Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT)

What is DBT?

DBT is a broad based Cognitive Behavioural treatment (please refer to CBT handout) developed specifically for helping people with very intense emotions and chronic relationship difficulties.

'Dialectical' means exploring how ways of being and thinking that may appear contradictory, can actually support each other. For example learning to accept yourself whilst focusing on changing your behaviour might feel at crossed purposes. In DBT however accepting yourself alongside developing key skills to manage relationships more effectively, without reliance on self-destructive behaviours enables these goals to come together.

Who is it for?

DBT is recommended for individuals who have difficulty with emotional regulation or those engaging in self-destructive and/or self-harming behaviours. DBT for families uses the key principles of this approach to promote improvement in these key relationships to enhance family functioning. If being used with a young person living at home, the evidence indicates that sessions involving parents/carers alongside work with the young person can be very helpful in breaking unhelpful patterns and sustaining change.

What are the aims of DBT?

DBT aims to help you understand your emotions without judgement, and at the same time support you to learn techniques to manage your emotions, how you interact and what you do.

What is involved?

DBT is a very structured approach.

Techniques may include:
- Mindfulness
- Distress tolerance
- Strategies to help with emotional regulation
- Strategies to support interpersonal skills

DBT sometimes involves group work.

For more information about DBT please visit:
https://childmind.org/article/dbt-dialectical-behavior-therapy/