Distress Brief Intervention Buzz Session Guidance and Facilitator Notes

Distress Brief Intervention
Connected Compassionate Support

University of Glasgow

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Introduction to the Distress Brief Intervention Buzz Session Resource

In addition to completing the core Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) Level 1 Induction, the independent evaluation of the DBI pilot programme recommended that trained staff attend area or service-specific 'Buzz Sessions'.

This Buzz Session resource complements and extends the core DBI Level 1 Induction. It includes a presentation template and accompanying guidance notes and advice for facilitators.

This resouce is based on existing good practice examples shared with us by DBI partners from around the country including: Scottish Action for Mental health (SAMH), Change Mental Health, Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Partnership, North and South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnerships, Penumbra, Lanarkshaire Association for Mental Health (LAMH) and Lifelink .

What are Buzz Sessions?

Buzz Sessions are short information and reflection sessions that can be used to 'top up' or 'refresh' core DBI Level 1 Induction for providers. They are suitable for reinforcing learning for staff who have recently completed the DBI Level 1 Induction as well as refreshing learning among those who have undertaken the induction longer ago. In addition to reinforcing or refreshing vital information and messages Buzz Sessions are an important opportunity for attendees to ask questions about the service, share reflections about their views and experiences of the DBI service and identify and troubleshoot any local area or role-specific issues.

Who is responsible for organising and delivering Buzz Sessions?

DBI Master Trainers, or their designates, as part of the National DBI Training Network are responsible for the delivery of Buzz Sessions. This responsibility includes ensuring sufficient time is allocated to deliver Buzz Sessions effectively and that Buzz Sessions are provided according to an agreed organisational or area schedule.

How should Buzz Sessions be delivered?

Ideally Buzz Sessions should be attended by a small group (ideally no more than ~10) to encourage open and honest discussion. Indicatively, one hour should be scheduled for a Buzz Session, but some flexibility may be required. Buzz Sessions can be held online or in-person and there is an emphasis on interaction

Buzz Sessions are often facilitated by Level 2 services for local DBI Level 1 staff. In some cases Level 1 services facilitate Buzz Sessions for their own staff. Regardless of the organisation responsible for delivering Buzz Session, it is strongly recommended that local DBI Level 2 partners contribute to Buzz Sessions.

There may be occasions where an abdriged version of a Buzz Session is required to meet local or service-specific needs. Master trainers are well placed to exercise judgment where adjustments to the standard Buzz Session model is necessary. In the following resource a minimum set of **core messages** and components have been highlighted. These core messages are emphasised throughout the guidance notes and are summarised at the end of this document. Please ensure you cover these core messages at all Buzz Sessions within the time available.

The remainder of the presentation template can be adapted to meet local and/or service-secific needs. Changes to the template should take place in consultation with your local/organisational DBI Master Trainer.

Buzz Session Facilitator Guidance

This guidance accompanies the presentation template which provides a structure for the Buzz Session. The session includes core messages from the DBI Level 1 Induction, local or service-specific details and activities.

A minimum set of **core messages** have been summarised at the end of the document. These can also be provided to Level 1 staff as a handout. Please note that providing the core messages as a handout is not a sufficient alternative to participating in an interactive Buzz Session.

The Buzz Session structure addresses the following areas:

- What is DBI?
- Making a referral
- Local DBI data
- Composite case study/local case study
- Frequently asked questions

Facilitator notes linked to each of these areas are provided on the following pages.

Welcome and introductions (slide 1 and 2)

Introduce yourself as the Buzz Session facilitator and thank those in attendance for coming along.

Explain that this Buzz Session builds upon the Distress Brief Intervention Level 1 Induction, which may have been completed online (e-module) or in a facilitated session. The goal of the Buzz Session is to reinforce and extend core DBI Level 1 Induction material. It is a chance to recap key information about DBI, share and reflect on practice, troubleshoot any issues encountered and continue the development of skills. It is also an opportunity to build and maintain effective relationships between the DBI Level 1 and Level 2 services.

Please emphasise the open and interactive nature of the session, so everyone is encouraged to ask questions and share reflections.

Ask those in attendance to briefly introduce themselves (names, role).

What is DBI? (slides 3)

Refer to these slides to remind those in attendance of some of the key features and definitions used within DBI.

The overarching aim of DBI is to improve co-ordination across agencies, facilitate quicker access to support and provide more consistency in the compassion people in distress receive (**core message**).

Remind attendees that DBI is a two-level response and briefly provide the aim of each level: DBI Level 1 aims to enhance the immediate frontline response to distress, and DBI Level 2 aims to provide immediate (within 24 hours) connected compassionate follow-up/support for a period of up to 14 days (**core message**).

The overarching aim of DBI is to improve co-ordination across agencies, facilitate quicker access to support and provide more consistency in the compassion people in distress receive. DBI adopts an "ask once get help fast" approach (**core message**)**.**

What is DBI? (slide 4)

Use this slide to remind those in attendance what the DBI Level 1 and Level 2 responses involve. Although Buzz Session attendees do not provide a Level 2 response, they are a key source of information and access to the DBI Level 2 service. Highlighting the type of support available at DBI Level 2 can ensure the nature of support on offer is communicated accurately.

What is DBI Level 1?

- The DBI Level 1 response is a simple caring and compassionate response provided by frontline staff during initial presentation of distress, with the option to refer to DBI Level 2 (**core message**).

- Level 1 assessment involves a straightforward conversation with a person in distress or suspected to be in distress. This is grounded in empathy, excellent communication skills and underpinned by compassion. Following the assessment, frontline staff have the option of referring an eligible person to receive 14 consecutive days of support beginning the following day (within 24 hours of Level 1 referral being made). This further support is DBI Level 2 response and is provided by trained DBI practitioners in 3rd sector organisations within the community (**core message**).

- Receiving a compassionate and caring frontline response with the offer of further next-day support will help the person manage their immediate distress and engage them with the additional support options now available at DBI Level 2.

- DBI provides frontline staff with an additional option to manage the high number of distress presentations when other care or support pathways are not suitable.

- Level 1 referrers are: Primary care, Emergency Department, Police Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Service and NHS24.

What is DBI Level 2?

- The DBI Level 2 response offers person-centred support within 24 hours of referral for a period of up to 14 consecutive days. DBI Level 2 is provided by trained DBI practitioners based in third sector organisations within the community (**core message**).

- Practitioners at Level 2 will attempt initial contact, usually by phone, within 24 hours of receiving a referral from Level 1. During this initial call they will explain and clarify what the DBI service offers, conduct a welfare check ensuring the person is safe and knows how to access emergency support, take a record of presenting issues and gather the required DBI data information.

- The Level 2 response provides support options matched to the needs of the person in distress. This involves an empathic needs-focused assessment, facilitating problem solving and self-management skills, signposting, and providing information about specialist services, local connections, and support options. Those referred for Level 2 support will develop a Distress Management Plan (**core message**).

- The DBI Level 2 services across Scotland are provided by: Penumbra, Lanarkshire Association for Mental Health (LAMH) Recovery Across Mental Health (RAMH), Glasgow Association for Mental Health (GAMH), Falkirk and District Association for Mental Health (FDAMH), Mind Your Head Shetland , Lifelink, Scottish Action for Mental Health (SAMH), Change Mental Health, The Blide Trust.

What is DBI? (slide 5)

Use this slide to highlight one of the core elements of the DBI Level 2 response, the development of a Distress Management Plan (D-MaP). It is not necessary to cover the D-MaP in depth as most Level 1 providers will not access a person's D-MaP. However a copy of a person's D-MaP can be shared with their GP, so any Primary Care colleagues may benefit from discussion of this resource.

- The D-MaP is a resource for identifying and recording the experiences, expectations, strengths, and concerns of an individual in distress.

- The process of developing a D-MaP empowers the individual to identify personally relevant actions and solutions both in the short and longer term.

- At the end of the DBI Level 2 support, the D-MaP can be shared with the person's GP and they may choose to share it with other services or idividuals in their support network.

Referral Criteria (slide 6)

Use this slide to remind those in attendance of the referral criteria for DBI. Emphasise that because distress can present in different forms, and in order to ensure the wide-range of relevant experiences of distress are captured, an inclusive definition of distress is used for the DBI programme. Describe who DBI is for, and who DBI is not for.

Who is DBI for?

- Individuals (16+) with emotional pain for which they sought, or were referred for, help and which does not require (further) emergency response (**core message**).

- DBI is suitable for individuals encountering frontline services with a wide range of distress presentations (**core message**).

Who is DBI not for?

- Anyone in distress who requires urgent treatment or assessment of physical or mental health. For example, an individual who is at imminent risk of harm to themselves or others is not suitable for a referral to Level 2 service (**core message**).

- Not for anyone under 16 years of age at this time (**core message**). While some specific sites are involved in a small scale pilot of DBI for Children & Young People (C&YP) aged 14+ years, this Buzz Session resource is intended for those providing DBI to those aged 16 years and over.

Referral Information (slide 7)

On this slide is the standard referral form which the majority of DBI Level 1 services will complete in order to refer a person to the DBI Level 2 service following a presentation of distress. The referral form used by Police Scotland differs slightly in appearance but includes very similar information.

Use the referral example on the slide to remind attendees about the referral form, how to make a referral and the importance of providing sufficient, accurate and clear information on the referral form before sending to Level 2 services. Bring attendees' attention to the points of note on the slide to help highlight each section of the referral form.

Evidence from the independent evaluation of the DBI pilot programme and experiences of DBI Level 2 services identified good quality referral information as vital to an effective and efficient referral process. Poor quality referrals can make it more difficult for Level 2 services to contact a referred person within 24 hours and delay them accessing support they need. In some cases poor quality referrals can compromise the safety of DBI Level 2 services staff.

Referral form

On the referral form, it is important that Level 1 staff include:

- Details of the distress presentation and suitability for DBI support (**core messag**e)
- Details of any possible risk to self and others. Please ensure that Level 1 providers are aware that DBI Level 2 providers cannot access statutory service information systems. It is therefore crucial that any concerns over risk or safety are shared as part of the referral form (**core message**)
- Accurate contact details to ensure DBI Level 2 services can attempt contact within 24 hours (**core message**)
- Record of consent for the referral (**core message**)

It is also important before making a referral to DBI Level 2 to:

- Ensure the person in distress is provided with a copy of the DBI Service Information Sheet (**core message**)
- Make the referral to Level 2 as soon as you can (**core message**)
- Emphasise potential value of engaging in DBI Level 2 support. For example, person-centred approach, development of problem-solving and coping techniques development of a D-MaP to reduce distress in the short and long term, signposting to ongoing support organisations (**core message**)
- Highlight purpose of DBI Level 2 to the individual in distress to prevent unrealistic expectations about what DBI can offer (**core message**)

Referral forms should be sent electronically via a secure email address to the local DBI Level 2 provider. Within 24 hours of submitting the referral, the person in distress will be contacted by Level 2 services and offered up to 14 consecutive days of support (**core message**).

Local DBI data (slide 9

This slide can be used to present relevant recent statistics from the local Level 2 service data. Offering this information can help attendees see their individual contribution as part of a significant programme reaching and supporting those in distress. Some suggestions for relevant data to present here include:

- Total number of referrals to the Level 2 service (monthly, quarterly, annually)
- A breakdown of referral to the Level 2 service by referring organisation/role
- Gender and age breakdown of referrals
- A selection of common presenting problems and contributory factors
- Average number of Level 2 sessions received by those referred
- Levels of Engagement in Level 2 (completion reason statistics)
- Average distress rating scores following completion of DBI Level 2 support

This information can be found from a combination of monthly Public Health Scotland (PHS) referral reports, four monthly PHS local infographics and from data available directly from the DBI Level 2 dataset (MS Excel up to May 2024 and REDCap from June 2024) by Level 2 provider colleagues.

If you require assistance in gathering local Level 2 service data for this slide please contact your local/organisational DBI Master Trainer, or the DBI Central Team.

Time Space Compassion – Helen's Story (slide 10)

The animation on this slide describes Helen's Story. This is a composite fictional case study based on Public Health Scotland DBI Level 2 data and real life DBI case studies. It describes DBI through a Time Space Compassion lens.

Time, Space, Compassion - Helen's Story - YouTube

As an alternatively to the animation, faciliators can present a local anonymised case study from their Level 2 service. Facilitators may wish to describe an annonymised person in distress, their presenting problems, identified outcomes for the individual and the steps taken by the individual in distress, and support by the DBI practitioner, to help manage their distress in the short and longer term .

Frequently asked questions

The final slide gives the attendees an opportunity to ask questions. Protetcting time and space for questions is crucial. Some frequently asked questions at DBI Buzz Sessions include:

1. *Do individual need to have a mental health diagnosis to be referred to DBI?*

No, individuals do not need to have a mental health diagnosis to be referred to DBI. Part of the rationale for DBI stems from the fact that mental health diagnoses are usually required to access mental health care. DBI seeks to widen compassionate support to offer help when people need it most, regardless of if they have a mental health diagnosis or not. DBI acknowledges that anyone can experience distress at any point in their lives and it is a normal reaction to stress, sorrow, or pain.

2. *Can my colleagues refer to DBI if they have not completed the DBI training?*

No, DBI Level 1 referrers must have completed the Level 1 online LearnPro induction e-module or have attended a Level 1 facilitated induction session.

3. *Can I refer someone to DBI if they are being referred to another support service?*

Yes, DBI is a valuable additional option which frontline staff can use to address the high number of presentations for distress. Any decision to provide a DBI response should not

alter decisions made in relation to the care, support and safeguarding practices which are relevant to the role of the Level 1 provider.

4. *Can I refer someone if they are having suicidal thoughts and/or behaviours?*

Yes, while DBI is not a suicidal crisis support service, there are many people who are referred to DBI with a history of or current suicidal thoughts and behaviours. However, if you are concerned there is an imminent risk to someone's safety, then urgent assessment may be the priority, not DBI. In these instances, it is important to follow local organisational risk escalation procedures.

5. *Can someone in distress be referred to DBI after receiving immediate treatment?*

Yes, while in some cases the priority may be for a person to receive immediate assessment or treatment, they can still be referred to DBI Level 2 subsequent to receiving the prioritisied support. If treatment requires hospital admission then referral to the DBI Level 2 service should be considered at a later date.

6. *Can someone be referred more than once?*

Yes, people can be referred to DBI more than once. For example, if has there been a change in circumstances or this a new instance of distress. All re-referred people are also assessed by the DBI Level 2 team to explore the best options of support. If a Level 1 provider is unsure about the eligibility of an individual for a referral to Level 2, they can contact their Level 2 organisation contact for guidance.

7. *Who can I contact if I have any further questions?*

You can contact your local Level 2 organisation. Level 2 organisations can provide a suitable contact, phone number and email address for Level 1 staff. You can also access more information on www.dbi.scot website.

8. *What is a typical 'case' of someone referred to DBI?*

There is unlikely to be a single case-type. The key strengths of DBI (multiple services providing a consistent response, a broad operational definition of distress, 14 consecutive days of support) mean that there could be a lot of variation in the people who can be referred to DBI Level 2 and how they choose to make use of the DBI service. The nature of support given by Level 2 services may vary substantially and so might the reasons contributing to someone's distress. Some examples of factors contributing to distress include relationship problems, physical health problems, housing or money worries, thoughts or suicide or self-harm, bereavement.

9. *What happens if I make a referral and the person no longer wants to engage with Level 2 support?*

During the first contact 24 hours after a Level 2 referral has been made, Level 2 practitioners will have a conversation with the person in distress. The Level 2 service will be explained, and the practitioner will explore if or how the service could benefit them. If the individual

chooses that they no longer want to engage, they can withdraw consent and their case is closed. Feedback is sent to the person's GP and DBI Level 1 referrer.

DBI Level 1 Buzz Session Core Messages

- Distress Brief Intervention is *"a low intensity, time limited, and supportive problem-solving contact with an individual in distress."*

- The overarching aim of DBI is to improve co-ordination across agencies, facilitate quicker access to support and provide more consistency in the compassion people in distress receive.

- DBI Level 1 is a simple caring and compassionate response provided during initial frontline presentation of distress, with the option to refer to DBI Level 2. It is delivered by frontline staff, including colleagues in A&E, NHS24, General Practice, Social Care, Police Scotland, and Scottish Ambulance Service.

- DBI Level 2 response offers person-centered support within 24 hours of referral for a period of up to 14 consecutive days. DBI Level 2 includes an empathic needs-focused assessment, problem solving and self-management skills, the development of a distress management plan, signposting, and information about specialist services, local connections, and support options. DBI Level 2 is provided by trained DBI practitioners in 3rd Sector organisations within the community.

- DBI is available to individuals (aged 16+) with emotional pain for which they sought or were referred for help and which does not require (further) emergency response.

- DBI is an additional support option and does not replace existing pathways for care, treatment, or support.

- If you are concerned there is an imminent risk to someone's safety, then urgent assessment may be the priority, not DBI.

- It is vital to provide accurate and informative content on a DBI Level 2 referral form; including: accurate contact details, record of consent, details of any possible risk to self and others, details of the distress presentation and suitability for DBI support. Details of any possible risk to self and others. DBI Level 2 providers cannot access statutory service information systems. It is therefore crucial that any concerns over risk or safety are shared as part of the referral form (**core message**)

- For more information contact your local DBI Level 2 service or visit www.dbi.scot website.

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