

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

Virtual Program Guide

If you have questions after reading this pamphlet, please call the DaRT Program:
› Phone: 902-464-3222

Contents

What number do I call for help 24/7?	2
Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team	2
811.....	2
What is the DaRT Program?	3
Your primary clinician	3
Technical requirements	3
Intake process	4
What will my treatment focus on?.....	5
Program goals	5
Responsibility.....	5
Holistic (whole person) approach.....	5
Team approach	5
Your Circle of Support.....	5
Confidentiality.....	5
Dignity and respect	5
Medication.....	6
Research	6
What is expected of me?	7
Group guidelines	8
Guidelines for virtual groups	8

Groups 9

 Relaxation Skills Group..... 9

 Goals Setting Skills Group 9

 Emotion Skills Group 9

 Relationship Skills Group 10

 Communication Skills Group..... 10

 Leisure Skills Group 10

What can I expect from my health care team?..... 11

If you are interested in joining the DaRt program 12

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

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If you are considering the DaRT Program, or you are about to start, you probably have a lot of questions. This pamphlet will help to answer your questions.

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) helps 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 these issues:

- › Suicidal thoughts
- › Self-harming thoughts or behaviours
- › Anxiety
- › Depression
- › Trouble coping with distress
- › Psychosis (a mental health condition where people have trouble understanding what is real and what is not)
- › Substance use
- › Any other mental health concern

The MHMCT also supports loved ones, community agencies, and others to manage a mental health crisis.

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, mental health, or addictions emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.

What is the DaRT Program?

DaRT is a 6-week group program. You must be committed, motivated, and emotionally engaged (for example, you are open to talk about your feelings, thoughts, and reactions) during each session. You must be on time and attend 3 days each week. The group meets online using Zoom for Healthcare. **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 team of health care providers from psychiatry, 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 group will give you a feeling of connection. You will also learn:

- › skills for coping with anxiety and other emotions.
- › ways to improve your relationships.
- › ways to improve your communication skills.
- › about patterns of behaviour.

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, a psychiatric resident (doctor), a nurse, or a clinical therapist (counsellor who assesses and treats emotional issues or mental illnesses).

Technical requirements

You will need:

- ☐ A device (like a cell phone, laptop, tablet, or gaming system) with video, audio (sound), and a microphone
- ☐ High speed internet and Wi-Fi access
Note: Online video streaming uses a lot of data.
DaRT does not pay if you go over your data limit.
- ☐ A private area to take part (headphones are recommended)

If you have any questions about the technical requirements, please ask a team member.

- › Phone: 902-464-3222

Intake process

You will meet with your primary clinician and decide together if the program is right for you. They may ask questions like:

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

The DaRT Program offers a rolling entry. This means that group members are always joining and leaving the program. You will work with your primary clinician to choose your start date.

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

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

What will my treatment focus on?

Your treatment will focus on making you more aware of the present.

Program goals

The goals of the program are to help you:

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

Responsibility

You are responsible for:

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

Holistic (whole person) approach

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

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.

Your Circle of Support

You choose who is included in your Circle of Support. This may include your family, friends, or other community supports. You will work with your team to make treatment goals that keep your support person(s), work, and community in mind.

Confidentiality

- Group sessions are confidential (private). **Do not talk about what was discussed in group outside of group sessions.** Even if you do not use a person's name, you should not talk about their personal information. 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.

Dignity and respect

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

Medication

- 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.
- 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.

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 are, and what changes you need to make. Your health care team is here to help.
- You are expected to be on time for all group sessions and appointments. If you are going to be late or cannot make it to a scheduled group session or an appointment, call and tell a member of your health care team. If you arrive late to a group session, you may not be able to join until the next group session.
 - › Phone: 902-464-3222
- You are expected to set goals each week related to the changes you wanted to make when you first started the program.
- You may have strong emotional reactions during sessions. If this happens, try to stay present. 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.
- The support you get from your group members is important for your treatment. But sometimes these relationships can get too close. It is important to have good boundaries, so that you can stay focused on your recovery goals.
- As part of having good boundaries and protecting confidentiality, we discourage:
 - › exchanging contact information with other group members.
 - › reaching out to other group members through social media.
- You are expected to tell your primary clinician about any:
 - › changes that are happening in your life
 - › any drug or alcohol relapses
 - › changes in your mental health
- You are responsible for:
 - › taking your medications as prescribed.
 - › telling your primary clinician about any changes in your medications.
 - › telling your primary clinician if you have any concerns about your medications.
- If you do not want to continue in the program, please talk with your primary clinician.

Group guidelines

- You are expected to take part in all group sessions. The information from each session links together, so missing a session will affect your success in the program.
- These guidelines were written by group participants. We will respect each other by:
 - › being on time.
 - › staying signed into group sessions.
 - › 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.
 - › not judging other group members.
 - › being honest.
 - › letting each person talk without interrupting.
 - › listening carefully and respectfully.
 - › turning off cell phones and/or other electronic devices that may be distracting.
 - › not swearing.

Guidelines for virtual groups

You will be asked to review and sign a consent form before you start the program. These guidelines help to make sure all sessions are private and confidential for all group members:

- Take part alone from a private space.
- **Do not** record or take screenshots (pictures) of sessions.
- **Do not** join a session if you have used drugs and/or alcohol.
- Dress appropriately.
- **Do not** have items in the background that may emotionally harm or trigger others (like disturbing images, violent language, or objects or images related to drugs or alcohol).
- **Do not** use filters or backgrounds.

Groups

Relaxation Skills Group

You will learn 6 relaxation techniques. They will help you to slow down and be present in the moment.

Relaxation techniques may not feel natural at first. With practice, these skills will help to give you a sense of calm and peace.

Goals Setting Skills Group

This group uses the SMART technique to set meaningful goals and change negative behaviours. SMART goals are:

- › **Specific**
- › **Measurable**
- › **Action-oriented**
- › **Realistic**
- › **Time-bound**

As your behaviours change, your thoughts and feelings will change too.

Emotion Skills Group

Stress is a normal part of life. This group will help you learn ways to manage stress and your emotions. Learning to deal with stress will help your emotional and mental health.

Relationship Skills Group

This group will help you to build stronger relationships with yourself and others. You will learn skills related to:

- › Self-esteem
- › Shame
- › Boundaries
- › Relationships
- › Personality styles
- › Healthy connections

Communication Skills Group

It is important to express your needs directly, while respecting others. This helps everyone one to feel secure. This group will teach you communication skills and how to set healthy boundaries.

Leisure Skills Group

Leisure and recreation can support your well-being in many ways.

Leisure activities can help you to:

- › Socialize
- › Increase your confidence and self-esteem
- › Relax
- › Be physically active
- › Express yourself creatively

Mental health challenges can start a pattern of disconnecting from others and avoiding activities. This group offers a chance to explore your interests and make leisure a part of your routine. Doing things you enjoy may also help you to stay motivated when you face challenges.

What can I expect from my health care team?

Your health care team will:

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

Your primary clinician will:

- › help you choose what goals you want to work on.
- › 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.

There are differences between group therapy and friendship. To offer you the best care, your health care team must be professional and put your health first. **Although they will be caring, your team members cannot be your friends.**

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 for dealing with stress
- ☐ 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"/>

