SECOND EDITION

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MARSHA M. LINEHAN

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Marsha M. Linehan

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When I am on retreats, each afternoon I walk and wring my hands, saying to all the mental health patients of the world, "You don't have to wring your hands today. I am doing it for you." Often when I dance in the hallway of my house or with groups, I invite all the mental health patients of the world to come dance with me.

This book is dedicated to all the patients of the world who think that no one is thinking of them. I considered telling you that I would practice skills for you so you don't have to practice them. But then I realized that if I did, you would not learn how to be skillful yourself. So, instead, I wish you skillful means, and I wish that you find these skills useful.

About the Author

Marsha M. Linehan, PhD, ABPP, is the developer of Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) and Professor of Psychology and of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and Director of the Behavioral Research and Therapy Clinics at the University of Washington. Her primary research interest is in the development and evaluation of evidence-based treatments for populations with high suicide risk and multiple, severe mental disorders.

Dr. Linehan's contributions to suicide research and clinical psychology research have been recognized with numerous awards, including the Gold Medal Award for Life Achievement in the Application of Psychology from the American Psychological Foundation and the James McKeen Cattell Award from the Association for Psychological Science. In her honor, the American Association of Suicidology created the Marsha Linehan Award for Outstanding Research in the Treatment of Suicidal Behavior.

She is a Zen master and teaches mindfulness and contemplative practices via workshops and retreats for health care providers.

Preface

Since the publication of the original Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) skills training manual in 1993, there has been an explosion of research on the applications of DBT across disorders. My pilot and first DBT study focused on the treatment of highly suicidal adults. Now, we have research demonstrating the efficacy of DBT skills training with suicidal adolescents, as well as adults with borderline personality disorder, eating disorders, treatment-resistant depression, substance use, and a variety of other disorders. A diagnosis of a mental disorder is not required, however, to benefit from DBT skills. Friends and family members of individuals with difficulties will find these skills helpful; kids in elementary school through high school can gain from these skills. Businesses will find DBT skills useful in creating better work environments. All the DBT therapists I know practice these skills in their own lives on a routine basis. I myself am grateful for the skills because they have made my life a lot easier. As someone once said to me, "Aren't these skills your mother was supposed to teach you?" I always say yes, but for many people their mother just did not or was not able to get around to it.

I developed many of the skills by reading treatment manuals and treatment literature on evidence-based behavioral interventions. I reviewed what therapists told their patients to do and then repackaged those instructions in skills handouts and worksheets and wrote teaching notes for therapists. For example, the skill "opposite action" is a set of instructions based on exposure-based treatments for anxiety disorders. The major change was to generalize the strategies to fit treatment of emotions other than anxiety. "Check the facts" is a core strategy in cognitive therapy interventions. The mindfulness skills were a product of my 19 years in Catholic schools, my training in contemplative prayer practices through the Shalem Institute's spiritual guidance program, and my 35 years as a Zen student—and now Zen master. Mindfulness of current thoughts also draws from acceptance and commitment therapy. In general, DBT skills are what behavior therapists tell clients to do across many effective treatments. Some of the skills repurpose entire treatment programs now formulated as a series of steps. The new "nightmare protocol," an emotion regulation skill, is an example of this. Other skills came from research in cognitive and social psychology. Still others came from colleagues developing new DBT skills

for new populations. As you can see, these skills came from many different sources and disciplines.

I am happy to present this skills training manual for clients, which includes all of the handouts and worksheets I have developed so far in DBT. (Stay tuned for more.) You are not likely to need to use all of the skills I have included. Every skill works for someone and no skill works for everyone. The skills in this book have been tested with a huge variety of people: adults, adolescents, parents, friends, and families, both high risk and low. I hope the skills are just what you need. Use your interpersonal skills (see the DEAR MAN GIVE FAST skills in the Interpersonal Effectiveness skills module) to talk your skills trainer or other teacher into teaching you skills not ordinarily covered in skills training if you want to learn them. If you should decide to venture forth on your own, I must tell you that we have no research on the effectiveness of this skills manual as a self-help workbook or self-treatment manual. I am hoping to write a self-help treatment book in the future, so keep your eyes open for that. Meanwhile, you might be interested in the skills videos available through The Guilford Press or The Linehan Institute and listed on page ii of this manual. They themselves do not constitute treatment, but we know that many people have nonetheless found them useful, even though we have not collected data on them. On your own or with the help of a skills teacher, I wish you skillful means.

Acknowledgments

Developing, researching, testing, and organizing the behavioral skills in this book has been a process that has unfolded over many years. Over these years many people made important contributions to what finally became this set of skills and worksheets. Here I want to thank a long line of teachers, colleagues, students, postdoctoral fellows, and clients, who for many years have been in dialogue with me on how to best develop, organize, explain, and disseminate behavioral skills to those in need of skillful means.

I want to acknowledge Rev. Pat Hawk and Rev. Willigis Yaeger, who were my contemplative prayer and Zen teachers, and Anselm Romb, my Franciscan spiritual guide, who taught me to let go of words. Each of them listened to me for hours as I sorted out how to practice and how to teach mindfulness. My mentors, Gerald Davison and Marvin Goldfried, taught me behavior therapy, and through them I was introduced to evidence-based treatments, where I found most of the skillful means that I condensed into the skills in this book. I extend my gratitude to Jon Kabat-Zinn, John Teasdale, Mark Williams, and Zindel Segal for inspiration. I especially want to thank my students and former students (in alphabetical order), Milton Brown, Anita Lungu, Andrada Neacsiu, Shireen Rizvi, Stephanie Thompson, Chelsey Wilks, Brianna Woods; and my fellows and former fellows, Alex Chapman, Eunice Chen, Melanie Harned, Erin Miga, Marivi Navarro, and Nick Salsman. Many others have jumped in when asked, colleagues Seth Axelrod, Kate Comtois and her entire DBT team, Sona Dimidjian, Anthony Dubose, Thomas Lynch, and Suzanne Witterholt, as well as the Linehan Institute scientific advisory committee (Martin Bohus, Alan Fruzzetti, André Ivanoff, Kathryn Korslund, and Shelley McMain). I could not have written this book without the help of Elaine Franks, my fabulous administrative assistant, and Thao Truong, our office and financial manager, who made sure that our research clinic did not fall apart while everyone was waiting for me to finish this book. My family, Geraldine, Nate, Catalina, and Aline, made life easy at every turn no matter the stress—not a minor contribution to getting a book written.

Much of what is in this manual I learned from the many clients who participated in skills training groups that I have conducted over the years. I am grateful to all those who put up with the many versions that did not work or were not useful,

and to those among them who gave enough feedback for me to make needed revisions in the skills being taught.

The clients who gave feedback were, for the most part, individuals at high risk for suicide. I thank the University of Washington Human Subjects Division, which has never even once impeded my research treating individuals at extremely high risk for suicide. Their willingness to allow such high-risk research when other universities often do not sets an example and made this book possible.

Last, but certainly not least, I want to thank my copy editor, Marie Sprayberry, Senior Editor Barbara Watkins, Executive Editor Kathyrn Moore, and the staff at The Guilford Press. In getting this manual out in a timely fashion they each had occasion to practice all the distress tolerance skills in this book. Their concern for this book and for this form of treatment was evident at every step.

Alas, it is likely that I have forgotten or accidently left out one or more individuals who have contributed to this book. If so, please let me know so I can include you in future editions.

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Purchasers can download and print the worksheets from this book at *www.guilford.com/dbt-worksheets*.

Introduction to This Book

This book contains informational handouts and worksheets for people learning Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) skills. The overall goal of DBT skills training is to help you increase your resilience and build a life experienced as worth living. DBT skills are aimed at teaching a synthesis of how to change what is and how to accept what is. Skills teach you both how to change unwanted behaviors, emotions, thoughts, and events in your life that cause you misery and distress as well as how to live in the moment, accepting what is. There are different sets of DBT skills, and no single training program will include all of the handouts and worksheets in this book. Your skills trainer or individual therapist/case manager will direct you to the appropriate handouts and worksheets for your particular program.

How This Book Is Organized

There are five main sections in this book, and each begins with a brief introduction. Following a first section on General Skills, there is a section of handouts and worksheets for each of the four main DBT skills modules: Mindfulness Skills, Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills, Emotion Regulation Skills, and Distress Tolerance Skills. There are topical subsections of handouts and worksheets within each skills module, as described below. Every skill or set of skills has a corresponding handout with instructions for practicing that skill. Nearly every handout has at least one (often more than one) associated worksheet for recording your practice of the skill. The introductions to each section summarize the handouts, their purposes, and the worksheets that go with them.

General Skills: Orientation and Analyzing Behavior

During **Orientation**, you will be introduced to DBT and the goals of skills training, and will be encouraged to identify your own personal goals. You will also be oriented to the format, rules, and meeting times of your particular skills program.