

Dynamic (attachment-focused) Relational Therapy (DaRT) Program

In-person Program Guide

If you have questions after reading this guide,
please call the DaRT Program:

› Phone: 902-464-3222

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Dynamic (attachment-focused) Relational Therapy (DaRT) Program

In-person Program Guide

This guide will answer any questions you may have about attending the DaRT program.

Your first day

“Most people are very nervous their first day. If you are feeling something like, ‘this may help some people, but not me’ or ‘I can’t talk in front of other people’ or ‘I can’t handle this,’ you are not alone. Many people during their first day in the program express these same thoughts and feelings. Good advice others have given is ‘give yourself a chance,’ and ‘sit back and observe at first,”

— Written by a graduating group member

What number do I call for help 24/7?

Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team

The Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team (MHMCT) provides help for children, youth, and adults experiencing a mental health crisis or mental distress. The service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- › Phone: 902-429-8167 or (toll free) 1-888-429-8167

The MHMCT can help you cope with issues like:

- › Suicidal thoughts
- › Self-harming thoughts or behaviours
- › Anxiety
- › Depression
- › Trouble coping with distress
- › Psychotic or distorted thinking
- › Substance use
- › Any other mental health concern

The MHMCT also supports families, friends, community agencies, and others to manage a mental health crisis through education, outreach, and consultation.

811

Call 811 to talk with a registered nurse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They can help with non-urgent, health-related issues. They may:

- › give information and advice to care for yourself at home.
- › suggest seeing your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner).
- › suggest going to the nearest Emergency Department.

If it is a medical or mental health and addictions emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.

What is the DaRT Program?

DaRT is a 6-week intensive group. The group meets on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays for half days. **You are expected to commit to the full 6 weeks and attend all group sessions.** You are also expected to attend appointments with members of your health care team.

Sessions will be led by a health care team from psychiatry, psychology, occupational therapy, social work, nursing, and recreation therapy. As Nova Scotia Health is a teaching facility, learners may also take part in your care.

This program is focused on emotions. It will help you:

- › build skills and start to work through all of your emotions.
- › learn ways to improve your relationships.
- › learn ways to improve your communication skills.
- › change your patterns of behaviour.
- › build a sense of connection and belonging in your community.

You are expected to commit to both group sessions and individual appointments. They are both important parts of your treatment.

Your primary clinician

You will be assigned a primary clinician who is a member of the DaRT health care team. They may be a social worker, psychiatric resident (doctor), nurse, occupational therapist, or clinical therapist (counsellor who assesses and treats emotional issues or mental illnesses).

Where is the DaRT Program located?

Dr. Clyde S. Marshall Building, main floor
Nova Scotia Hospital
294 Pleasant Street
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia B2Y 0A5

If you have any questions, please reach out to a team member.

- › Phone: **902-464-3222**

Intake process

Before starting the program, you will meet with your health care team member and decide together if the program is right for you. They will ask questions about your life experiences to help you make connections and develop insight into your current struggles. You will be encouraged to start thinking about what goals you would like to focus on in therapy. They may ask questions like:

- Is this the right time for you to attend a program like DaRT?
- Will this program meet your needs?
- What are your goals for the program?
- Are your living arrangements stable?
- Do you have any challenges that might make it hard for you to take part in the program?

To help you decide what changes you want to make, ask yourself:

- How are my relationships?
- Do I enjoy my leisure (free time) activities?
- Am I satisfied with my work?
- Do I feel productive?
- Do I have enough structure (a healthy daily routine) in my day?
- Am I able to say what I want or need from others?
- Am I able to say no without feeling guilty?
- Can I express how I feel?
- How do I deal with stress in my life?
- How do I deal with feelings of guilt, shame, and low self-worth?
- Do I have complicated feelings to work through?

How do I join the DaRT Program?

- The DaRT Program offers a rolling entry for all group members. This means that there are no specific start or end dates. There is always a flow of participants joining and finishing the program.
- The rolling entry is helpful, as you and your primary clinician can pace your start date to best fit your schedule and therapeutic needs. You will work with your primary clinician to decide your start date.
- You will join a group in progress that already has momentum. This will help you get started. This also means that you will not have to wait very long to start the program once you complete the intake process and are ready to start.

What will my treatment focus on?

Your treatment will focus on working through complicated emotions that may be keeping you stuck. You will learn to develop a healthy relationship with yourself, improve your relationships with others, and build skills to tolerate (handle) and work through difficult emotions.

The Program will focus on:

- › Understanding your emotions and behaviours
- › Learning to recognize and deal with stress
- › Shifting thinking patterns and core beliefs that are not helping you
- › Having more empathy and compassion for yourself and others
- › Lowering feelings of depression, anxiety, and isolation
- › Developing healthy habits and routines
- › Building connections with others in your life and community
- › Improving your communication skills, including setting healthy boundaries

Your Circle of Support

Your Circle of Support is made up of family and friends who you have chosen to provide you with support. You will work with the team to make treatment goals that keep your loved ones, work, and community in mind. You may be encouraged to choose a support person to come to the Program to meet with your health care team at the end of your treatment.

Relapse prevention

The goals of the program are to help you:

- › improve your relationships.
- › function better in your community.
- › prevent or lower future mental health concerns.

Group focus

Most of the treatment happens in a group setting. You may also meet individually with members of your health care team.

Responsibility

You are responsible for:

- › setting your own goals.
- › working on these goals in the program and at home.

Confidentiality

- Group sessions are confidential (private). **Do not** talk about what was discussed in group outside of group sessions. Please respect everyone's personal information (even if you do not use the person's name). All health care team members will respect your right to confidentiality.
- Sometimes hospitals, doctors, or therapists are required by law to release certain information. Please ask a member of your health care team if you would like more information about this.

Team approach

All health care team members are involved in your treatment. The team meets each week to stay up-to-date on your goals and progress. They work together with you to help you meet your program goals.

Holistic (whole person) approach

Your treatment will focus on all parts of your health. This includes physical, emotional, and intellectual well-being.

Dignity and respect

You and your team members will treat each other with dignity and respect.

Medications

- This is a therapy program. **Medication is not the main focus.**
- If you need medication(s) for your mental health, your prescribing doctor or psychiatrist should manage it while you are in the program.
- When you start the Program, a team member will ask you about the medication(s) you are taking. It is important that your health care team knows and understands what medication(s) you are taking (including any over-the-counter medications). If any changes are made to your medication(s) while you are in the Program, please tell a member of your health care team.
- Your health care team works with your primary health care provider. We will send your primary health care provider a full report about your treatment at the end of the program.

Research

DaRT staff do research studies to make sure we are helping people. You may be asked to take part in a study. This is completely up to you. **Your decision will not affect the quality of care you receive.** You can choose to not take part at any time. If you choose to take part, you may be asked to:

- › fill out questionnaires before and after the program.
- › take part in an interview.

If you are invited to take part in a study, the research team will give you information about it.

If you have questions, please call the DaRT Program:

- › **Phone: 902-464-3222**

What is expected of me?

- **You are in charge of getting better.** We expect you to decide what your concerns and issues are, and what changes you need to make. Your health care team is here to help.
- You are expected to attend all of your appointments and group therapy sessions. If you are going to be late or cannot make it to an appointment, call and tell a team member.
 - › Phone: 902-464-3222
- You are expected to be on time for all of your groups and appointments and group therapy sessions. If you are going to be late, call and tell a team member. If you arrive late, you will not be able to join the group until the next session.
- You may have strong emotional reactions during group sessions. If this happens, try to stay present in the session. This is your chance to work through your feelings safely with the support of the group. If you have questions about this, please ask your primary clinician.
- If you do not want to continue in the program, please talk with your primary clinician.
- The support you get from other group members is important in your treatment. Sometimes these relationships can get too close. It is important to have good boundaries, so that you can stay focused on your recovery goals.
- **Do not share your contact information with other group members.** We discourage using social networking sites (like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) while you are in the program, including during group sessions. This is part of having good boundaries and keeping information confidential.
- You are expected to set goals each week related to the changes you wanted to make when you first started the program.
- You are expected to tell your primary clinician about any changes that are happening in your life, as well as any drug or alcohol relapses, or changes in your mental health.
- You are responsible for taking your medications as prescribed. You are also responsible for telling your primary clinician about any concerns you have, or changes in your medications.

What should I expect during the group?

The team believes in care for the mind, the body, and the spirit. Groups reflect this whole person focus. This is a **group treatment program** and **all** participants need to take part in all groups. The groups link together, so missing some groups will affect the overall benefit you may gain from the program.

Group guidelines

These guidelines were developed by participants and apply to all groups.

We will respect each other by:

- › being on time.
- › staying in the group.
- › being responsible for what we say using “I statements.”
- › keeping everything said in the group confidential.
- › not talking about others when they are not present.
- › being non-judgmental.
- › being honest.
- › Allowing only one conversation at a time.
- › listening carefully and respectfully.
- › turning off cell phones/other devices that may be distracting.
- › not physically comforting others during the group. This allows them the opportunity to lean to settle and sooth themselves.
- › not using profanity (swear words) to make sure the group feels safe.

We encourage group participants to be mindful of the language they use. Often those who take part in the DaRT program have been making changes in their life which may include reducing involvement with substances, working on their anger, or learning how to connect with others in a healthy, supportive way.

Groups

Emotional Tolerance

Everyone has emotions, and developing skills for a healthy relationship with your emotions is an important part of a healthy lifestyle.

Stress is a normal part of daily life and stress causes emotional upset.

This group will help you learn skills to understand your emotions and your stress reactions, and improve your ability to tolerate all emotions.

Assertiveness Skills Group

During the course of our daily lives, we need to interact with others. Learning to express our needs directly, while respecting others, is a vital tool to keep us feeling well and secure.

This group helps you develop communication skills, including:

- › expressing your feelings.
- › learning to cope with people who make unreasonable demands.
- › basic conversation skills.
- › expressing your needs.

The group is organized to start with a review of homework from the previous week. Then each week the session will focus on a new skill, followed by a role play and feedback. Practicing these skills in the group will help you to develop greater self-confidence and a sense of control.

Community Meeting

This is a meeting in which volunteer positions are chosen for the week. During your 6 weeks at the DaRT Program, you are considered a member of our community. With that role comes shared responsibilities. The volunteer positions make sure the Program works well from day to day.

Emotions Processing Group

This is a group where staff and participants meet together. It is a time to share your emotional experiences with others and to understand how they relate to your life. It is also the group in which participants who are finishing the Program say their goodbyes and review their experiences. Participants are asked not to write or take notes during this group.

Physical Activity Group

There is a connection between your physical and mental health. Exercise can help improve mood and anxiety. This group offers you a chance to get moving at a level that is possible for you. The group tries different exercises, group games, and adapted sport, using simple and easy routines and equipment.

The importance of physical activity, motivation to get started, and available community resources will also be explored. This group will help you experience the benefits of exercise and find enjoyment in making it part of your life.

Relationships with Yourself and Others

Healthy relationships and connections are the foundation of health and wellbeing. The purpose of this group is to strengthen your relationships with yourself and others. This is a skill-building group that covers topics such as Self-esteem, Shame, Boundaries, Attachment Styles, Relationship Patterns, and Healthy Connections.

Wellness Group

This group focuses on the 3 spheres (major areas) of wellness: Leisure, Self-Care, and Productivity. A balance of these activities can give you the chance to socialize, increase your confidence and self-esteem, relax, and be physically active or express yourself creatively. Doing the things that you enjoy helps with motivation when you face challenges. An important part of this group will include setting wellness goals. Mental health challenges can result in a pattern (habit) of distancing from your family, friends, and community, and avoiding responsibilities. This group offers a chance to explore your interests, connect with community resources, and establish a healthy routine.

Time outside of scheduled groups

The goal of the DaRT Program is to help you to function at your best and succeed in your community. When you are not attending the Program or meeting with a member of your health care team, we encourage you to:

- › practice the skills you are learning
- › work on your goals.

Snack voucher

You will be given a snack voucher each day. The voucher can be used in the coffee shop in the Mount Hope Building during breaks. Breaks are a chance to practice casual communication and socialize in a healthy way.

You can choose what food to get with the voucher. If the cost of the food is more than the amount on the meal ticket, **you are responsible for paying the difference.**

Parking

While you are in the Program, parking on the Nova Scotia Hospital site is free of charge. The parking lot behind the Hugh Bell building is accessible to the public. You will be given a parking pass to display on your dashboard during the program. You must give Program staff your license plate number to give to the parking office.

The DaRT Program is not able to provide financial support for transportation. If you have questions about getting to the Program, talk with your primary clinician.

Smoking and Scent Free Policy

Nova Scotia Health promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment. **Please do not use perfumed products.**

What can I expect from my health care team?

Your health care team will:

- › be present and on time for all groups for which they are responsible.
- › respect your right to confidentiality within the program.
- › give you feedback about how you are doing.
- › listen to your feedback about your treatment and the program.

Your primary clinician

You will be assigned a primary clinician who is a member of the DaRT health care team. They may be a social worker, psychiatric resident (doctor), nurse, or clinical therapist.

Your primary clinician will:

- › help you decide what goals you want to work on in the program.
- › meet with you one-on-one, as needed.
- › meet with you and a support person, if needed.
- › review your progress each week to see how you are doing.
- › plan follow-up treatment with you.

DaRT Program staff are not able to return urgent calls right away. **If you feel like you need urgent mental health crisis support:**

- Contact the Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team:
 - › Phone (toll-free): 1-888-429-8167
- Go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.

If you are having trouble tolerating the Program, talk with your primary clinician.

There are differences between group therapy and friendship. To offer you the best care, your health care team must be objective and professional. Team members cannot also be your friends, although they will be caring and friendly.

If you are interested in joining the DaRt program

You may wish to think about the questions below to help you get ready for treatment:

1. What are some of my accomplishments?

2. What are some of my strengths?

3. What are some of the problems that are affecting me the most?

4. I would like to focus on:

- My relationship with myself
- My relationship with others
- Coping skills
- Making social connections
- Dealing with my emotions
- Healthy boundaries
- Self-esteem and confidence
- Assertiveness
- Structure and routine
- Leisure and interests
- Other: _____

5. Choose how you feel about each statement below:

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
I am motivated to make lifestyle changes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am ready to make lifestyle changes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am able to make lifestyle changes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am willing to make lifestyle changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <https://library.nshealth.ca/PatientEducation>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

Nova Scotia Health promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.

Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

www.nshealth.ca

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.
If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.

