

PSHDC NEWSLETTER

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DBT Discussion: Dialectical Thinking

By Dr. Debra Resnick

The Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Group at PSHDC offers individuals strategies to help them balance their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors more effectively. This begins with dialectics. The term "dialectic" essentially means that two opposites can both be true

(<http://www.reference.com/browse/dialectic's>). We can reduce extreme thoughts and emotions by practicing dialectics.



Increasing Employee Productivity Through Health & Wellness

By Dr. Richard P. Johnson

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) were developed over 60 years ago to assist employers in improving productivity through health and wellness. Since that time these programs have become instrumental in making the workplace safer, and employers more invested in employee growth and satisfaction.

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The extreme thought on the left is balanced by the truth that although we may feel alone, most often the reality is that we are not alone.

The same is true of emotions that accompany extreme thoughts. For example, believing that others are ignoring us may result in a feeling of rage. Although rage is an extreme emotion, looking deeper into ourselves we may find very different emotions such as fear or sadness. These feelings may be overshadowed by an intense emotion like rage, but if we look for them we can reduce the intensity of a feeling such as rage and bring ourselves into more balance emotionally.

We all have extreme thoughts sometimes. Dialectic thinking can help keep us grounded in reality, rather than letting ourselves get carried away with unrealistic extremes. The balance that dialectics create enables us to cope with challenging situations, rather than letting extreme emotions and thoughts create unhealthy or destructive behaviors.

For more information about Dialectic Behavior therapy, contact Dr. Debra Resnick at extension 12.

Taking the Pepsi Challenge!

By Dr. Suzanne Robison

The “Refresh Everything” Pepsi Grant challenge has earned several worthy causes much needed funding in 2010. PSHDC is proud to announce that we will be among the many causes competing for grants throughout the month of November!

Many local professionals and parents contact PSHDC seeking a Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) group for adolescents who are in need of an adjunct or alternative to their current treatment modalities. PSHDC’s adolescent groups offer many invaluable tools to these youth, such as interpersonal skill training, emotion regulation



Adolescent hands together; forming a circle to symbolize their DBT group, and the sense of wholeness DBT has given them.

How to Get Your Adult Children Out on Their Own

By Dr. Suzanne Robison

With unemployment rates rising, and the media proclaiming that today’s age 25 has become the new 18, many parents are faced with adult children living in their home for longer than they had anticipated. This not only creates uncertainty and anxiety in parents, but leaves youth without the ability to support themselves feeling disillusioned, dependent, and depressed. This cycle can create what Seligman termed “learned helplessness” (1975), making independent living for everyone seem to be an unreachable goal.

To assist with these problems that so many families are facing, PSHDC has created a Young

skills, mindfulness skills, and distress tolerance skills. As such, the group has become hugely popular almost beyond our means, requiring us to start seeking bigger space and a wider range of resources.

The Pepsi Refresh Everything grant application submitted by PSHDC is an effort to enhance the DBT services offered in our Fort Washington office, and will be used for:

- Family program development
- Marketing
- Quality Improvement research
- Training
- Scholarships for youth
- Larger group space and more sophisticated resources

To win, this requires us to gain daily votes from our local community members. Please consider taking a moment each day in November to help these youth get the resources they need to get the most out of DBT. Log on to Refresheverything.com and search for PSHDC.

Adult Independent Living (YAIL) Group. This is an ongoing group that is offered to individuals age 17–25, who need help with the following life skills:

- ❖ **FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**
- ❖ **WORK ETHIC**
- ❖ **FAMILY PLANNING and ROLE MODELING**
- ❖ **MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS**
- ❖ **SELF CARE**
- ❖ **MANAGING A HOUSEHOLD**
- ❖ **BUYING AND MAINTAINING AN AUTOMOBILE**
- ❖ **STUDYING TIPS AND CAREER PLANNING**

Contact Dr. Suzanne Robison at extension 35 to determine if the Young Adult Independent Living Group is for you or a youth that you know.

Does Your Child Have Aspergers?

By Rachel Goren

Autism is a spectrum disorder, meaning that it can have symptoms that range from very low functioning to very high functioning. Asperger's is commonly known as high functioning Autism, and the individual often shows symptoms that may be difficult to diagnose. Like any other spectrum disorder, Asperger's disorder is made up of a cluster of symptoms that may resemble other disorders such as ADHD, mood, or anxiety disorders. These symptoms then are often overlooked by parents, teachers, or health care providers. For instance, kids with Asperger's may get good grades, have many interests and hobbies, and are rarely a behavior problem for parents or teachers. Here are some signs and symptoms

(<http://www.americanaspergers.org/aspergers-in-children>) that may require further assessment:

- **Ruminating** – Fixating on a subject or object for an unusual length of time; difficulty with change or transitions
- **Limited empathy** – Self-focused to the point of minimizing ways he or she impacts others
- **Lack of social skills** – Social awkwardness, misinterpreting other's facial expressions or body language; withdrawing into hobbies or tasks rather than preferring social interactions
- **Difficulty connecting emotionally with others** – Poor communication and/or difficulty expressing emotions; odd speech patterns

As the above do not qualify a child for a diagnosis of Asperger's, this should merely be used as a guide to consider whether or not a child should undergo a comprehensive assessment by a trained professional. In addition, there are many wonderful resources for families seeking help for this disorder. In order to avoid misdiagnoses or treatment failures, be sure to collaborate with providers, community members, and school professionals if someone you love is in need.

Satiating Stress

By Dr. Michelle Spencer

Although we hear a lot about stress, it often isn't clear what stress it is. Some of us think of it as something that happens *to* us – work pressure, school pressure, or being overwhelmed by all of the day to day demands on our time. In reality, stress happens *within* us; it is our emotional, physical, and mental experiences to these live situations.

Understanding Stress

The American Institute of Stress (2010) points out that “stress”, as defined in 1936 by Hans Selye, is “the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change”. More specifically, positive events like getting married, buying a home or getting promoted can cause what's known as eustress; while negative events like deaths, losing a job, or experiencing an accident can cause us distress. How we perceive the event or stressor determines its impact on our emotional and physical health.

Managing Stress

Stress management lies in the way in which we manage our perception of the stressor and our behaviors following that stressor. Since each person experiences a given stressor differently, coping with it is likely to be different for each of us. In other words, there is NO SINGLE, right way to cope with stress. So first and foremost, you have to know yourself. What calms you down? What brings you comfort? What amps you up? Here are a few things to consider before deciding how to respond to stress:

1. If you are a task-oriented problem solver, analyze the situation and take direct action.
2. If you are emotion-oriented and tend to like talking through your feelings then spend time with a confidant during times of stress.

Please see Satiating Stress on Page 5

Finding the Right Therapist

By Rachel Goren

For those of you who have either thought about, been referred to, or have heard about the potential benefits of psychotherapy, there are several areas to consider when seeking therapeutic support. What follows are 6 important aspects to consider when seeking out a practitioner who can best meet your mental health needs.

1. **Discipline/Approach**—Therapists can range from specializing in only one type of discipline to practicing multiple approaches. Ask your therapist about his/her approach and then research to ensure it matches your needs
2. **Setting and location**—Your therapist's office should make you feel at home. Make sure it's a convenient location to stop en route to and from home/work
3. **Cost and coverage**—Call your insurance carrier using the behavioral health number on the back of your card to find providers in your network. Pay out of pocket only for specialized services that are necessary, or that you've

determined cannot be provided by a provider in your network

4. Experience and education—Providers can be licensed, have undergraduate or graduate degrees, and may have 0–to several years experience. Be aware of these variables and discuss them openly with those you trust.

5. Relatability—Research shows that it's the therapeutic relationship that creates change more than any other factor (Hall, 1977). A healthy, strong connection should be present from the first encounter

6. Recommendations—Word of mouth is valuable in choosing a reputable practitioner to work with. Choose a professional based on family, friends, or professional's recommendations.

If you are not satisfied with your provider, most insurance companies have websites that offer extensive referral networks so that you can locate professionals that match your needs. Should you have any questions about these categories, contact one of our professionals at PSHDC.

EAT PRAY LOVE: A WOMEN'S GROUP

By Dr. Margaret Preston

The movie release of the bestselling book *Eat, Pray, Love* (2006) by Elizabeth Gilbert has sparked many people's interest in breaking free from suffering, empowering them to seek ways to create happy, healthy lives for themselves. In the spirit of the story's character, PSHDC has developed a weekly group for women who are:

- ❖ *Feeling unfulfilled in their marriage*
- ❖ *Fearful of change*
- ❖ *Sacrificing their own happiness for that of others*
- ❖ *Feeling confused, guilty, angry, or resentful*

This group offers women in need food for the soul, nourishment for the spirit, meditation for enhanced mindfulness and strategies for finding self love.

"You were given life; it is your duty (and also your entitlement as a human being) to find something beautiful within life, no matter how slight."

—Elizabeth Gilbert, Eat Pray Love, 2006, pg #115

To join this exciting new group contact Dr. Margaret Preston at extension 26.

Increasing Employee Productivity from page 1

Job satisfaction is directly related to productivity, increased safety records, employee retention and profitability (Gallup, 2002). Although the current economy is forcing many employers to reduce or even eliminate financial incentives to employees, investing in employee wellness is an alternative many companies are finding an invaluable means of showing appreciation to their workforce. PSHDC offers consultative services to employers who may not have access to a large, comprehensive EAP program, but still value the health and well being of their employees. Below are just some of the ways we coordinate with employers to increase productivity.

Health & Wellness Seminars – Offering employees a brief presentation on topics (such as seeking a balanced lifestyle, working with others, managing stress, or prioritizing self care), these seminars are conducted on site, during convenient hours, and can be tailored to meet the unique needs of any workplace.

Executive Coaching – Meeting with leadership to assist with integrating personal and people skills into their daily structure and interactions, and

help with organizing, prioritizing, delegating, and other management functions

Employee Evaluation – Partner with us to evaluate potential employees pre-employment, conduct fitness for duty evaluations, or assist with writing performance improvement plans that will set your employees up for success and protect employers from liability.

Critical Incident Stress Management – this intervention is provided for employees when tragedy hits such as death, employee downsizing, workplace violence, or natural disasters that make employees need a sense of security and psychoeducation about how to handle their reactions to these stressors.

We are proud to be an integral part in developing employees in work sites throughout the tri-state area. To arrange a free workplace consultation contact Dr. Johnson at extension 15.

“Investing in employee wellness is an alternative many companies are finding an invaluable means of showing appreciation to their workforce.”

Satiating Stress from page 3

3. If you are distraction-oriented and need some time to rest your mind and think about or envision the change, then engage in a hobby or task when you feel overwhelmed by stressors.
4. If the stressor is so overwhelming that you can't get a handle on it, get the assistance of a professional.

Finally, all things considered stress PREVENTION is likely to benefit most everyone. Practice prevention by:

- ✓ **Being proactive.** What events are likely to cause you stress? Holidays, birthdays, work commitments? Consider what you can do now to decrease the demands placed on you as the event gets closer.
- ✓ **Clearing the air.** Are there relationship or family issues that are nagging at you? Consider what you can do to clear up misunderstandings and promote communication between involved parties.
- ✓ **Accepting that there are just going to be some situations and things that you either must change or cannot change.** Figure out which is which and work at those you can change and work at changing your attitude towards those you cannot change.
- ✓ **Considering using therapy to explore your needs and enhance your personal growth.**

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Upcoming Topics in 2011:

Suicide Prevention

Spotlight on Groups

DBT: Opposite Action

Spotting Teenage Substance Use

Finding Time for Ourselves

Making it Through Economic Hardship

Parent's Piece: Setting Good Limits

Is your House Cyber Safe?

Post-Partum Depression

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

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