

# Redesigning Dialectical Behavior Therapy for Autistic Young Adults

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# Disclosures

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Today's speaker has no financial relationships with an ineligible company relevant to this presentation to disclose.

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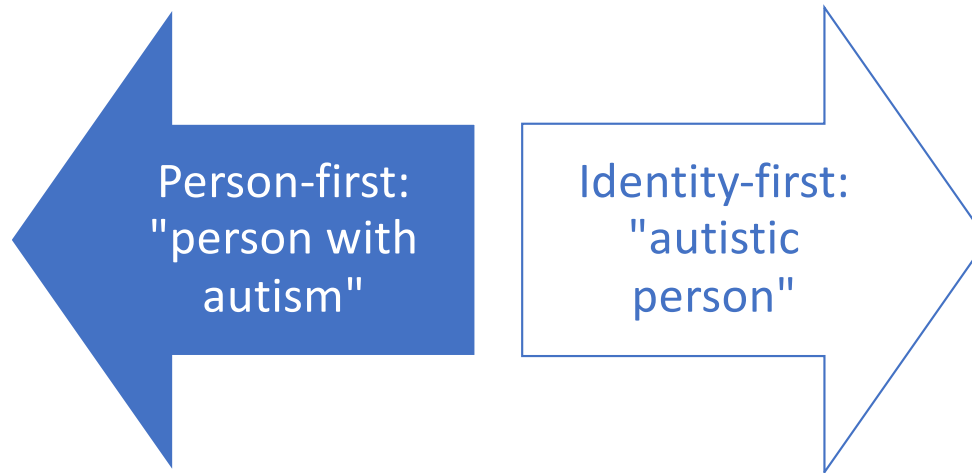
# Objectives

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- Attendees will be able to identify the rates of suicidal thoughts and behaviors in Autistic adults
- Attendees will understand why Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) may be a viable treatment option for Autistic adults with suicidal thoughts and behaviors
- Attendees will learn about preliminary findings from an ongoing study focused on redesigning DBT for Autistic young adults

# Note on Language

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# Suicidality in Autistic Adults

- ~72% of Autistic adults report suicidal thoughts and behavior
- ~50% engage in non-suicidal self-injury

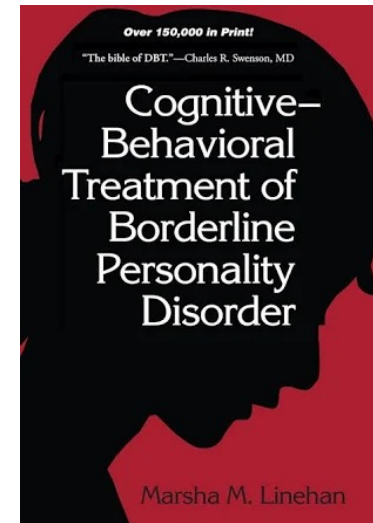


Cassidy et al. (2018); Maddox et al. (2017)

# Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)

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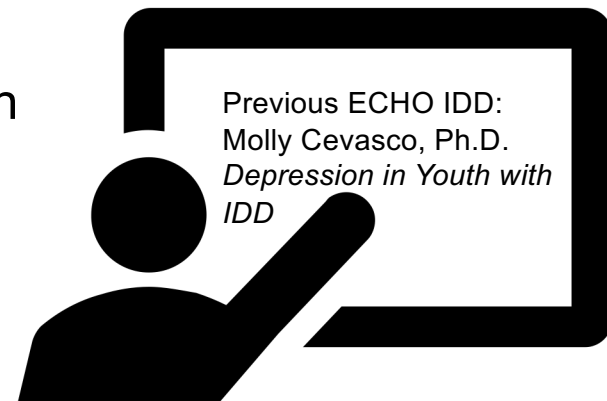
- Created by **Marsha Linehan, Ph.D.**
- Third-wave **behavioral** therapy
- **Acceptance** and **change**
- Chronic suicidal thoughts and behaviors
- Strong **evidence** base



Linehan (1993)

# DBT Well-suited for Autistic Adults

- **Structured** and **flexible** treatment
- **Few studies** have tested it
- No **systematic** or **iterative** studies
- **No involvement** of Autistic adults as research partners or key stakeholders in studies




Bemmouna et al. (2021); Ritschel et al. (2021)

# Comprehensive DBT Modes

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Individual therapy 

Skills training group 

Phone coaching 

Consultation team 

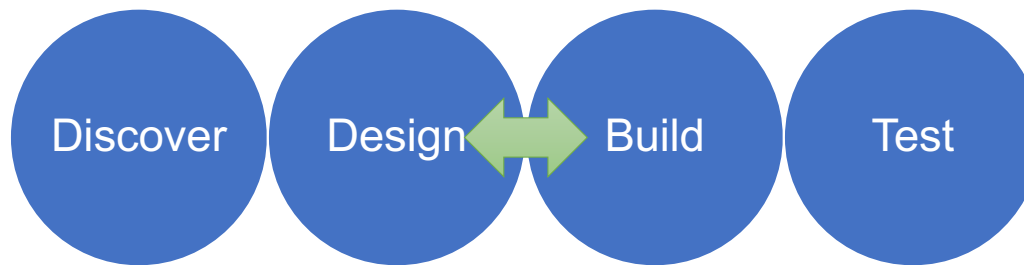
Ancillary treatment 

Linehan (1993)



# Discover Design/Build Test

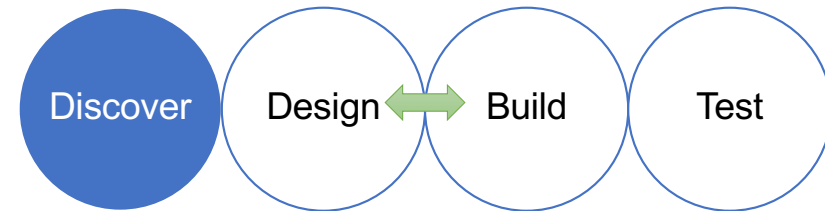
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Lyon et al. (2019)

# Understanding the Context

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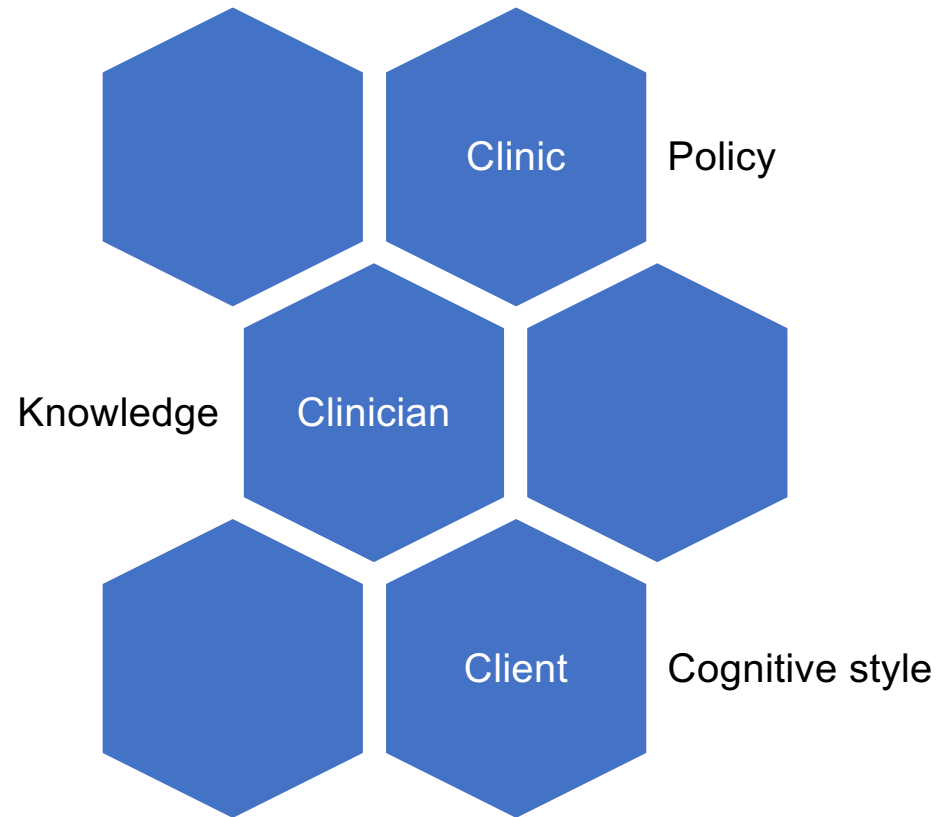


## Discover Phase Part I

- **Qualitative interviews** focused on understanding the **determinants**
  - Autistic adults
  - DBT clinicians and clinic leaders

McVey et al. (in prep)

# Emerging Findings: Determinants




McVey et al. (in prep)


# Emerging Findings: Preliminary Targets for Redesign

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Individual therapy 

Skills training group 

Phone coaching 

Consultation team 

Ancillary treatment 

Linehan (1993)

# Recruiting!

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## Discover Phase Part II

Study coordinator: Adora Du [adora123@uw.edu](mailto:adora123@uw.edu)

Study PI: Alana McVey [ajmcvey@uw.edu](mailto:ajmcvey@uw.edu)



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- International Society for the Improvement and Teaching of Dialectical Behavior Therapy



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Career Mentor: Gary Stobbe, MD

Project Coordinator, Collaborators, and Consultants

Participants

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# Available resources

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Access recorded brief recorded presentations at this site:  
<https://wainclude.org/echo/echo-idd-wraparound/presentations/>

February 22, 2023, *IDD and Mental Health*, Rachel Earl, Ph.D.

November 9, 2022, *Depression in Youth with IDD*, Molly Cevalasco, Ph.D., BCBA

October 12, 2022, *Understanding Anxiety in IDD*, Molly Cevalasco, Ph.D., BCBA

December 22, 2021, *Identification of Mental Health Conditions in Youth with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)*, Lindsey Miller, ARNP

April 21, 2021, *Suicide Screening for Youth with IDD/ASD*, Megan Goldenshtyen, Ph.D.



# References

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Ritschel, L. A., Guy, L., & Maddox, B. B. (2021). A pilot study of dialectical behaviour therapy skills training for autistic adults. *Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1352465821000370>

# Questions

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**THANK YOU!**

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