

## What Therapy is Best for You & Your Clients?

Mental health treatments may include CBT, DBT, and ACT interventions. All three are evidence-based therapies that teach effective coping strategies. These skills are first practiced in session with a therapist and then continued in everyday life. The main difference between them is their focus.

### CBT – Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

**Focus:** Thinking and behaviour patterns that have become troublesome.

CBT looks at how thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are connected. While some background information may be gathered, the focus is mainly on presenting problems rather than past experiences or trauma. The goal is to change unhelpful thoughts to improve feelings and behaviours.

**CBT can be beneficial for:**

Phobias, OCD, anxiety, and depression.

**CBT interventions may include:**

- Recognizing cognitive styles and examining whether they are helpful or not
- Evaluating behaviours (your own and sometimes others')
- Practicing solution-oriented coping strategies
- Increasing confidence in skills and abilities
- Overcoming avoidance and gradually facing fears
- Learning relaxation strategies for the mind and body

**In short:** CBT helps you change unhelpful thinking to improve how you feel and act.

### DBT – Dialectical Behaviour Therapy

**Focus:** Social relationships and emotion-based regulation, using structured coping strategies grounded in mindfulness.

DBT recognizes that emotions can be complex and even contradictory - two opposite feelings can be true at the same time. DBT works toward meaningful behavioural change through a skills-based program, often offered in group and/or individual therapy.

**DBT can be beneficial for:**

Personality disorders, self-harm, emotional dysregulation, eating disorders, substance use, depression, PTSD, and ADHD.

**DBT includes four skill modules:**

- Mindfulness – Increasing awareness and staying present by noticing thoughts and emotions without automatically reacting to them.
- Distress Tolerance – Building the ability to tolerate intense emotions without engaging in behaviours that may make situations worse in the long term.
- Emotional Regulation – Learning skills to manage and change emotions that interfere with daily life.
- Interpersonal Effectiveness – Communicating clearly and assertively while maintaining relationships and self-respect.

**In short:** DBT helps you manage intense emotions and strengthen relationships.

## ACT – Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

**Focus:** Acceptance, mindfulness, and value-driven change to increase psychological flexibility.

ACT teaches you to accept difficult thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations without judgment or trying to avoid them. Instead of fighting discomfort, the focus is on clarifying personal values and committing to behaviours that align with those values.

ACT often uses metaphors, paradoxes, and structured exercises in either group or individual therapy.

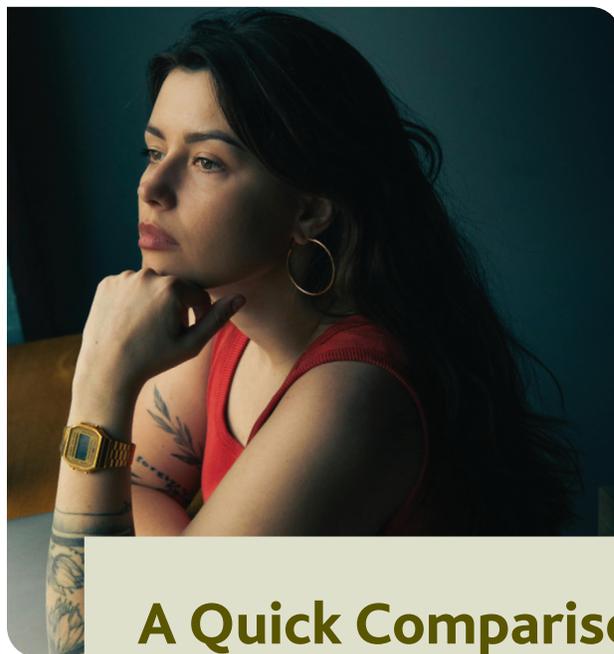
### ACT can be beneficial for:

Stress, burnout, anxiety, chronic pain, life transitions, depression, eating disorders, and substance use.

### ACT interventions include:

- Accepting unpleasant thoughts and feelings without judging or trying to get rid of them
- Practicing mindfulness to stay grounded in the present moment
- Clarifying personal values
- Committing to value-based actions, even when discomfort is present

**In short:** ACT helps you live according to what matters most to you, even when life feels difficult.



## A Quick Comparison

**CBT** → Change unhelpful thoughts and behaviours

**DBT** → Build skills to manage intense emotions and improve relationships

**ACT** → Accept discomfort and commit to living by your values

Many therapists integrate elements of all three approaches to best support individual needs.

**At Block Building Therapies your occupational therapist can offer an integration of these therapies through individual therapy. Our mental health program is designed to implement such therapies, which includes the adult ADHD program.**

For further assessment, therapy, consultation and/or education on mental health interventions, contact Block Building Therapies at :

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Referral forms for new assessments are also available online at our website: [www.blockbuilding.ca](http://www.blockbuilding.ca)