The background is a light gray with a grid of squares. Overlaid on this are numerous colorful splatters in red, orange, yellow, green, and blue. There are also faint, concentric white circles scattered across the background.

Using Dialectical Behavior Therapy in Schools and Mental Health Counseling

Safer Society 2024

I **love** to connect

Email: Anette@Abirgersson.se

Facebook: Total Team Training
or
Leg. Psykoterapeut Anette
Birgersson

LinkedIn: Anette Birgersson



Activity

Where are you
working?

What made
you interested
in this training?

This is Kalle ...

- He is easily distracted
- He struggles with peer relationships
- He gets easily angry or overly excited
- He seems anxious/restless
- He disturbs class with silly comments, sounds or through moving around



Activity

Are these the
kids you
struggle with?

What else do
you see?



- Promotes a way of thinking about behavior from a needs and strength-based approach.
- Gives us skills to support kids in distress
- Gives us skills to teach kids the skills to be able to understand and manage their own distress
- Gives us ways to handle our own distress in hard situations with kids and or caregivers and colleagues

Why can DBT be useful in a school setting?

Shift focus

- from problem behaviors to needs and skills



Understand and describe the problem behaviors



Understand and describe the needs those problem behaviors meet



Vulnerabilities, Developmental level, Diagnosis, Trauma



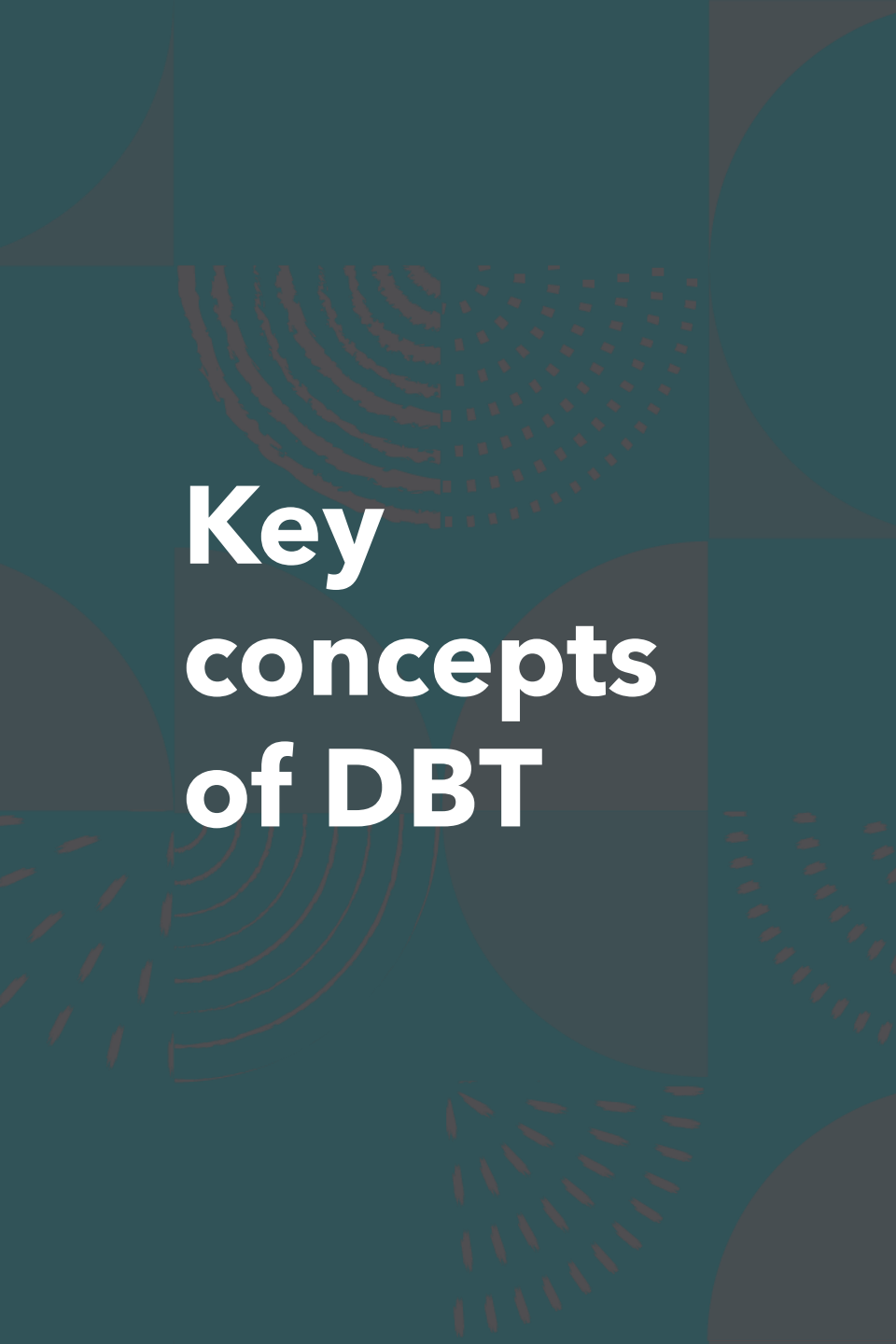
Acceptance - Change



Bio Social Theory



Skills deficits and strengths



Key concepts of DBT

Dialectical thinking

Balance Acceptance - change

Therapeutic approach

Commitment

Validation

Therapy interfering behavior –
kids/counselor/therapist/staff/caregiver

Prioritizing target behaviors

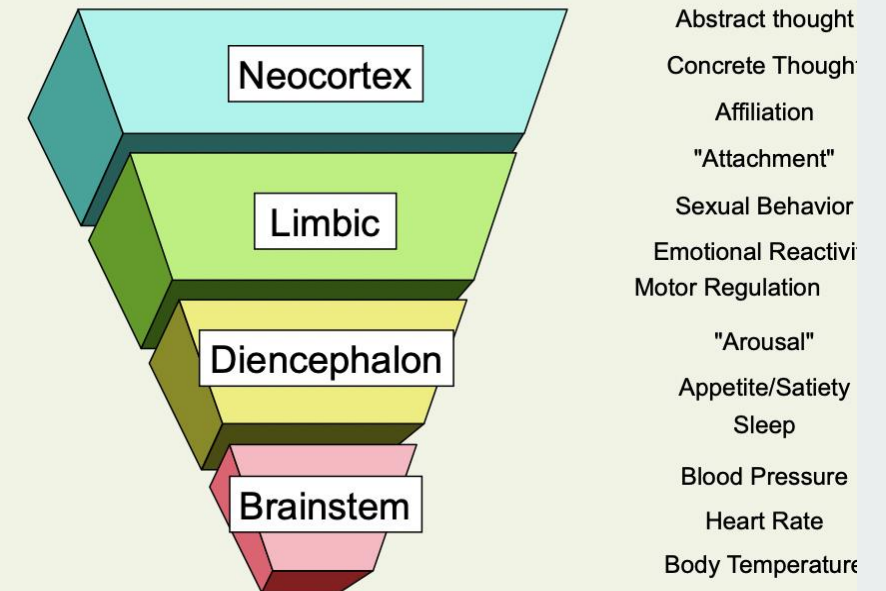
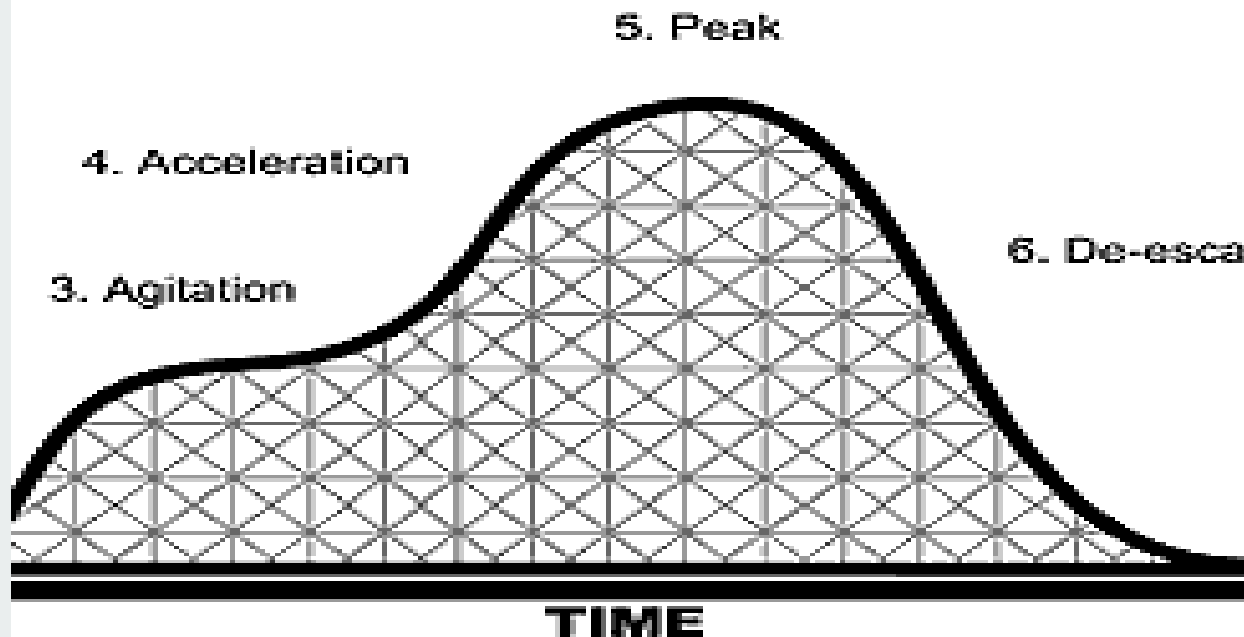
Teaching skills and practicing individually and in group

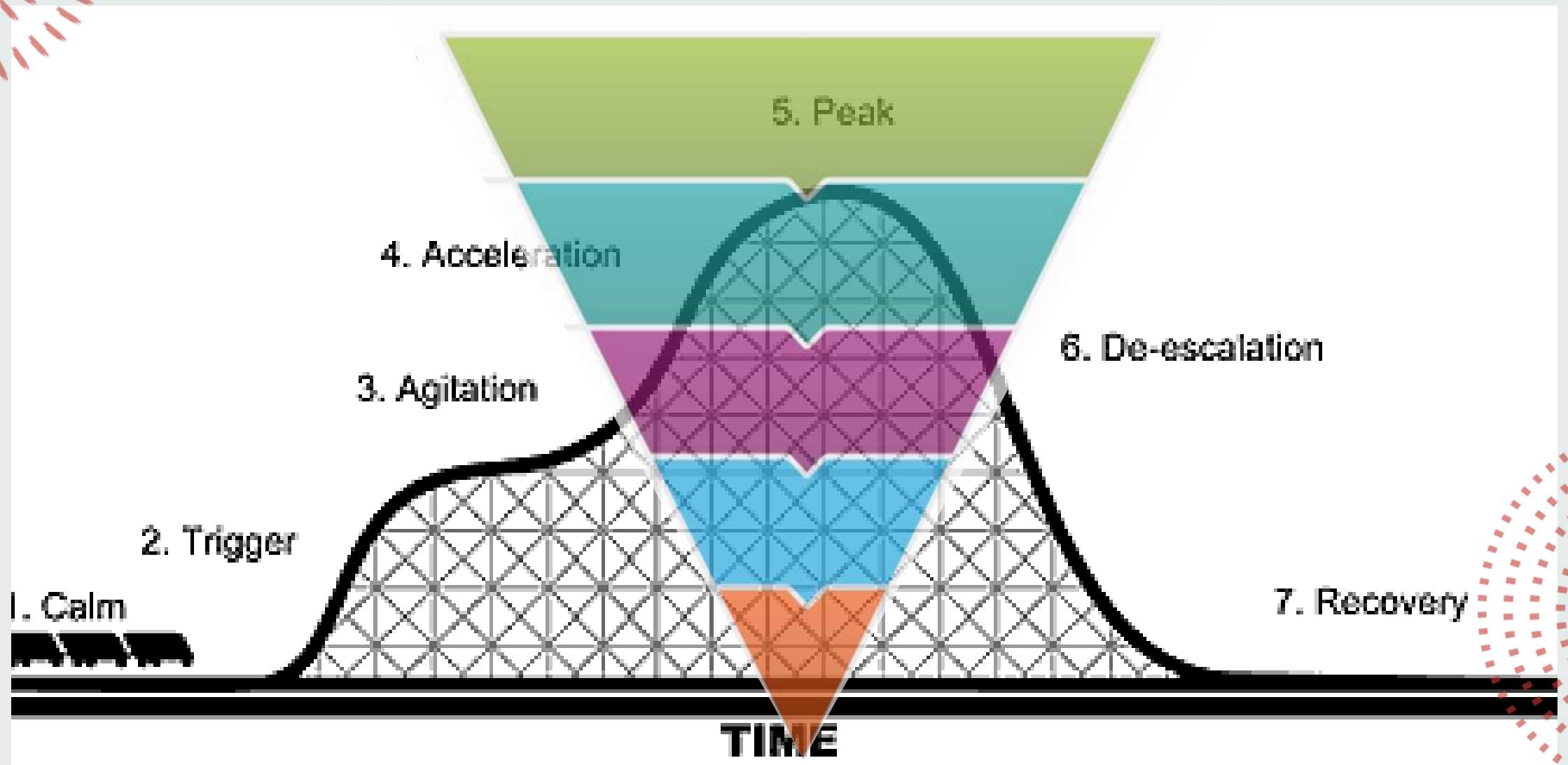
Working in teams



But first the basics ...

Needs and vulnerabilities awareness





Trauma Symptoms

Thoughts

- Rumination
- Flashbacks
- Concentration difficulties
- Fear of being retraumatized
- Difficulties sleeping

Emotions

- Anxiety and fear
- Tense, irritated and angry
- Depressed
- Shame, guilt, bitterness
- Sense of isolation

Body

- Rapid heartbeat
- Pressure on chest
- Tense muscles
- Tiredness, feeling of no energy
- Body aches
- Hypervisgelence

Behaviors

- Avoidance
- Difficulty relaxing
- Avoiding being alone
- Drug/alcohol use
- Mood swings
- Rituals

SYMPTOM AWARENESS



PROBLEM BEHAVIORS

- Avoidance
- Restlessness
- Impulsivity
- Anxiousness
- Aggressiveness



TRAUMA

- Concentration
- Hypervigilance
- Control
- Depression
- Irritable/tense



NEUROPSYCHIATRIC DISORDER

- Concentration
- Restlessness
- Difficulty with changes
- Difficulty understanding
- Irritable, Angry, scared



AGE TYPICAL

- Depending on age
- Anxiousness
- Irritable
- Overly assertive
- Social anxiety



How do we understand what Kalle need?

- Think about what we've just talked about.
- What do we need to know to start helping Kalle with his problem behaviors?



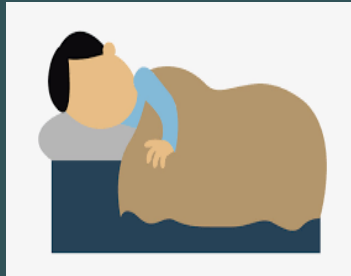


Vulnerabilities

Support kids in developing a care plan addressing their unique vulnerabilities



Nutrition



Sleep Routine



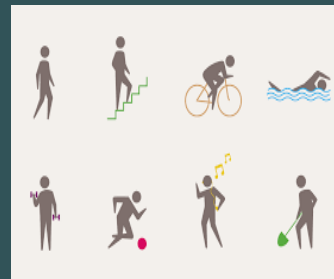
Med management



Exercise



Hygiene



Enjoyable and Relaxing Activities



Self-care and Self-Value

NEEDS AND VULNERABILITIES



BASIC NEEDS

Eat

Drink

Sleep Hygiene

Connection



TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Exercise

Hygiene

Medications



HIGHER LEVEL CARE

Recreation

Self-Care

Self-Value

Diagnosis Awareness



RELATIONSHIPS

Touch

Connection/Attachment

Communication

Feeling Valued





**How do you take care of
your vulnerabilities to be
an effective counselor?**

TOP20 USELESS SUPERPOWERS



ACID TEARS



INVISIBILITY IN THE DARK



CONTROL REMOTE CONTROL



COMMUNICATE WITH FRUIT



TRASH DETECTION



75% LEVITATION



SUMMON A LAMP...ONCE



BULLET ATTRACTION



READ YOUR OWN MIND



INSTANT HAIRLOSS



ABNORMAL ARMHAIR GROWTH



ABSORB BAD LUCK



SUPER SLOW-MO



REVIVE BUGS



ULTRA FAST AGING



INVISIBLE HANDWRITING



1 SECOND SUPER STRENGTH



TURN INTO A LAPTOP FOREVER



SEDUCE HATS



DESATURATION

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Validation a superpower

- What do you think about when I say validation?
- Why do you think I say validation is a superpower?

You can validate ...

- **Feelings** - You can always validate a feeling, feelings can't be wrong. Feelings can be wrong if you interpret your emotion as something it's not. Like feeling tired when you might be hungry or bored or...
- **Emotions** - can be effective or ineffective. Validating an emotion means noticing that it is there even if it is unpleasant, painful or leads to negative consequences.
- **Thoughts** - You can validate a thought without seeing it as true, it's there.
- **Difficulties** - You can validate how difficult something is and how difficult someone experiences a situation.
- **Experiences** - We experience situations in different ways. You can validate an experience even if you don't share it.
- **The desire for change** - One can validate the validity of wanting something even if it is not possible to get it.
- **Needs** - You can always validate what the client thinks they need even if you don't think it's what would be effective
- **Efforts** - Validate efforts, even if the goal wasn't reached.
- **Opinions and beliefs** - It is easy if you share opinions but no less important if you think differently and much more difficult.
- **Things someone does for someone else**

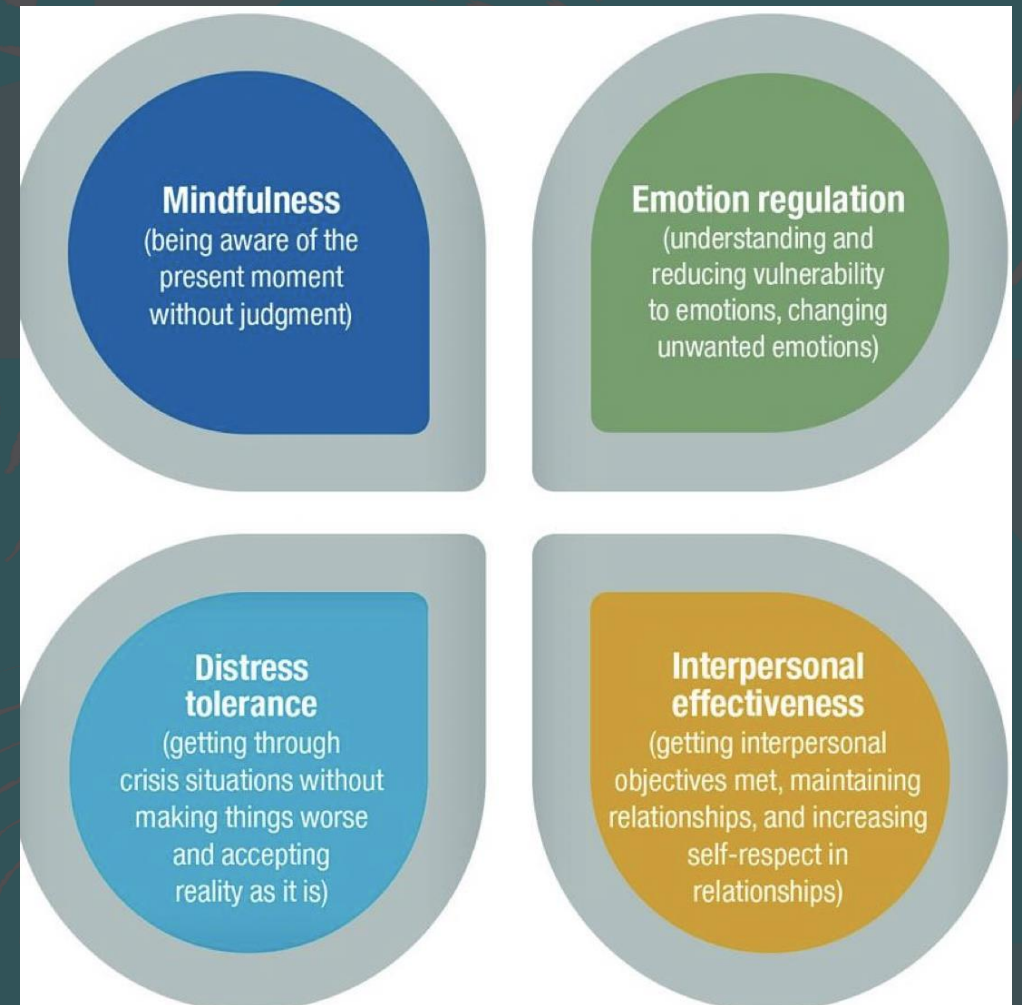
How would you talk to Kalle about his needs?

- He is easily distracted
- He struggles with peer relationships
- He gets easily angry or overly excited
- He seems anxious/restless
- He disturbs class with silly comments, sounds or through moving around

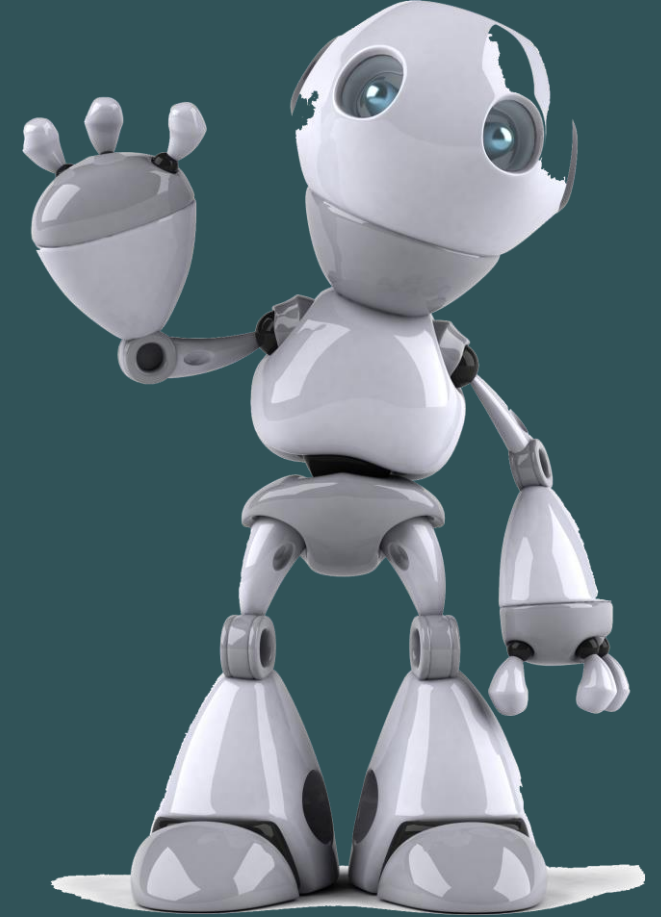
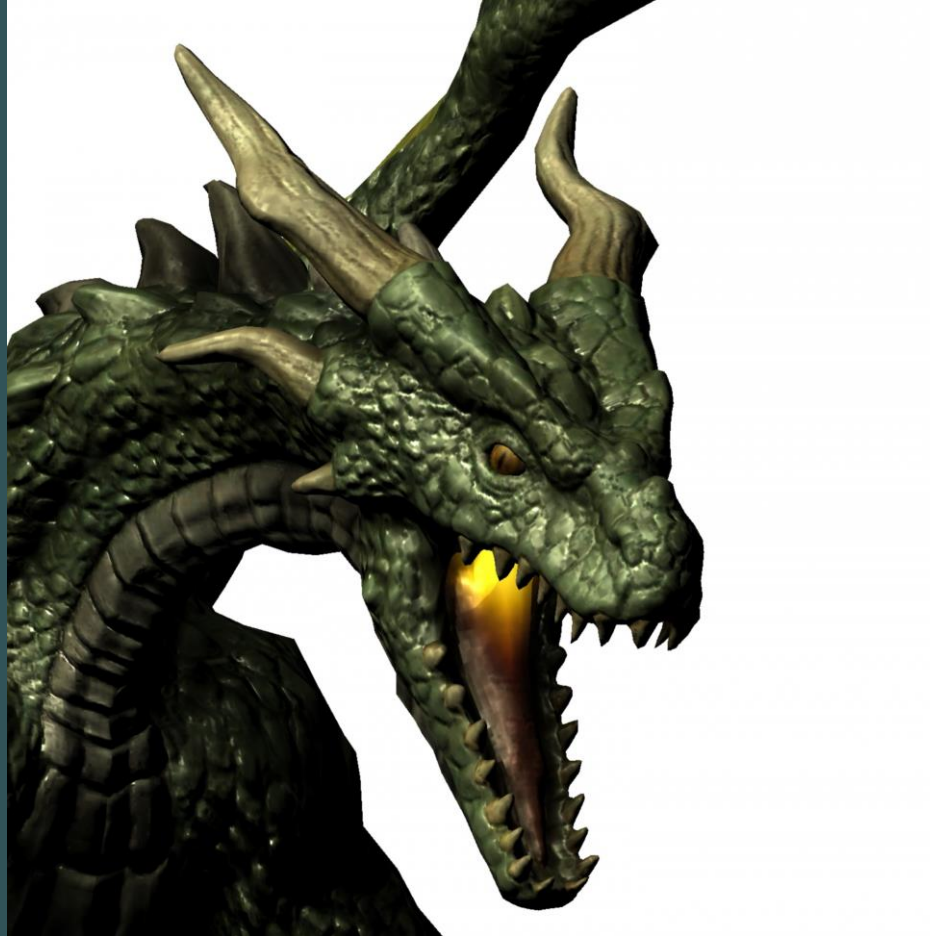


Modules and skills training in DBT

- DBT believes that every person does the best they can all the time and that they always want to do better
- DBT assumes that problem behaviors are caused by skills deficits and/or not knowing what skill and when to use a skill
- The DBT skills training teaches the kid behavioral skills and how to use them in every day lives



Wisemind - emotional mind - reasonable mind



Mindfulness

- Increase self awareness
 - Bodily sensations
 - Emotions
 - Urges
 - Behaviors / Actions
 - Thoughts
- Learn to use your Wisemind/Wizard brain
- Learn to use your mindfulness skills



Mindfulness Skills

What Skills

- Observe
- Describe
- Participate

How Skills

- Non-Judgmental
 - Describe what you see
- One thing at the time
- Effectiveness – What works



**Noticing what's going on –
in the moment**



Distress tolerance -

- Manage a situation without making it worse
- Skills for when emotions/stress is high
- Distraction
- Self soothing
- What works for you?
- Radical acceptance



TEMPERATURE

Change your body temperature. Splash your face with cold water, hold an ice cube, let car AC blow on your face, take a cold shower



INTENSE EXERCISE

Do intense exercise to match your intense emotion. Sprint to the end of the street, do jumping jacks, push ups, intense dancing




PACED BREATHING

Try Box Breathing: Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold it for 4 seconds, breathe out 4, and hold 4. Start again, and continue until you feel more calm.



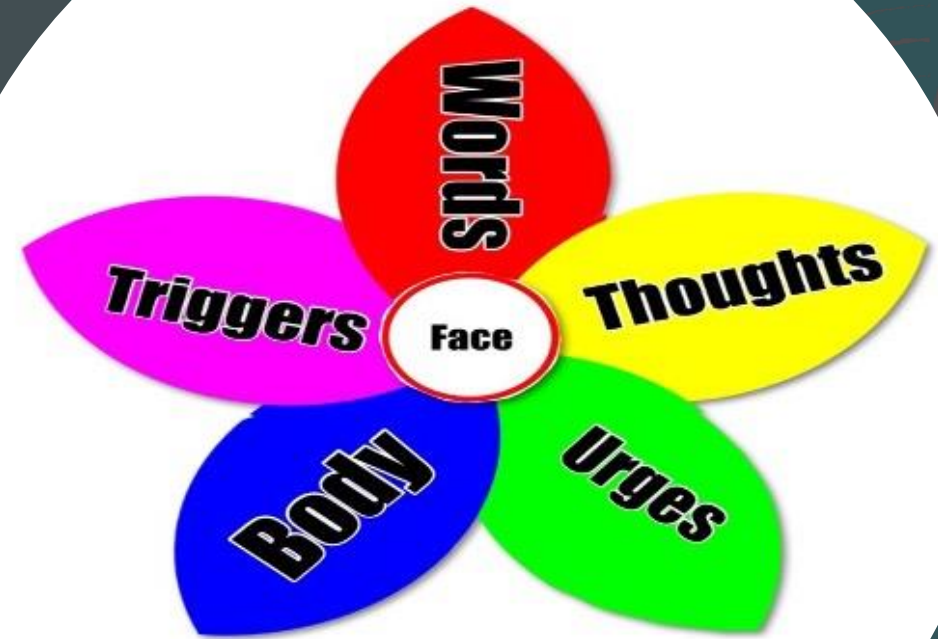
PAIRED MUSCLE RELAXATION

Focus on 1 muscle group at a time. Tighten your muscles as much as possible for 5 seconds. Then release & relax. Repeat with other muscle groups.



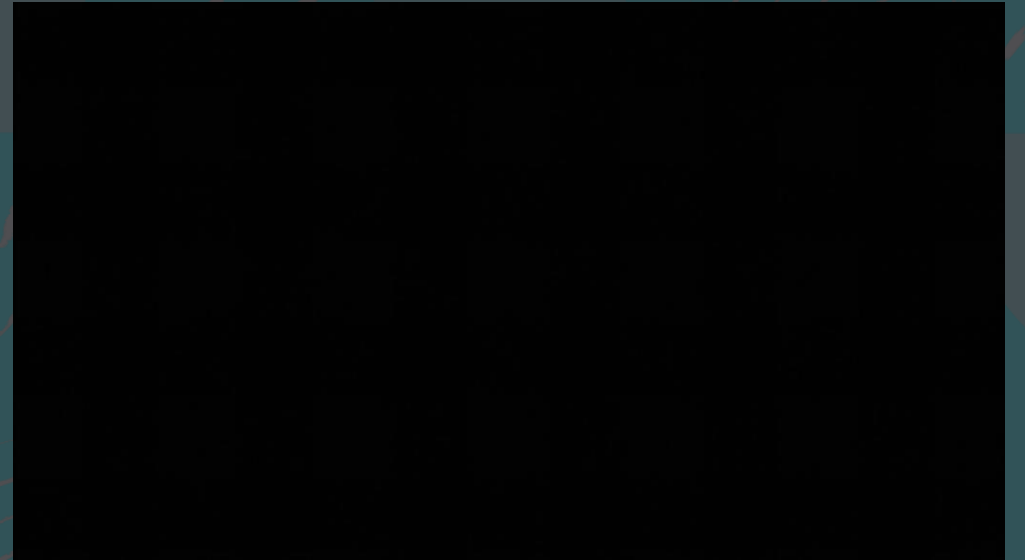
Emotional regulation

- Learn about emotions, how they work and affect you
- Learn to master difficult emotions
 - Decrease difficult emotions
 - Increase *manageable* emotions
- Connect your bodily sensations to your emotions to understand the feeling
- Connect feelings to Urges
- Connection emotions - thoughts - Behaviors



Emotional regulation Skills

- Being aware of emotions and what they are telling me
- Observing and understanding emotions
- Change emotional response
- Checking the facts
- Opposite action
- Problem solving
- Surf the emotion wave
- Practice understanding and work on being less emotional vulnerable.



RELATIONSHIP SKILLS



MAKE CHOICES

- Make a goal
- Wizard, lizard, robot brain
- Get info/ask questions
- Ask/tell what you want
- Negotiate/compromise
- +/- consequences



MAKE CONNECTIONS

- Be friendly/ easy manners
- Listen/ Validate
- Be/act interested
- Be gentle
- Reach out



EXPRESS YOURSELF

- Stand up for your values
- Be truthful
- Say how you feel
- Be fair
- Apologize - when needed

Dear Man,

DESCRIBE

EXPRESS

ASSERT

REINFORCE

How to get
what you want

MINDFUL

APPEAR CONFIDENT

NEGOTIATE



FOCUS ON RELATIONSHIP SKILLS VS EMOTIONAL REGULATION

BUILDING RELATIONSHIP SKILLS



- Strengths-Based approach
- Built in emotional regulation skills
- Making skills concrete and manageable
- Real-world application
- More “user friendly” in the moment

- Deficit-based approach
- Requires higher level of mind-body connection
- Harder to apply during difficult moments
- Difficult to reinforce consistently
- Focus is within the individual



FOCUSING ON EMOTIONAL REGULATION

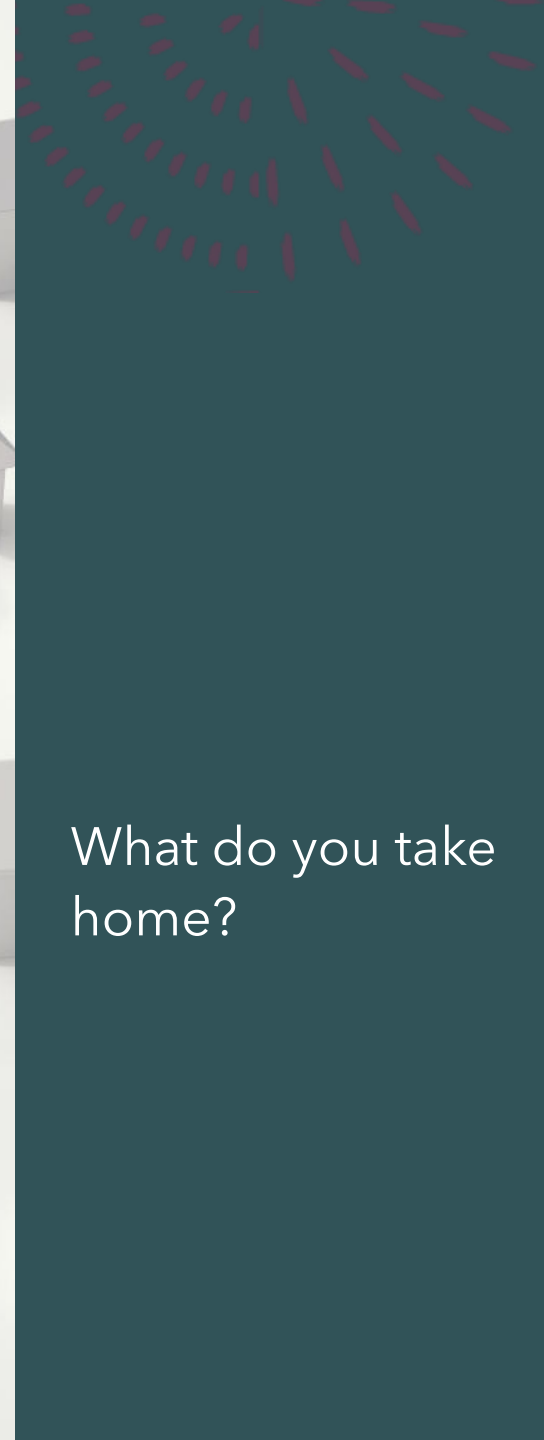
**Kalle comes to
the classroom
after recess and
he's very upset.**

What do you do?



How do we get “Buy In”?

- Making it fun
- Making it concrete
- Psychoeducation
- Rituals and traditions
- Expect success
- Allow for “safe” failure
- Eyebrows down
- Set reachable goals but stretch
 - Many small goals
 - Rewards on the way
- Positive reinforcement
- Involve Caregivers, Staff



What do you take
home?



Total Team Training