

DBT for Children Center for Training and Guidance

self-love safety belonging



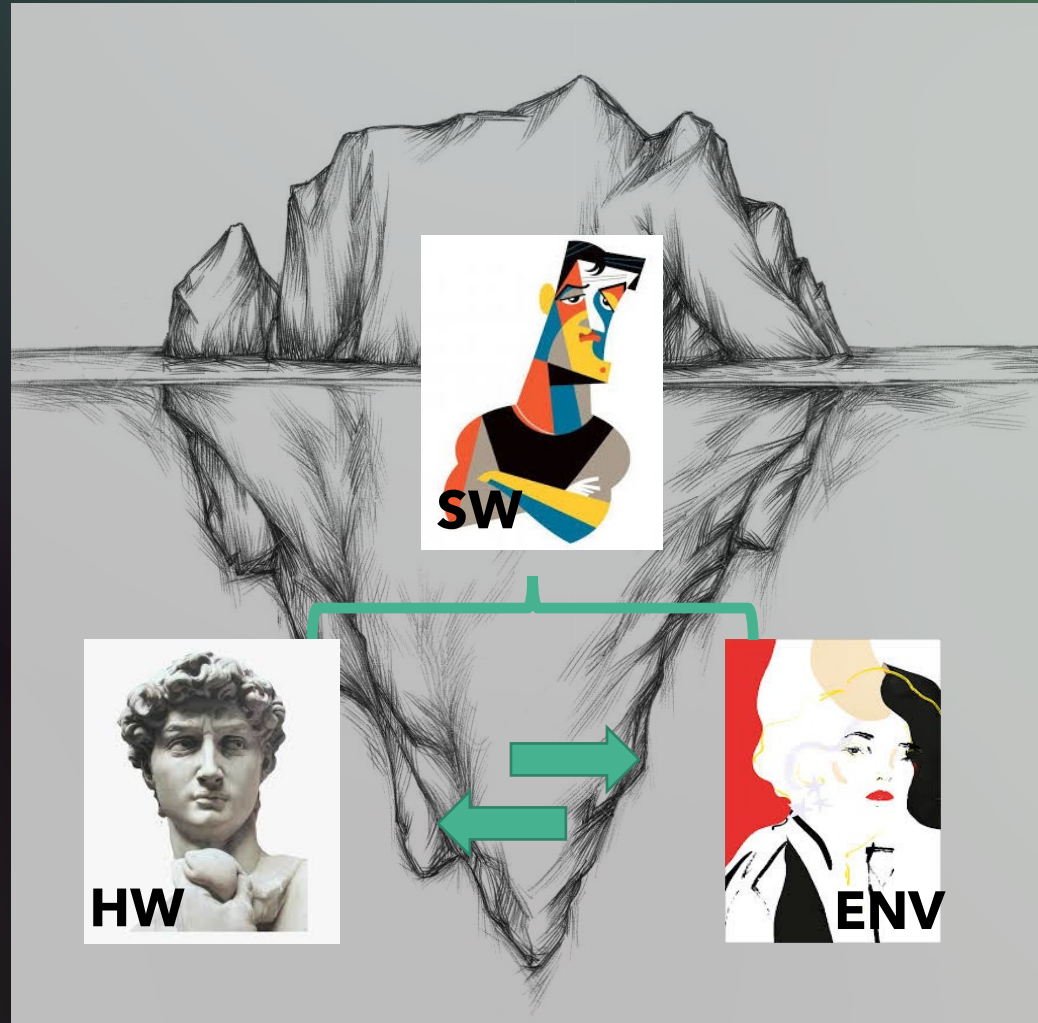
2010

childDBT

DBT for children:
Dialectics of addressing
external and internal
controlling factors

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Main Concepts



Supersenser: The David



Supersenser

1. High emotional sensitivity:

- Low threshold
 - It does not take much for a reaction to occur
- High reactivity
 - Reactions happen very fast (going from 0 to a 100 in a millisecond)
- High intensity
 - Reactions are very severe
- Slow return to baseline
 - Reactions last a long time

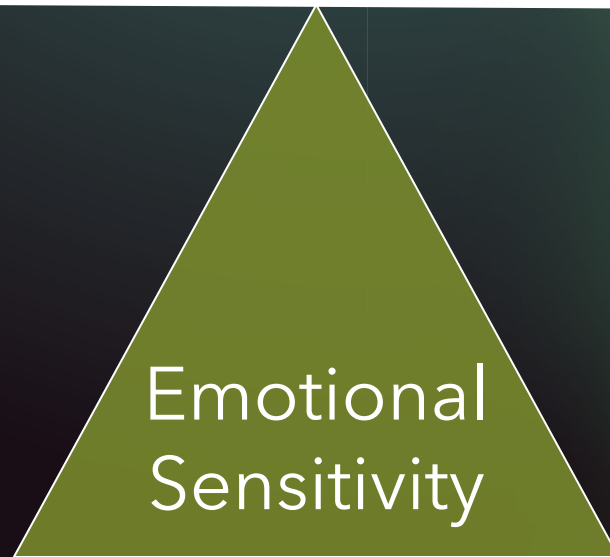
2. Corresponding behavioral dyscontrol:

- Frequent temper outbursts (physical and/or verbal aggression)
- Suicidal ideation/behaviors and/or NSSI

Emotional Sensitivity: The Dialectic

Challenges

Advantages



Emotional Sensitivity: Advantages

- Enhanced experience of positive emotions
- Ability to read other people's emotions
- Enhanced empathy
- Increased creativity

Akinola & Mendes, 2008; Ceci & Kumar, 2016; Spinrad & Stifter, 2006; Zahn-Waxler, Robinson, & Emde, 1992

"You are so sensitive!"

Sensitivity has acquired such negative connotations as:

- Touchy
- Defensive
- Uptight
- Paranoid
- Neurotic

Supersenser

Term “supersenser”:

- Decreases risk of pathologizing
- Avoids a risk of invalidation
- Provides a dialectical view of presenting issue
- Gives children and parents a sense of relief and even contentment
- Increases child’s interest and willingness to learn techniques

THE MESSAGE

Emotional sensitivity is a special ability that you need to learn how to better control and not a problem to correct

Emotion Dysregulation in Childhood: Adolescent and Adult Outcomes

- Current:
 - Disruptive Mood and Dysregulated Behaviors
- Future:
 - Personality Disorders
 - Depressive Disorders
 - Anxiety Disorders
 - Alcohol Use
 - Substance Use
 - Suicidality
 - NSSI

Althoff et al. (2010); Okado et al., (2014); Pickles et al., 2009

Superparent: The Environment



Harmful Transaction

Emotional Sensitivity



Inability of the
environment to meet
the needs

Products:

- Emotional dysregulation
- Invalidating environment

Invalidating Environment

- In many cases it's not physically or emotionally abusive.
- In many cases its good-enough parenting turned invalidating/critical/judgmental/retaliatory through a pervasive transaction between what the child needs and parental inability to meet these needs.
- Invalidating environment pervasively and indiscriminately negates or dismisses responses (feelings, thoughts, behaviors, physiology) independent of their actual validity.

Superparent

- Good-enough parenting may not be sufficient to meet the needs of supersensers.
- They may need to be parented by **superparents.**

Superparents are like Firefighters:

- Don't start fires
 - avoid modeling verbal and physical aggression
 - avoid retaliation
 - avoid invalidation
- Are not afraid of fires
 - avoid accommodation
- Calmly and skillfully put down fires and work on preventing fires
 - validating
 - prompting and reinforcing adaptive behaviors
 - using effective parenting techniques
 - doing daily reinforced skills practice with the child
 - working on own emotion regulation

In DBT-C we can directly target the
Environment!

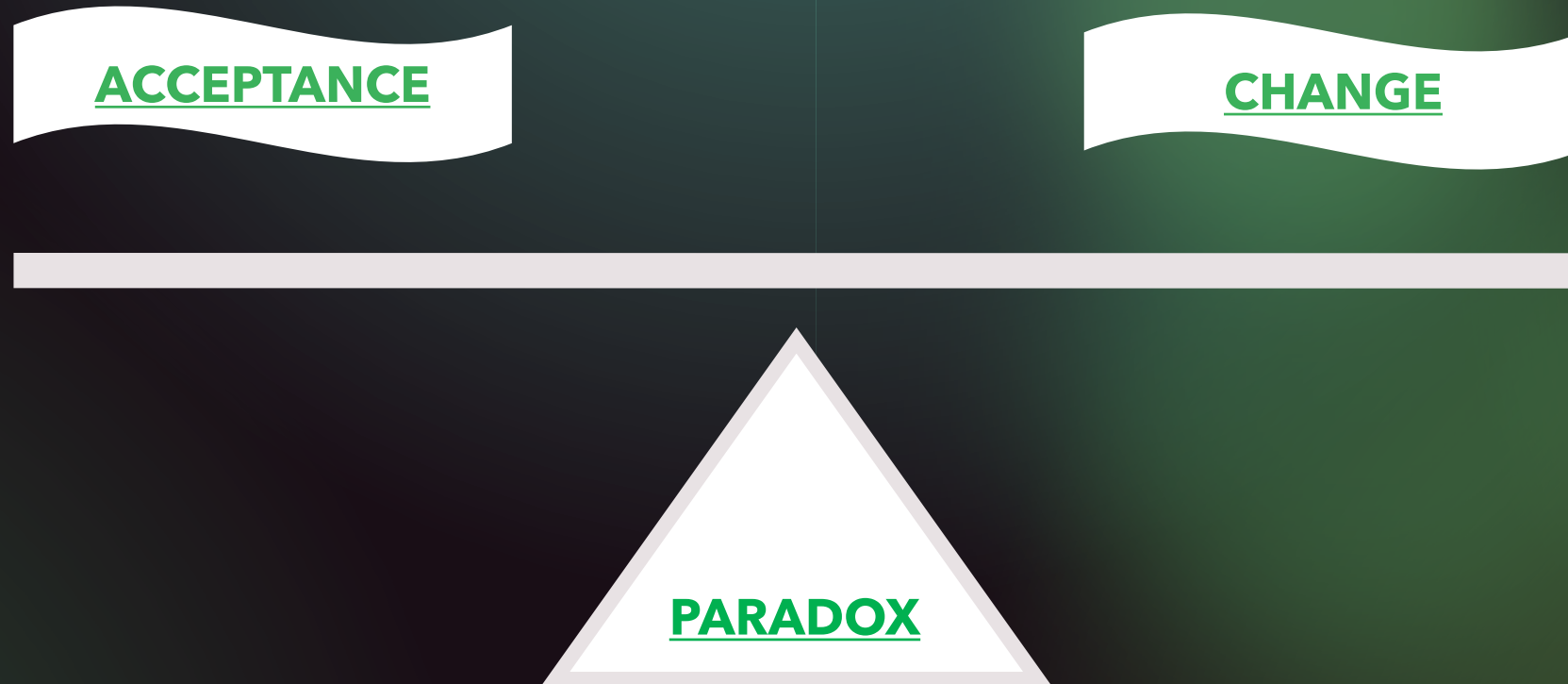
In DBT-C:

Child is the patient

Parents are the main therapeutic tools

DBT-C: MAIN DIALECTIC

Main Dialectic of Standard Model DBT



Main Dialectic of DBT-C

External controlling factors

Internal controlling factors

SYNTHESIS

Dialectic of our existence

Conditional side of existence	Unconditional side of existence
External controlling factors	Internal controlling factors
Relationship with external environment	Relationship with self
Responses (emotions/thoughts/actions)	I am an entity (neither good nor bad)
Win some/lose some	Stable, unwavering, cut in stone

Information Field: Dialectics

Relationship with the environment

Relationship with Self

External controlling factors

Events that:

- Elicit
- Reinforce
- Punish
- Extinguish
- Shape Responses

Internal controlling factors

Decrease/increase in vulnerability in the core senses:

- Self-love
- Safety
- Belonging

Level of symptom

Level of problem

Standard DBT and DBT-A

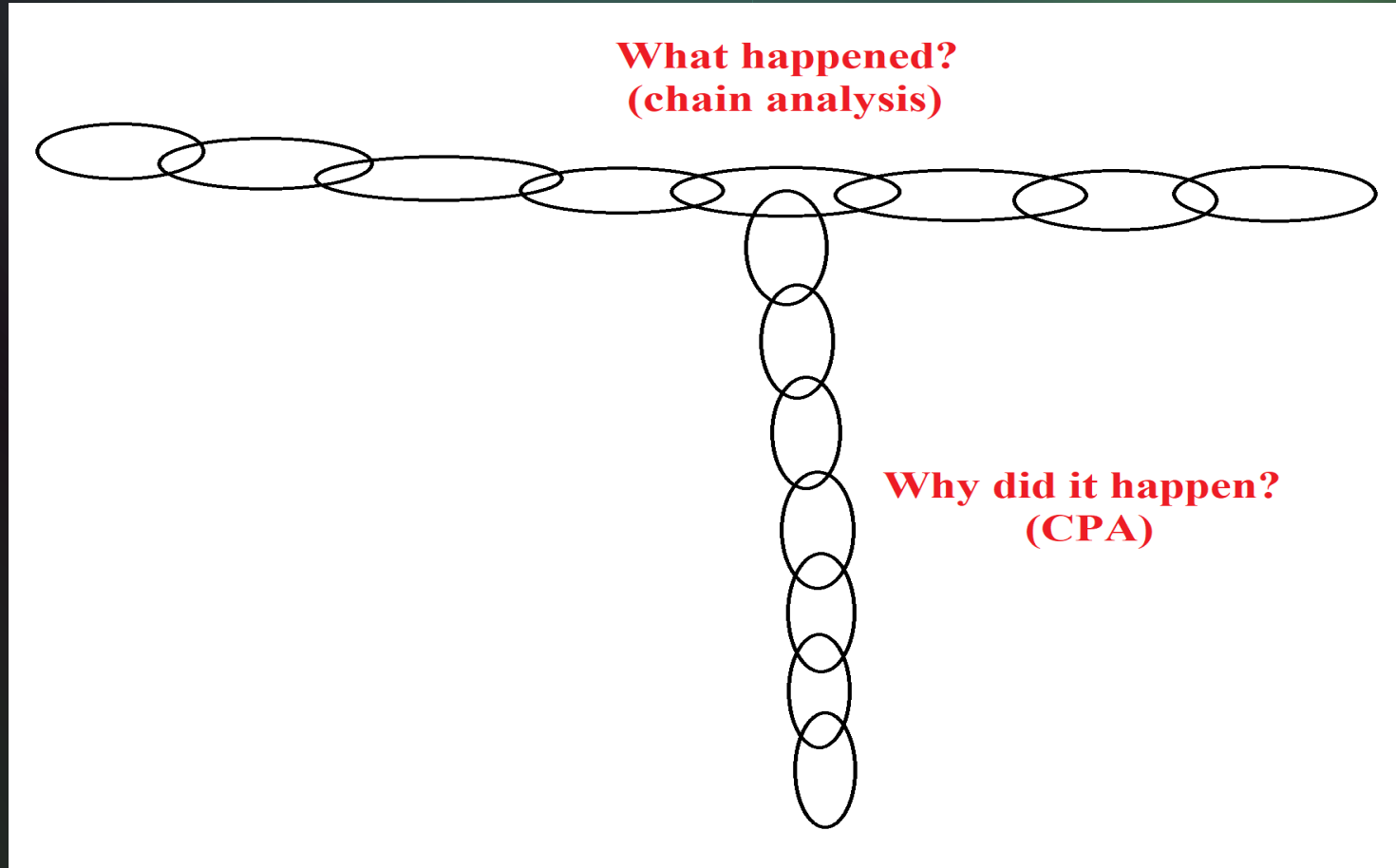
Core Problem Analysis

DBT for children

What is Core Problem Analysis?

- Identification of meanings assigned to events
- Evaluation of functions of responses
- Understanding the relationship with self via an analysis of vulnerabilities in the three core senses - self-love, safety and belonging.
- Evaluation of how these vulnerabilities influence the relationship with an environment (i.e., adaptive and maladaptive responses).
- Provision of specific therapeutic strategies to decrease these vulnerabilities.

Information field: What vs. Why



We are looking for function

Why?

Because otherwise the response is likely to continue to occur

Why?

Because pt will not know how to satisfy this function with alternative response

Especially if

Pt has no idea that there is a function

Thus, increasing risk of

Random Solution Generation

How to identify functions?

1. Ask relevant questions
2. Conduct chain analysis
3. Identify patterns
4. Test hypotheses
5. Conduct Core Problem Analysis



In awareness



Not yet in awareness

Functions of NSSI

Examples:

"I can't take this anymore!" - Coping

"I need help!" - Communication

"My friends cut; I want to belong" - Peer group connection

"I will be noticed through my pain" - Attention

"I do not want to go to school" - Instrumental

"My cutting makes my parents miserable" - Retaliation

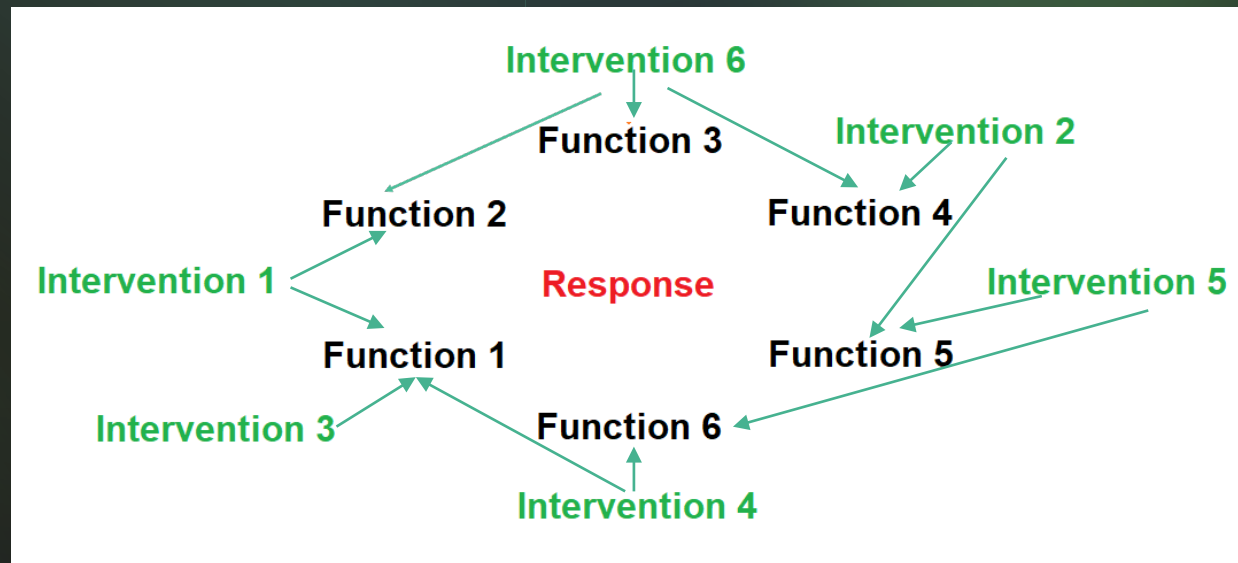
"I hate myself " - Self-punishment

"I am empty" - Fill the void

"I am this dark person who cuts" - Identity

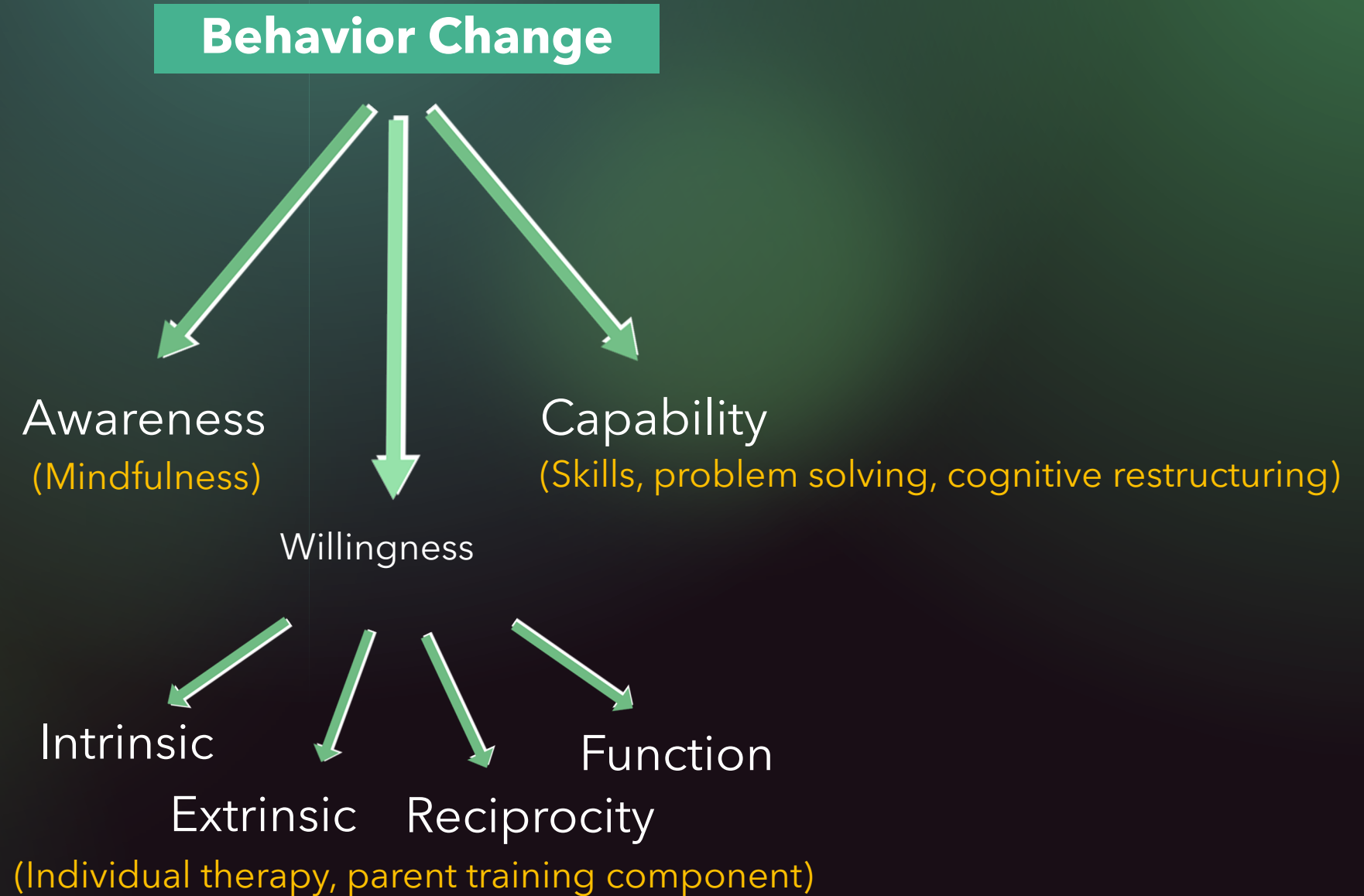
Effectiveness of treatment stems from an ability to closely match

EACH intervention to EACH function of a response



DBT-C: ADDRESSING EXTERNAL CONTROLLING FACTORS

DBT-C: Behavior Change Model



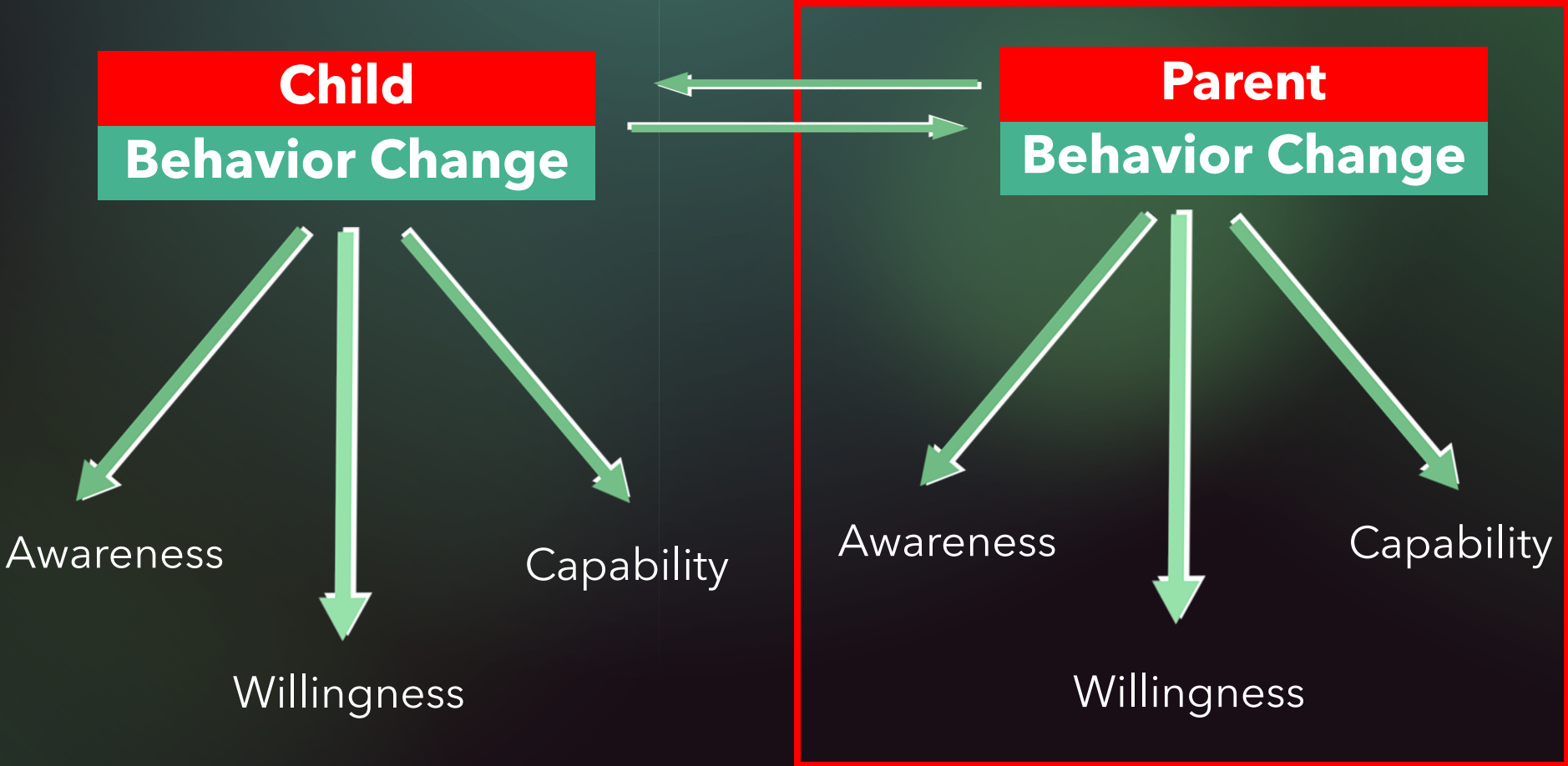
General overview of DBT-C adaptations

- DBT principles and theoretical framework were retained without modification
- Major additions:
 - Intensive parent component was added to addressing external controlling factors
 - Internal controlling factors (CPA)
- Major modifications to addressing external controlling factors:
 - Biosocial Theory
 - Target hierarchy
 - Skills training
 - Phone coaching
 - Didactics on emotions moved to individual therapy
 - Commitment requirement from parent and not from child

DBT vs DBT-C: External Controlling Factors

DBT skill	DBT-C skill	DBT-C individual	Parent training	Not covered
		Mindfulness		
Three states of mind	Three states of mind			
What skills	What skills			
How skills	How skills			
		Interpersonal Effectiveness		
Factors reducing Interpersonal Effectiveness	What gets in the way of being effective			
Myths	Worry Thoughts			
Cheerleading	Cheerleading			
DEAR	DEAR			
MAN, GIVE, FAST	FRIEND			(no) Apologies Stick to values
Walking the Middle Path:			Walking the Middle Path:	
Dialectics			Dialectics	
Dialectical Dilemmas of parenting			Dialectical Dilemmas of parenting	
Validation			Validation	
Behavior change skills			Behavior change skills	
		Distress Tolerance		
Wise Mind ACCEPTS IMPROVE the moment	DISTRACT	Making meaning		Comparisons Prayer
TIP skills	TIP skill			
Self-Soothe	Self-Soothe			
STOP		STOP		
Pros and Cons		Pros and Cons		
Radical Acceptance		Letting It Go		
Willingness/Willfulness		Willingness/Willfulness		
		Emotion Regulation		
Understanding emotions		What am I feeling? Feeling thermometer Feeling/Thought/Behavior Triangle		
Myths about emotions		Myths about emotions		
Model for describing emotions		Emotion Wave		
What good are emotions?		Why emotions are important?		
Check the facts		Check the facts Change thinking pattern		
Problem solving		Problem solving		
Letting go of emotional suffering	Surfing Your Emotions			
Opposite Action	Opposite All The Way			
PLEASE	PLEASE			
ABC	LAUGH			

Emphasis on parents



Emphasis on parents

Parents have to:

- Model skills use
- Reinforce adaptive behaviors
- Ignore dysfunctional behaviors
- Suppress dangerous behaviors
- Validate child's distress

Child's behavior is
IRRELEVANT
until environment can
effectively support
progress

DBT-C Hierarchy of Primary Targets

- I. Decrease risk of psychopathology in adolescence and adulthood
 1. Life threatening behaviors of a child (e.g., suicidality, NSSI)
 2. Therapy destroying behaviors of a child
 3. Therapy interfering behaviors of parents
 4. Parental emotion regulation
 5. Effective parenting skills
- II. Parent-child relationship
 6. Improve parent-child relationship
- III. Target current child's symptoms
 7. Risky or unsafe behaviors
 8. Quality of life Interfering behaviors
 9. Skills training
 10. Therapy interfering behaviors of a child

Parent training component

1. Biosocial Theory and Transactional Model
2. Creating a change-ready environment
3. Creating a validating environment
4. Introduction to behavior modification techniques
5. Essential behavioral modification techniques
6. Behavioral capability
7. Punishment
8. Introduction to Dialectics
9. Dialectical Dilemmas



DBT-C

Primary targets

Parental
Emotion
Regulation

Validating
Environment

Daily
Skills
Practice

DBT-C: ADDRESSING INTERNAL CONTROLLING FACTORS

Sense of Self Love (1 of 3)

Sense of self-love (SSL) refers to a consistent and reliable ability to experience love for self **as is**. *It is not the same as self-love, which is an instinct of self-preservation.* SSL refers to a stable and enduring relationship with self as that to an entity, neither good nor bad, where experience of self-love is not based on satisfying a requirement of being "good enough."

- SSL allows a person appreciate and enjoy one's own abilities, inborn aptitudes, talents and inclinations, as well as acquired facilities, interests, competencies, expertise and mastery.
- SSL also allows a person accept inability to meet standards imposed by the environment (non-attachment to outcome).

Sense of Self Love (2 of 3)

- Parental love for the child provides a foundation for the child's ability to experience self-love.
- It is imperative to avoid getting stuck in a picture of what the child "should" be instead of appreciating the child as is and helping child appreciate herself (Michelangelo's David metaphor).

Sense of Self Love (3 of 3)

Pervasive and indiscriminate invalidation interferes with child's ability to experience self-love. It is hard for the child to feel love toward herself if she believes that she is not even good enough to garner the love of her own parents.

Sense of Safety (1 of 2)

- Sense of safety refers to an ability to self-control and accumulate resources, knowledge, and connections sufficient to handle challenges, as well as the realistic appraisal of danger.
- Sense of safety starts to develop within a secure environment, where caregivers provide stability, consistent protection and support.
- Sense of safety continues to develop when a child acquires better control over her responses, understanding of self and accumulates life experiences to trust that she is able to effectively deal with life challenges.

Sense of Safety (2 of 2)

Inability to rely on consistency, protection and emotional support from parents and frequent parental accommodation of dysfunctional behaviors interfere with the child's abilities to trust self, others and the world.

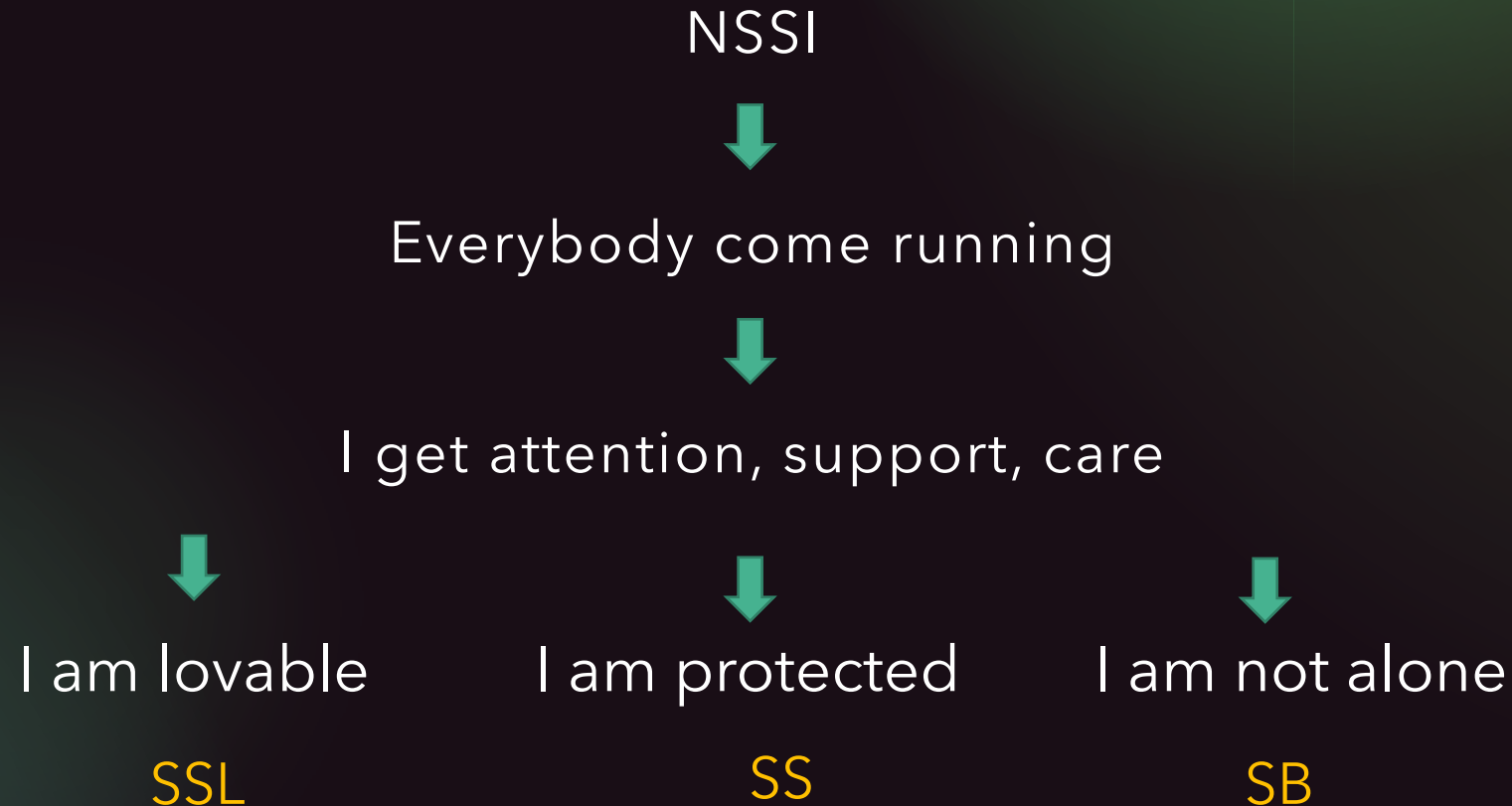
Sense of Belonging (1 of 2)

- Sense of belonging refers to an enduring sense of being welcomed and accepted as a part of a family or a group, as well as connection to ancestry.
- Sense of belonging starts to develop within a family, through a positive relationship with caregivers.

Sense of Belonging (2 of 2)

A relationship where parents frequently use downward comparisons and are critical, judgmental, retaliatory, invalidating, punishing and dismissive is likely to communicate messages to the child that she is not good enough, not accepted and even not wanted.

Maladaptive behaviors:
short-term decrease, with long-term increase in vulnerabilities



CPA-specific interventions

CPA provides specific intervention techniques to address vulnerabilities in core senses that give rise to maladaptive responses

1. How to connect to self-love, without attempting to satisfy conditions of “good-enoughness”?
2. How to decrease vulnerability in the sense of safety via directly influencing the 4 aspects of self (affect, cognition, action, biology)?
3. How to decrease vulnerability on the sense of belonging by giving to self and others

Two Sides of Existence: Dialectics

Conditional side of existence	Unconditional side of existence
Relationship with external environment	Relationship with self
Responses (emotions/thoughts/actions)	I am an entity
Win some/lose some	Stable, unwavering sense of self-love
All range of emotions	Self-love
Sense of safety	N/A
Sense of belonging (relationships)	Sense of belonging (ancestry)
Adaptive coping skills	Adaptive coping skills + CPA

Thank you for attending!

