studies, reflecting 24 unique samples. Though increased risk for BPD was reliably attributed to multiple factors within social, family, maltreatment, and child domains, the most striking limitation of this research is its lack of disorder-specific findings. Additional limitations, including notable heterogeneity in sampling methodology, symptom assessment methodology, and developmental timing of assessments, are discussed in terms of how close we are to pinpointing who is most at risk and why in an attempt to provide a roadmap for future research.