

Patient & Family Guide

2022

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

Virtual 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

Virtual 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 online using Zoom for Healthcare. **You are expected to commit to the full 6 weeks and attend all group sessions.**

Sessions will be led by a health care team from psychiatry, occupational therapy, social work, nursing, and recreation therapy.

The 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 in your 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, psychiatric resident (doctor), nurse, or 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 reach out to a team member.

- › Phone: 902-464-3222

Intake process

You will meet with your health care team member and decide together if the program is right for you. 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?

What will my treatment focus on?

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

Loved ones and my community

You will work with the team to make treatment goals that keep your loved ones, work, and community in mind.

Relapse prevention

The goals of the program are to help you:

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

Group focus

Most of the treatment happens in a group setting.

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.

Responsibility

You are responsible for:

- › setting your own goals.
- › working on these 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.

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.
- If you have another medical condition, we will give you a referral to a doctor (usually your primary health care provider).
- 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.
- If you have internet problems during a session, you will not be able to rejoin until the next session. If you are having internet problems, call and tell a team member.
 - › Phone: 902-464-3222
- You may have strong emotional reactions during group sessions. If this happens, **try to stay present**. If you have questions about this, please ask your health care team member.
- 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.

Group guidelines

- You are expected to take part in all group sessions. The information from each group links together, so missing groups will affect your success in the program.
- These guidelines were written by group participants. They apply to all groups. We will respect each other by:
 - › Being on time
 - › Staying with the group and being visible on the screen during each session
 - › Being responsible for what we say and using “I” statements
 - › Keeping everything said in the group confidential
 - › Not talking about others when they are not present
 - › Not judging others
 - › Being honest
 - › Letting each person talk without interrupting
 - › Listening carefully and respectfully
 - › Turning off cell phones
 - › Not using electronic devices
 - › Not swearing. This lets everyone in the group feel safe.

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 participants:

- 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. For example, disturbing images, violent language, or objects or images that relate to drugs or alcohol.
- **Do not** use filters or backgrounds that you have downloaded.

Groups

Relaxation

You will learn 6 relaxation techniques. They will help you learn how 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

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.

Stress, Emotions, and Your Health

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.

Relationships with Yourself and Others

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

- › Self-esteem
- › Shame
- › Boundaries
- › Relationships
- › Attachment styles
- › Love languages and connections

Assertiveness Training

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

Leisure

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 stay motivated when you face challenges.

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.

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 team members interact with you in any other way (like giving you a job or giving legal or financial advice), this may be a conflict of interest and your treatment may not be as successful.

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"/>

Notes:

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.