



A comparison of online and face-to-face Dialectical Behaviour Therapy: A parallel-group randomized trial and pragmatic evaluation

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Information Sheet

Introduction

My name is Richard Lakeman. My colleagues (listed above) and I are investigating the differences in outcomes and experiences of people who receive dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT) online or face-to-face.

What is this research about?

DBT is a programme that has traditionally been delivered face-to-face. That is, people meet face-to-face with a therapist, and attend a skills training group face-to-face for the duration of the programme. People sometimes contact their therapist for coaching by phone. Recently it has become common to offer both individual therapy and skills training online.

Our group and other researchers have been exploring the best ways to deliver DBT online to make this very effective programme available to more people. The Australian DBT Institute developed an online DBT programme over five years ago. We have interviewed therapists about their experiences, and most said that online DBT is effective, safe, and most people like it. Some people prefer it to face-to-face DBT.

We wish to compare the effectiveness and experience of a full DBT programme delivered face-to-face and online. There has been no research published that has done this.

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What does this research involve?

If you choose to take part in this research you will be allocated to face-to-face or online individual therapy and skills group training. You have a 50% chance (like tossing a coin) of having therapy online or face-to-face. You will receive the same programme, work with the same allocated therapist and complete the same group programme.

In DBT programmes, people complete questionnaires at the beginning and end of the programme and after each skills module. It is also routine to invite people to complete questionnaires about three months after the programme finishes. These questionnaires are about symptoms, feelings, behaviour, quality of life, and things expected to improve for people who participate in DBT. They can take up to 20 minutes to complete, sometimes longer and are shared with an individual's therapist. If you choose to participate in the research, these questionnaires will have your name and anything that will personally identify you removed and shared with the research team.

Participation is entirely voluntary, and you can withdraw from the research at any time up until the completion of the programme. If you request, any data that has been shared with the research team will be deleted. We hope that people stick with the programme and the type of delivery. However, we do understand that this is not always possible. If you do change types of delivery or do not complete the programme, we would like to know your reasons so we can learn from your experience. A researcher will be in touch to invite you to a brief discussion about your choice. We will also respect your choice not to talk to us.

Optional interviews about experiences

Our team is also interested in exploring the experience of being involved in DBT either online or face-to-face. To do this, we would like to talk to a small number of therapists and participants together (you, your therapist and a researcher) at the beginning, middle and end of therapy. If you would like to participate in this part of the project, there will be a part of the consent form to complete. You may also choose to talk to the researcher alone if you wish or ask the therapist to leave during an interview..

An experienced DBT therapist and researcher will be in touch and discuss a convenient time for both you and your therapist to meet on zoom. We anticipate these interviews will take no longer than 30 minutes. The focus of the interviews will be on expectations, what has been helpful, what skills are proving useful and what challenges you may have faced relating to the kind of delivery. With your permission, the meeting will be audio-recorded but you may ask for the recording to be paused if you want to say something 'off the record'."

Who can take part?

To be eligible to participate, you need to be 18 years of age or above, have been assessed by the team at the Australian DBT Institute and accepted into the programme. You also need to have access to transport and the time to attend the face-to-face programme if you

are allocated to that. If you are allocated to online DBT you need to have access to the internet and a place where you will have privacy.

What are the benefits of taking part?

The Australian DBT Institute will offer a small discount to participants in appreciation of participants' support. This discount will be applied regardless of which group people are allocated to or if they choose to withdraw from the research at any time.

What are the risks associated with this research?

This research does not involve any additional risks beyond participating in the DBT programme. Online and face-to-face delivery has been conducted successfully by the Australian DBT Institute.

It is possible that some participants may be assigned to a type of therapy they do not prefer or are best suited to. This can sometimes be the case in any therapy. If you feel this is the case please first discuss your concerns with your therapist.

Our responsibilities to you.

Therapists and group facilitators whom you will work with have the highest level of integrity and training. The Australian DBT Institute contractors will endeavour to provide you with the highest standard of service whether you choose to participate in research, or whichever mode of delivery you are assigned to. They will also negotiate agreements with you and other skills group members to maintain the safety and privacy of all DBT participants.

We will protect your privacy and confidentiality by ensuring that all data will be de-identified at the time of analysis. That is, anything which could identify you as an individual will be removed. Mainly group data will be reported. That is, the average differences between face-to-face and online groups. Where we write about individual cases, no information that could possibly identify individuals will be shared.

Dissemination of Results

The findings from this research will be published in peer-reviewed journals and presented to the therapy community at conferences. We expect that some findings will also be published in a PhD thesis.

Anonymized data (responses to some questionnaires without any identifying data) may be stored in a public repository so that others may access and check our findings. All data collected in this project will be stored safely and securely at Southern Cross University for a minimum of 15 years after publication.

Inquiries

If you have any questions about this research, please contact the chief investigator, Dr Richard Lakeman (+61 420355374) or email Richard.lakeman@scu.edu.au)

Informed Consent

If you wish to participate in this research, please read, complete and sign the attached consent form. Once signed, please leave it at reception in the box marked 'research' or return it directly to the Australian DBT Institute research officer, Crystal Black, personally or via email (research@dbtinstitute.com.au).

Ethics Approval

This research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Southern Cross University. The approval number is 2022/033.

Complaints

If you have concerns about the **ethical conduct** of this research or the researchers, write to the following:

*The Ethics Complaints Officer
Southern Cross University
PO Box 157
Lismore NSW 2480
Email: ethics.lismore@scu.edu.au*

All information is confidential and will be handled as soon as possible.