

# A DBT Culture

## Reporter

Donna Harrison at [Annesley House](#), Partnerships in Care on 23 January 2015.

## What do you do\*?



We have created a service where all psychologists, some nursing staff and an OT are trained in [Dialectical Behaviour Therapy](#) and all staff and patients receive periodic awareness sessions. As a result this now permeates the culture of the organisation.

## What is excellent about it?

Many of the people we support have a diagnosis of Personality Disorder and DBT is recommended by NICE as an evidence-based intervention for patients with a diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder. Whilst some services may offer some aspects of the DBT package, we are able to offer the full range including individual therapy, group skills, consultation and skills generalisation.

We have tailored handouts to our patient group by making them easier to read and visually appealing. The ward routine includes weekly mindfulness sessions for staff and patients who learn alongside each other, and some of these sessions are led by patients. We routinely deliver staff and patient awareness sessions on the different modules of DBT, these sessions raise staff and patients understanding and awareness about the programme.

Along with [RAID](#), this DBT culture provides a unifying approach to intervention, helping everyone to see that individual components are part of a larger whole. Adopting the culture enables the intervention to move out of the therapy or counselling room into everyday interactions.

The group sessions include patients from different services (two locked rehabilitation services and a high dependency unit) and this helps participants to meet people outside their circle and gain hope from seeing those at other stages of the journey.

## Stories of Striving for Excellence in Locked Rehabilitation Services

Partnerships in Care in the Midlands has been developing their uptake of DBT for ten years now and this continuity of commitment combined with low turnover of staffing has helped to embed the practice. The company has spent money and staff time on training and supervision. A major commitment has been to the fortnightly DBT consultation meetings in which all trained DBT practitioners spend two hours reflecting on their practice and checking that their work is true to the model of care.

The service is well connected to the originators of the approach and wider networks of practice, so that there is external challenge as well as internal reflection in the service.

The DBT PiC Midlands team have published two chapters on DBT which is due for publication in the Oxford Specialist Handbook of Medical Psychotherapy.

### Even better next time?

Marsha Lineham, who pioneered the DBT approach, has recently revised her work and the team are currently adopting the new version.

In order to maintain the DBT culture in our service we need to continue to run staff awareness sessions.

The team's 'horizon scanning' has brought to their attention an innovative addition to the DBT package which has been delivered a number of times and is called 'Walk the Middle Pathway'. This has been created elsewhere but has been judged to be coherent with the wider DBT package and has been adapted for local use.

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\* [NDTi](#) was commissioned to deliver a staff development programme promoting a more personalised and inclusive approach for those living and working in locked rehabilitation services in the English East Midlands. While the current inspection routine has a focus on risk prevention, our job is to focus on sharing positive practice and innovation. Peter Bates led the programme and wrote up these stories.

The Excellence Programme is for independent and voluntary sector providers of locked residential rehabilitation services for people with mental health issues or learning disabilities living in the East Midlands. It has delivered:

- A series of seminars for key staff and people using services to promote a more personalised and inclusive approach
- A shared sense of what excellent services look like, captured in an [Excellence Framework](#) document.

## Stories of Striving for Excellence in Locked Rehabilitation Services

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- *Learning exchange visits between members which lead to individual action plans for each service*
- *Excellence stories that capture and share ideas for service improvement.*

*These case studies have arisen from members of the Excellence programme and NDTi has not independently verified what we have been told. Some are radical and ambitious approaches that transform the whole service, while others consist of small steps that may not seem especially exciting to other readers, but make a difference to one person. Some readers might even question whether progress is being made at all! The overall purpose is to stimulate reflection and celebration for every step forward, whether large or small.*