

# Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)



How Reconnecting with Present Experience Can Help Your Loved One Heal

## What is DBT?

**Dialectical Behavior Therapy** is an evidence-based form of psychotherapy that teaches individuals to manage intense emotions, tolerate distress, and build healthier relationships. Developed for conditions marked by emotional instability and impulsive behavior, DBT equips clients with practical skills designed to interrupt the cycles that fuel chronic relapse.

## How It Works: The DBT Skills Framework

- 1) Mindfulness**  
Observe thoughts and feelings without judgment or impulsive reaction.
- 2) Distress Tolerance**  
Survive crisis moments without worsening the situation or turning to substances.
- 3) Emotional Regulation**  
Use guided experiential techniques to access and process blocked or avoided feelings.
- 4) Interpersonal Effectiveness**  
Build and maintain relationships while protecting self-respect and personal boundaries.

## Goals of DBT

- Reduce impulsive and self-destructive behaviors
- Develop tolerance for distress and uncertainty
- Build awareness of emotions as they arise
- Strengthen capacity for healthy, stable relationships
- Replace reactive patterns with intentional responses

## Therapeutic Benefits

- Reduced emotional crises and impulsive reactions
- Better ability to manage stress without substances
- More stable relationships and daily functioning
- Enhanced capacity to sit with discomfort
- Practical skills that support long-term sobriety

## **DBT is Highly Effective For Treating the Following Conditions:**

- Substance Use Disorder
- Depression
- Eating Disorders
- Borderline Personality Disorder
- Anxiety Disorders
- PTSD

## DBT at Burning Tree Ranch

Most programs introduce DBT skills in group settings over a matter of weeks, giving clients just enough exposure to recognize the concepts but not enough time to practice them when it matters most. For chronic relapsers, surface-level DBT instruction has not been enough.

Our **long-term, progress-based model** integrates DBT throughout treatment, giving clients the repetition and real-world practice that skill-building requires. Clients do not just learn distress tolerance in a session. They apply it under actual pressure, receive feedback, and demonstrate consistent behavioral change before they advance.



*“Emotional regulation does not come from understanding a concept. It comes from practicing it under pressure, failing, adjusting, and trying again. That takes months, not weeks.”*

 **Brook McKenzie, LCDC**  
CEO, Burning Tree Ranch



## Dual Diagnosis Treatment Using DBT

DBT has proven especially effective for individuals managing both substance use disorder and co-occurring conditions marked by emotional dysregulation, making it a natural fit for dual-diagnosis treatment. For chronic relapsers, untreated emotional instability and substance use form a cycle that neither condition can break alone.

At Burning Tree Ranch, we integrate DBT with CBT, EMDR, and individual therapy to create a coordinated dual-diagnosis treatment plan that addresses the emotional, cognitive, and trauma-based factors sustaining the relapse cycle, guiding clients toward lasting, sustainable sobriety.

### Dual Diagnosis Defined:

The presence of **both a substance use disorder and a mental health condition** occurring together. Effective treatment for dual-diagnosis addictions must address both aspects simultaneously.



### Have Other Treatment Programs Missed the Deeper Issues?

Burning Tree Ranch is the Nation's only authentic long-term treatment program for chronic relapse. Call us at (866) 287-2877 or visit us online at [www.BurningTree.com](http://www.BurningTree.com).

**Disclaimer:** Burning Tree Ranch aims to enhance the quality of life for individuals battling substance use and mental health disorders through well-researched and professionally reviewed content. Our publications focus on the nature of behavioral health conditions, available treatments, and their outcomes. Reviewed by licensed experts, our material is informative but not a replacement for professional advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the guidance of a licensed health provider for any medical or clinical concerns.