

*Understanding the Basics of DBT:  
A 4-Part Foundational Skills Series  
Session 3: Strategies for Emotion Regulation*

Crystal Socha, MS, LPC, CRC, NCC, ACS

June 18, 2024



**Mental Health Technology Transfer Center**  
*Funded by SAMHSA*

**Northeast and Caribbean  
Region 2**

**General Mental  
Health Workforce**

**Provider  
Wellness**

**Youth & Young  
Adult Services**

**School Mental  
Health Workforce**



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## Question and Answers

- Q & A will occur at the end of the call.
- Type your questions in the Q & A feature in Zoom located on the task bar (hover over task bar).
- Note: your question may be visible to other participants.

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AND HOPEFUL

INCLUSIVE AND  
ACCEPTING OF  
DIVERSE CULTURES,  
GENDERS,  
PERSPECTIVES,  
AND EXPERIENCES

HEALING-CENTERED AND  
TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE

INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS  
PARTICIPATING IN THEIR  
OWN JOURNEYS

PERSON-FIRST AND  
FREE OF LABELS

NON-JUDGMENTAL AND  
AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS

RESPECTFUL, CLEAR  
AND UNDERSTANDABLE

CONSISTENT WITH  
OUR ACTIONS,  
POLICIES, AND PRODUCTS

A woman with dark, curly hair and a nose ring is looking out a window. The window shows a view of a blue sky with clouds and green foliage. The woman is in the foreground, and the window is in the background.

# 988

SUICIDE  
& CRISIS  
LIFELINE

**For people experiencing:**

- Suicide, mental health, substance use crisis
- Emotional distress
- People concerned about someone in crisis

# Meet Today's Presenter



Crystal Socha, MS, LPC, CRC, NCC, ACS  
(she/her)



# **Understanding the Basics of DBT: A 4-Part Foundational Skills Series**

Crystal Socha, MS, LPC, CRC, NCC, ACS

# Foundational Series Outline

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## Session 1:

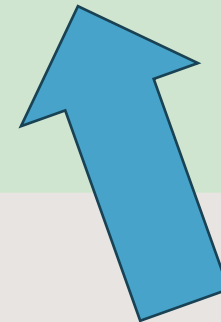
- Introduction to DBT & Strategies for Mindfulness

## Session 2:

- DBT Skills Training: Strategies for Distress Tolerance

## Session 3:

- **DBT Skills Training: Strategies for Emotion Regulation**



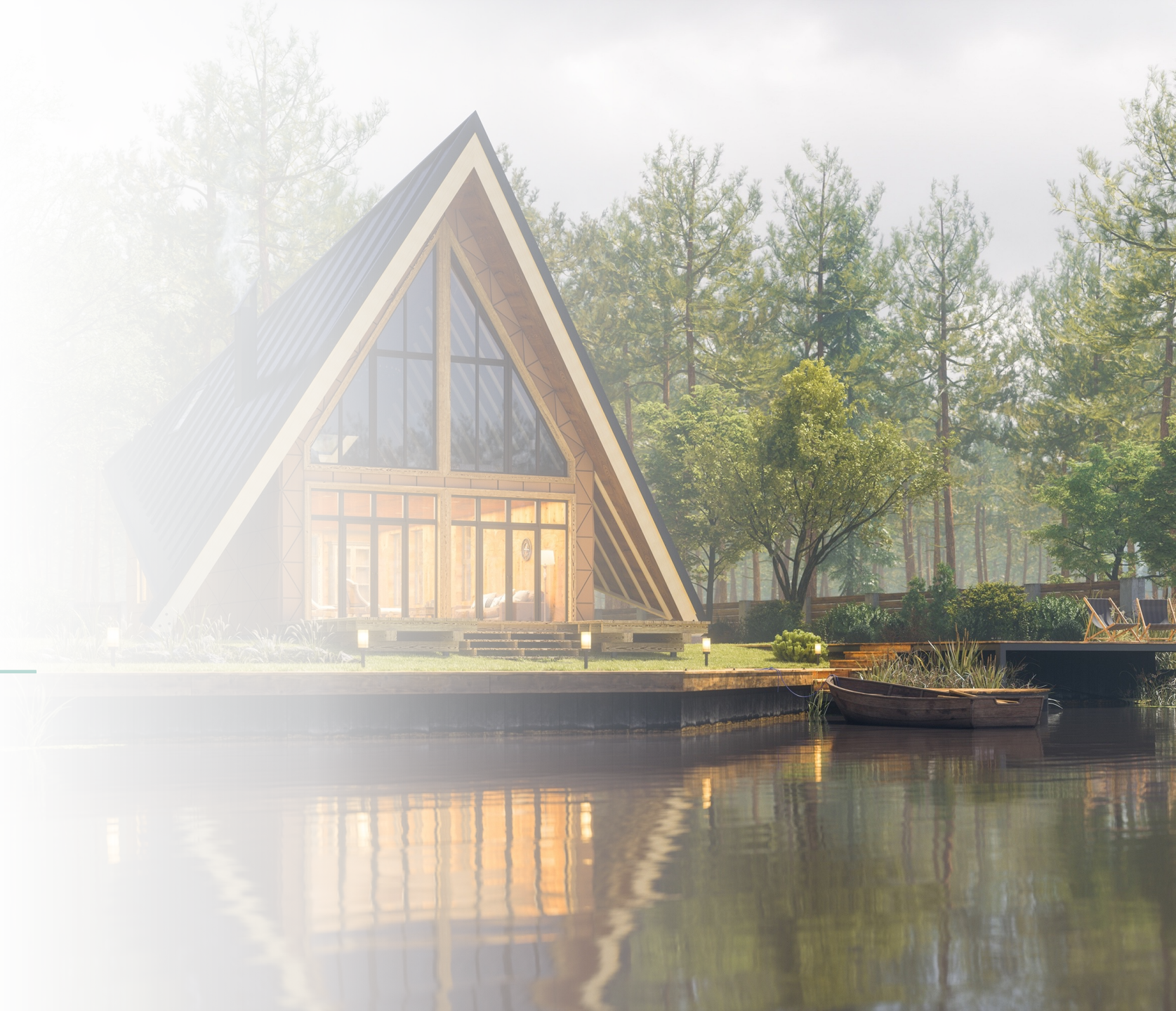
## Session 4:

- DBT Skills Training: Strategies for Interpersonal Effectiveness

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# **Session 3: DBT Skills Training: Strategies for Emotion Regulation**

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# Learning Objectives

<b>Understand</b>	Understand when to use emotion regulation skills
<b>Examine</b>	Identify how to change unwanted emotions through check the facts, problem solving, or opposite actions
<b>Recognize</b>	Recognize how to assist clients in reducing vulnerability to emotion mind and manage extreme emotions
<b>Review</b>	Review a case study and practical examples of using emotion regulation skills with clients



# Homework Review

If you practiced a distress tolerance skill...

- What went well?
- What was difficult or challenging?
- Did you get a chance to teach someone else the skill?

# Skills Overview

Mindfulness

Distress Tolerance

Emotion Regulation

Interpersonal Effectiveness

# Activity

- Find a piece of paper/pen or use your computer
- Write your name vertically from top to bottom
- Identify activities you enjoy using each letter of your name

## **Example:**

**C:** Crafting, coloring, cloud watching

**R:** Riding a bike

**Y:** Yoga

**S:** Staring at the sky, seeing a movie

**T:** Taking a walk, talking to a friend

**A:** Apple picking, antiquing

**L:** Learning, lighting a candle



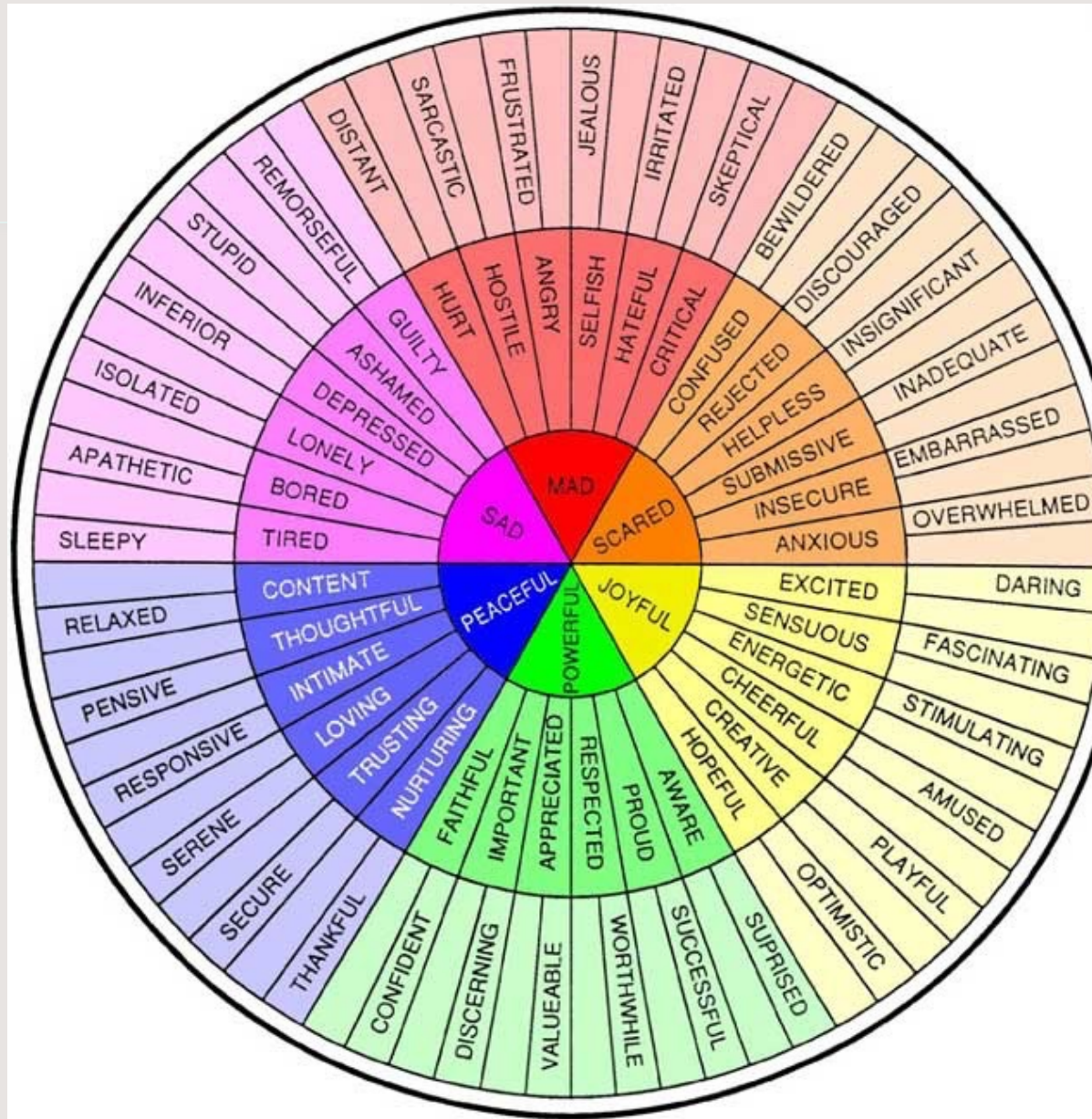


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# What is Emotion Regulation?

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# Emotion Regulation Overview



- *Teach clients how to:*
  - Understand and name their own emotions
  - Decrease the frequency and intensity of unwanted/painful emotions
  - Reduce emotional vulnerability and increase resilience
  - Decrease emotional suffering

# Emotion Regulation Skills



Understanding and Naming Emotions



Opposite Action



Problem Solving



Reducing Vulnerability to Emotion Mind –  
Building a Life Worth Living



Managing Really Difficult Emotions

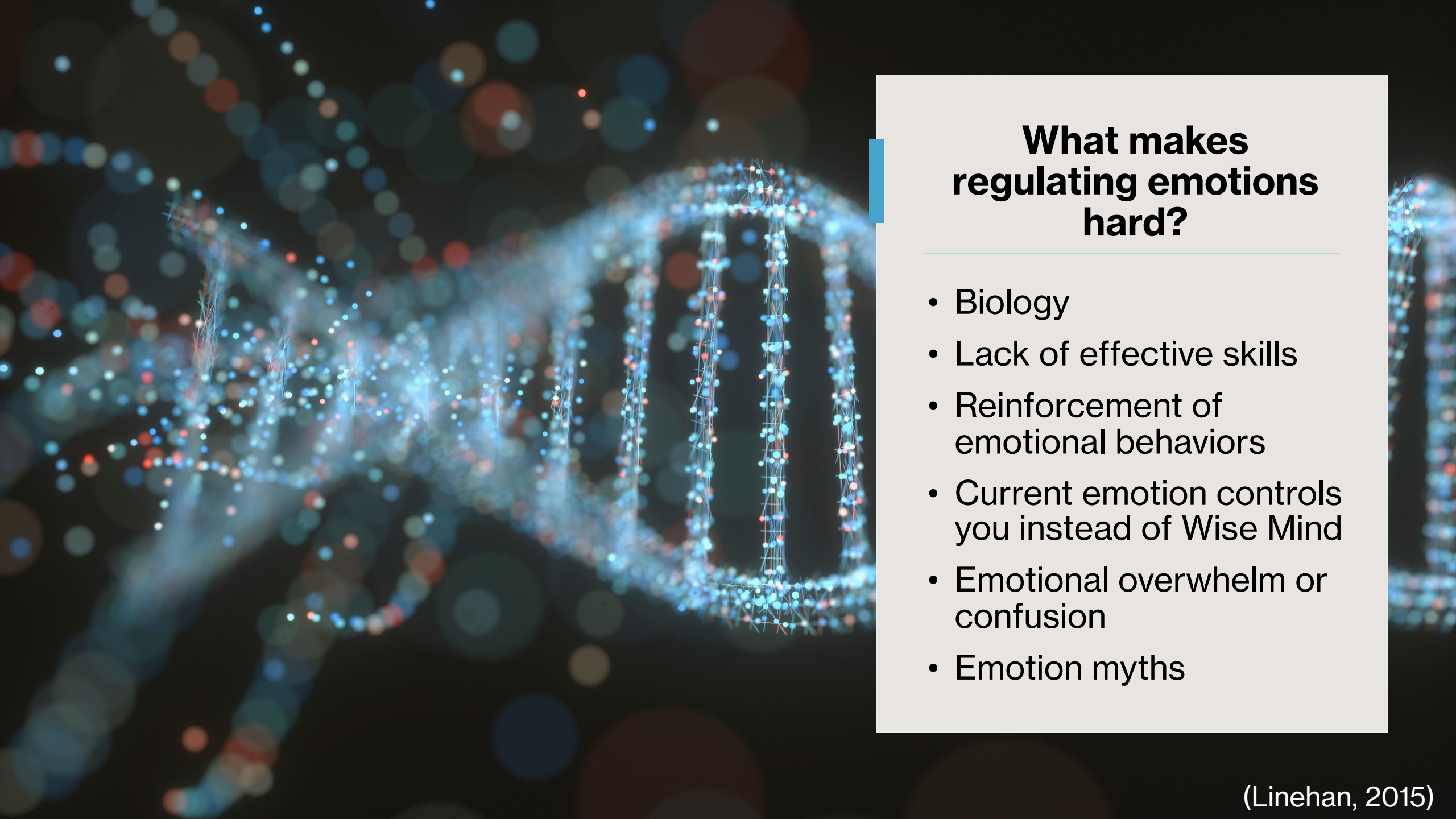
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# What Emotions Do for You

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- We need emotions for survival!
- The purpose of regulation emotions is NOT to get rid of them
- Emotions:
  - Prepare us physically for action
  - Communicate to others
  - Communicate to ourselves





## What makes regulating emotions hard?

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- Biology
- Lack of effective skills
- Reinforcement of emotional behaviors
- Current emotion controls you instead of Wise Mind
- Emotional overwhelm or confusion
- Emotion myths



# **Poll: Guess the Myth!**

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## Myths about Emotions

1. There is a right way to feel in every situation.

*Challenge:* \_\_\_\_\_

2. Letting others know that I am feeling bad is a weakness.

*Challenge:* \_\_\_\_\_

3. Negative feelings are bad and destructive.

*Challenge:* \_\_\_\_\_

4. Being emotional means being out of control.

*Challenge:* \_\_\_\_\_

5. Some emotions are stupid.

*Challenge:* \_\_\_\_\_

6. All painful emotions are a result of a bad attitude.

*Challenge:* \_\_\_\_\_

7. If others don't approve of my feelings, I obviously shouldn't feel the way I do.

*Challenge:* \_\_\_\_\_

8. Other people are the best judges of how I am feeling.

*Challenge:* \_\_\_\_\_

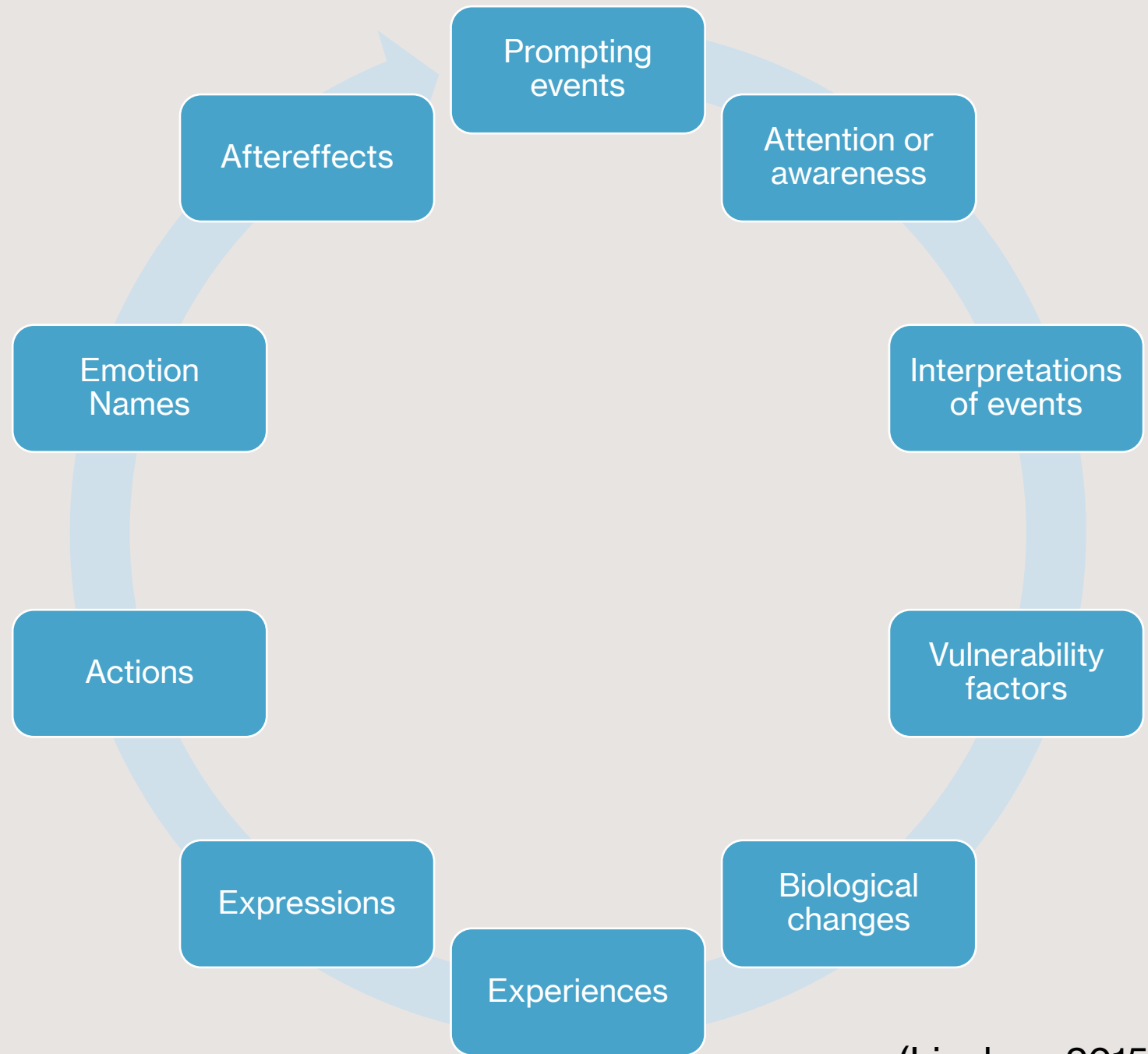
9. Painful emotions are not important and should be ignored.

*Challenge:* \_\_\_\_\_

10. Extreme emotions get you a lot further than trying to regulate your emotions.

*Challenge:* \_\_\_\_\_

# Model for Describing Emotions



(Linehan, 2015)



## Ways to Describe Emotions

### ANGER WORDS

anger	bitterness	fury	indignation	vengefulness
aggravation	exasperation	grouchiness	irritation	wrath
agitation	ferocity	grumpiness	outrage	
annoyance	frustration	hostility	rage	

### Prompting Events for Feeling Anger

- Having an important goal blocked.
- You or someone you care about being attacked or threatened by others.
- Losing power, status, or respect.
- Not having things turn out as expected.
- Physical or emotional pain.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Interpretations of Events That Prompt Feelings of Anger

- Believing that you have been treated unfairly.
- Blaming.
- Believing that important goals are being blocked or stopped.
- Believing that things “should” be different than they are.
- Rigidly thinking, “I’m right.”
- Judging that the situation is illegitimate or wrong.
- Ruminating about the event that set off the anger in the first place.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Biological Changes and Experiences of Anger

- Muscles tightening.
- Teeth clamping together.
- Hands clenching.
- Feeling your face flush or get hot.
- Feeling like you are going to explode.
- Being unable to stop tears.
- Wanting to hit someone, bang the wall, throw something, blow up.
- Wanting to hurt someone.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Expressions and Actions of Anger

- Physically or verbally attacking.
- Making aggressive or threatening gestures.
- Pounding, throwing things, breaking things.
- Walking heavily, stomping, slamming doors.
- Walking out.
- Using a loud, quarrelsome, or sarcastic voice.
- Using obscenities or swearing.
- Criticizing or complaining.
- Clenching your hands or fists.
- Frowning, not smiling, mean expression.
- Brooding or withdrawing from others.
- Crying.
- Grinning.
- A red or flushed face.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

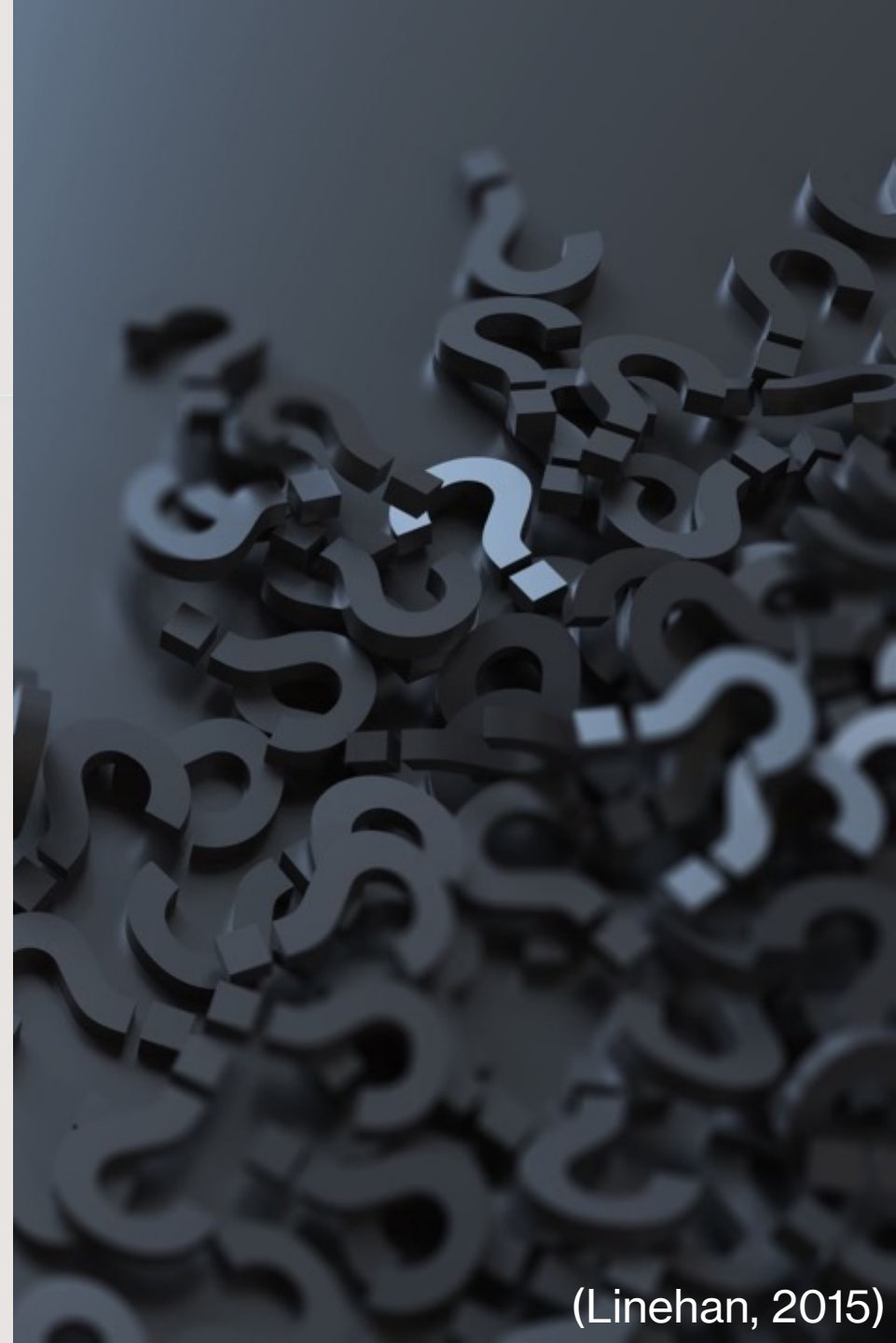
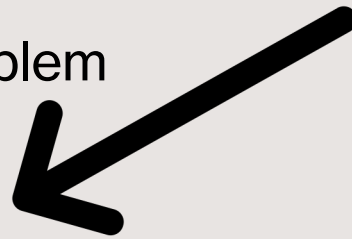
### Aftereffects of Anger

- Narrowing of attention.
- Attending only to the situation that’s making you angry.
- Ruminating about the situation making you angry or about situations in the past.
- Imagining future situations that will make you angry.
- Depersonalization, dissociative experiences, numbness.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

(Linehan, 2015)

# Options for Solving Any Problem

- **Solve the problem**
  - Identify the details of the problem
- **Feel better about the problem**
  - Use emotion regulation skills
- **Accept and tolerate the problem**
  - Use distress tolerance skills
- **Stay miserable**
  - No skills



# Emotion Regulation Skills: Changing Unwanted Emotions

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Check the facts



Problem solving



Opposite action

# How To: Check the Facts



1. What is the emotion I want to change?



2. What is the event prompting my emotion?



3. What are my interpretations, thoughts, and assumptions about the event?



4. Am I assuming a threat?



5. What is the catastrophe?



6. Does my emotion or its intensity fit the facts?

If my emotion does NOT fit the facts, consider using opposite action

# Emotion Regulation: Opposite Action



## Opposite Action

When your emotions do NOT fit the facts or when acting on your emotion is NOT effective



## Example:

*Emotion:* Sadness

*Action Urge:* Withdraw/isolate  
(stay in bed)

*Act Opposite:* Get active  
(take a shower)





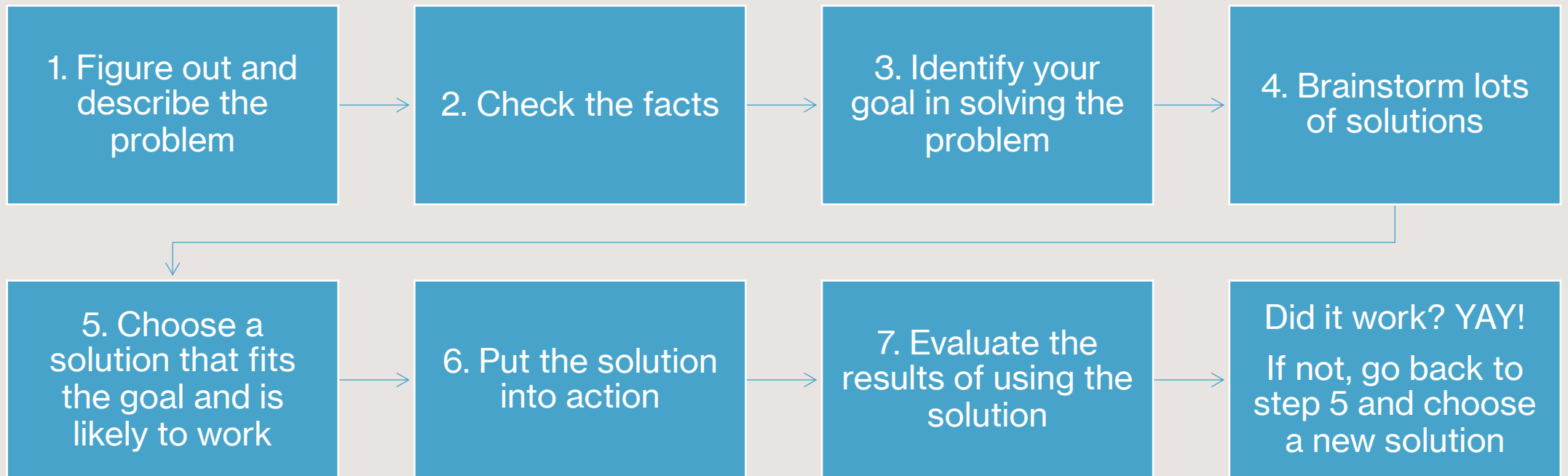
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# Emotion Regulation: Opposite Action

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- 1. Identify and name the emotion
- 2. Check the Facts
- 3. Identify and describe your action urges
- 4. Ask Wise Mind
- 5. Identify opposite actions
- 6. Act opposite all the way
- 7. Repeat acting opposite

# Emotion Regulation: Problem Solving



# Reducing Vulnerability to Emotion Mind

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Accumulating Positive Emotions



Building Mastery and **C**ope Ahead



Taking care of your mind by taking care of your body  
**(PLEASE)**

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# Emotion Regulation: Accumulating Positive Emotions (Short Term)

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1

Build positive  
experiences  
now

2

Be mindful of  
positive  
experiences

3

Be unmindful  
of worries



(Linehan, 2015)

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# Emotion Regulation: Pleasant Events List

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- We all need pleasant events in our lives
- Plan pleasant events in advance
- Try to do one a week
- Examples:
  - Taking care of plants
  - Riding a bike
  - Going hiking



(Linehan, 2015)

**What do you  
value?**

---



# Emotion Regulation: Accumulating Positive Emotions (Long Term) Values & Priorities List

Long-term happiness means experiencing life as worth living

Living our lives according to our own personal values

- “What in life are your highest priorities?”
- “What in life really matters to you?”
- “What is the direction you want your life to go in?”
- “What is in your life now that you do not want to lose?”
- “What things of value are not in your life right now?”

# Emotion Regulation: ABC PLEASE: Cope Ahead

1

Describe the situation that is likely to prompt problem behavior.

2

Decide what coping or problem-solving skills you want to use in the situation.

3

Imagine the situation in your mind as vividly as possible.

4

Rehearse in your mind coping effectively.

5

Practice relaxation after rehearsing.



# Managing Extreme Emotions

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MINDFULNESS OF  
CURRENT EMOTIONS



IDENTIFYING THE SKILLS  
BREAKDOWN POINT



# Emotion Regulation: Mindfulness of Current Emotions

**Observe**

Observe the  
emotion

**Practice**

Practice mindfulness  
of body sensations

**Remember**

Remember: You are  
not your emotion

# Case Study

- Sarah grew up in a close-knit family and had a particularly strong bond with her mother. Six months ago, her mother passed away suddenly due to a heart attack. This loss has profoundly impacted Sarah, leading to intense emotional “highs” and “lows” and difficulty coping with daily life. Sarah has a history of anxiety and mild depression, which have been exacerbated by her recent loss. She works as a graphic designer, a job she loves but has struggled to focus on since her mother’s passing. Her social life has also suffered; she has withdrawn from friends and stopped participating in activities she once enjoyed. Despite having a supportive partner, Sarah often feels alone in her grief. She is unsure what she feels moment to moment, and thinks she “shouldn’t feel this way anymore” because of the time that has since passed.

**How might you utilize emotion regulation skills to assist Sarah in navigating these intense emotions?**

# Summary



Emotion regulation skills help individuals to manage intense emotions and reduce emotional vulnerability



These skills ultimately increase emotional resilience and improve overall well-being

# Homework



Practice identifying and labeling an emotion



Ask yourself:

Does this emotion fit the facts? If not, act opposite!

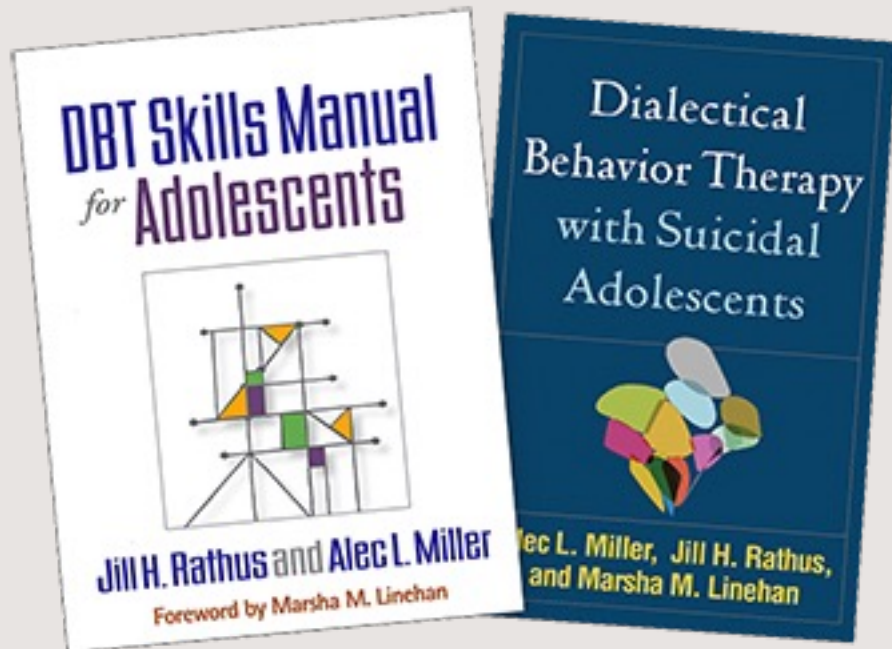
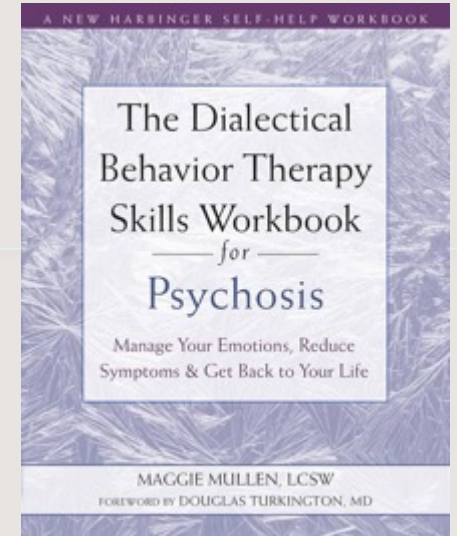
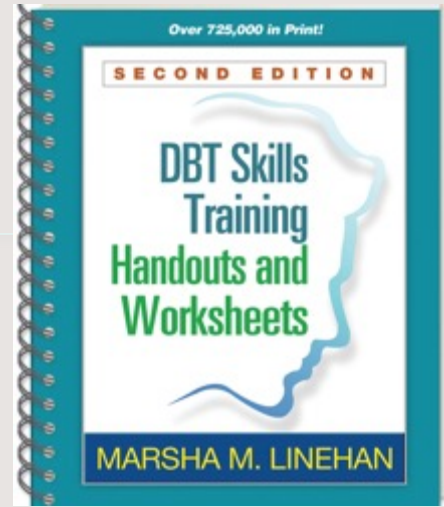
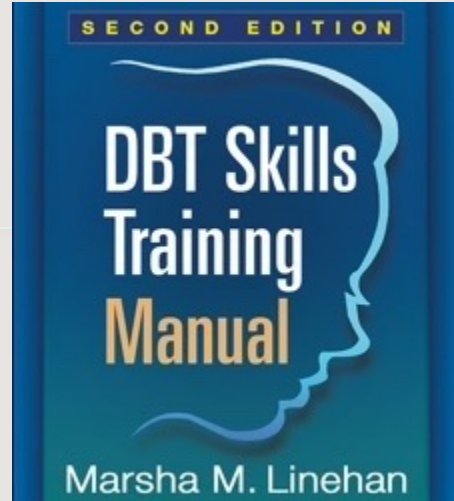
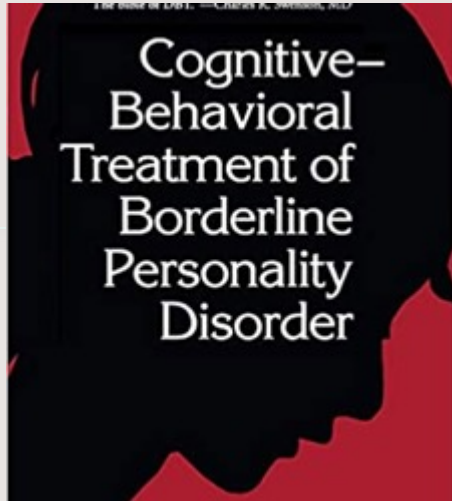


**Join us next Tuesday  
June 25<sup>th</sup> 12-1PM EST**

**Session 4:  
DBT Skills Training:  
Strategies for  
Interpersonal  
Effectiveness**

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# Resources

<https://dbt-lbc.org/>

<https://behavioraltech.org/>

<https://www.youtube.com/dbtru>

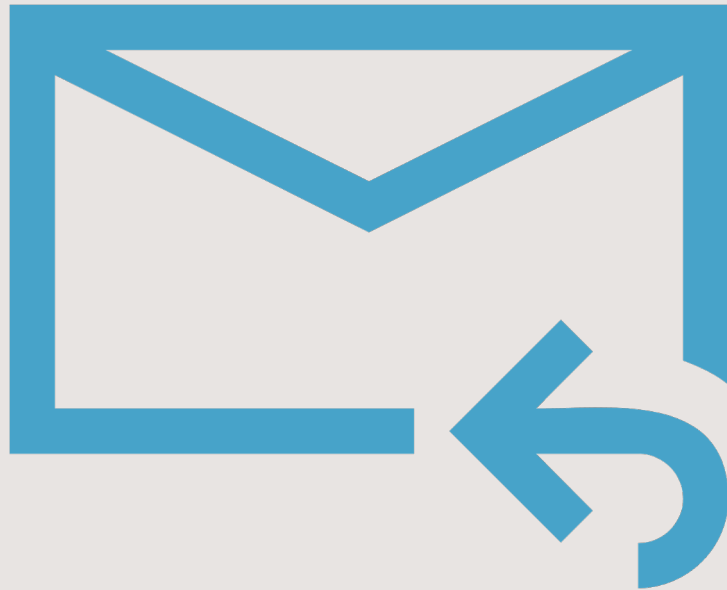
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- Chapman A. L. (2016). Dialectical behavior therapy: Current indications and unique elements. *Psychiatry (Edgmont (Pa. : Township))*, 3(9), 62–68.
- Linehan, M. (2015) DBT skills training manual (2nd Ed.) New York: The Guilford Press.
- Schimelpfening, N. (2023). *Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT): Definition, techniques, and benefits.*  
<https://www.verywellmind.com/dialectical-behavior-therapy-1067402>



# Thank You!

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# Evaluation Information

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Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

The purpose of the MHTTC Network is technology transfer - disseminating and implementing evidence-based practices for mental disorders into the field.

Funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the MHTTC Network includes 10 Regional Centers, a National American Indian and Alaska Native Center, a National Hispanic and Latino Center, and a Network Coordinating Office.

Our collaborative network supports resource development and dissemination, training and technical assistance, and workforce development for the mental health field. We work with systems, organizations, and treatment practitioners involved in the delivery of mental health services to strengthen their capacity to deliver effective evidence-based practices to individuals. Our services cover the full continuum spanning mental illness prevention, treatment, and recovery support.

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