



What are the qualitative experiences of clients with a diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder; who have completed the Manning Dialectical Behaviour Therapy 'Moving Forward' Stage 1 Program in the last two to five years?



Jullie Williams, Hunter New England LHD
jullie.williams@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) is a current therapeutic intervention used to assist people with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD). Research literature to date has mainly focussed on independently measurable treatment effects of DBT, rather than the patient experiences of clients in this diagnostic group. This exploratory qualitative study aims to illuminate the experiences of clients who have completed Stage 1 of the Manning 'Moving Forward' DBT program in the previous two to five years.

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy program graduates from a small rural coastal NSW town were invited to participate in the study; with four people agreeing to attend for an interview. The interview explored participants' experiences prior to DBT; the helpful and unhelpful aspects of the DBT program; and the effects DBT has had on their lives since completion. The interview transcripts were then analysed for recurrent and varying themes.

Participants readily enlarged on the chaos, distress and instability existing in their lives prior to DBT. Helpful aspects of the DBT centred on 'the Group' value and on improved awareness and emotional control. Unhelpful aspects pertained to concepts of 'self' and commitment to the program. The post DBT benefits reported by participants extended into many aspects of their lives; including better overall health; more stable mental health with decreased levels of self-harm and suicide attempts; increased opportunities for employment and social inclusion; and, improved significant relationships. All participants reported using various DBT core skills as an ongoing aspect in their lives.

Through this exploratory study it is evident that participants view DBT as a beneficial therapeutic intervention. While more formal and in-depth research is warranted in this area, the therapeutic effects linked to DBT are evident in the 'voices' of the participants; and, in taking the time to listen, as health care researchers, we can increasingly assist others with this concerning disorder.

For the full report on this project visit our website, follow the link to the Rural Research Capacity Building Program and click on 'view completed projects'

Jullie Williams is a Registered Nurse - Clinical Nurse Consultant. Working in NSW Health for many years, both in Psychiatric and General Nursing settings, now focussed on Community Mental Health. Interests in Quality Care, Client Advocacy, Indigenous Mental Health & Wellbeing, Professional Aspects of Nursing Practice. HETI Research scholarship is a 'career' highlight.



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