Dialectical Behavior Therapy for Adolescents

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A study in Oslo found that Dialectical Behavioral Therapy for Adolescents (DBT-A) significantly reduced self-harm, suicidal ideation, and depression among adolescents with repetitive self-harming behavior. DBT-A was significantly more effective at reducing all three problems than either psychodynamic therapy or cognitive behavioral therapy.

The differences in the number of treatment sessions contributed to some, but not all, of the difference in the effectiveness in reducing suicidal ideation between the “enhanced usual treatment” (EUC) group (that is, the group receiving psychodynamic or cognitive behavioral therapy) and the group receiving DBT-A. This was not the case for the reductions in either self-harm or depression. Although self-reported symptoms of depression were reduced in both groups “only the DBT-A group showed a significant reduction in interviewer-rated depression.”

The level of patient retention for the 19 weeks of outpatient treatment was good in both groups, which, according to the authors, demonstrates that “DBT-A can indeed be successfully delivered within a community mental health setting”


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