

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

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) 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 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 help you 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 program. The group meets on Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

You are expected to:

- Commit to the full 6 weeks and attend all group sessions
 - 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. Nova Scotia Health is a teaching facility, so learners may also take part in your care.
 - This program is focused on emotions. It will help you:
 - › Build skills to help you work through your emotions
 - › Learn ways to improve your relationships
 - › Learn ways to improve your communication skills
 - › Learn healthy behaviours
 - › Build a sense of connection and belonging in your community

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, an occupational therapist, or a clinical therapist (counsellor who assesses and treats emotional issues or mental illnesses).

Where is the DaRT Program?

Dr. Clyde S. Marshall Building, main floor
Nova Scotia Hospital
294 Pleasant Street
Dartmouth, NS B2Y 3S3

If you have questions, please call the DaRT Program:

- › Phone: 902-464-3222

How do I join the DaRT Program?

- Before starting the program, you will meet with a 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 help you better understand your current struggles.
- They will encourage you to start thinking about what goals you would like to focus on in treatment.
- 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 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?

When can I start the DaRT Program?

- The DaRT Program offers a rolling entry. This means that there are no start or end dates. There are always people joining and finishing the program.
- Your primary clinician will work with you to choose your start date. Once you are ready to join the program, you will not have to wait long.
- Joining a group that is already in progress will help you get started.

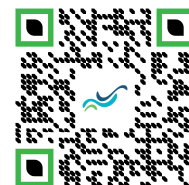
What will my treatment focus on?

- Your treatment will focus on working through complicated emotions that may be keeping you stuck. You will learn how 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
 - › Changing 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 (feeling alone)
 - › 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 support you.
- 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.
- For more information, ask a member of your health care team for pamphlet 1849, *Circle of Support and Circle of Care - Sharing Information and Working Together*, scan the QR code below, or visit:
 - › www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/1849

Scan the QR code on your device (open the camera on your device, point the camera at the code, and tap the banner or border that appears)



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 one-on-one 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 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 health care 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 your medication(s) changes 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 them 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 stop taking 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.

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, tell your health care team:**
 - › Phone: 902-464-3222
- You are expected to be on time for all of your appointments and group sessions. **If you are 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 talk with your primary clinician.
- If you want to leave 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 you can stay focused on your recovery goals.
- **Do not** share your contact information with other group members. We suggest not 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 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 medication(s) 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 group sessions?

The team believes in care for the mind, body, and spirit. The 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
 - › Not judging others
 - › Telling the truth
 - › Allowing only 1 conversation at a time
 - › Listening carefully and respectfully
 - › Turning off cell phones and other devices that may be distracting
 - › Not physically comforting others during the group, to give them the chance to learn to settle and soothe themselves
 - › Not using profanity (swear words), to make sure everyone in the group feels safe
- We encourage group participants to think about the language they use. Often, group participants have been making changes in their lives, which may include lowering their 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. It is important to learn ways to understand, tolerate, and deal with your emotions.
- Stress is a normal part of daily life. Stress can cause emotional upset.
- This group will help you learn skills to:
 - › Understand your emotions and stress reactions
 - › Improve your ability to tolerate and express emotions in healthy ways

Emotion Processing

- In this group, participants meet with staff to:
 - › Share their emotional experiences
 - › Understand how these experiences relate to their lives
- This is also the group in which participants who are finishing the program say goodbye and review their experiences.
- Participants are asked not to write or take notes during this group.

Relationships with Yourself and Others

- Healthy connections and relationships are the foundation of health and well-being. The purpose of this group is to strengthen your relationships with yourself and others.
- In this group, you will learn about self-esteem, shame, boundaries, attachment styles, relationship patterns, and healthy connections.

Time outside of scheduled groups

- The goal of the program is to help you 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. You can use the voucher at 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 of the voucher, **you are responsible for paying the difference.**

Parking

- While you are in the program, you may park in the parking lot behind the Hugh Bell building on the Nova Scotia Hospital site. 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 **does not** give 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
 - › Work together to help you meet your program goals
 - › Give you feedback about how you are doing
 - › Listen to your feedback about your treatment and the program
- 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 Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Crisis Line:
 - › Phone (toll-free): 1-888-429-8167

or

- **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 (not personally involved) 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

☐ Self-esteem and confidence

☐ My relationship with others

☐ Assertiveness

☐ Coping skills

☐ Structure and routine

☐ Making social connections

☐ Leisure and interests

☐ Dealing with my emotions

☐ Other:

☐ Healthy boundaries

5. Choose how you feel about each statement below:

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
I am motivated to make lifestyle changes.	☐	☐	☐
I am ready to make lifestyle changes.	☐	☐	☐
I am able to make lifestyle changes.	☐	☐	☐
I am willing to make lifestyle changes	☐	☐	☐

What are your questions?
Please ask a member of your health care team.
We are here to help you.

Questions for my health care team:

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Notes:

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This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:
www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

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

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