

Behavior Chain Analysis

DBT skill

When you're struggling to control an unwanted behavior—such as anger outbursts, substance use, or anything else—it's important to understand the chain of events that lead to it. Oftentimes, what happens before a problem behavior is just as important as the behavior itself.

1 Define the problem behavior

Name a behavior that's causing you problems. Avoid vague descriptions like "I got angry." Instead, be precise: "I yelled at my partner."

Problem behavior:



2 Describe the chain of events.

Trace your problem behavior backwards, writing down the events that led to it. Consider the following types of events:

- **Vulnerabilities:** Factors that make your problem behavior more likely. These may be as simple as feeling tired, hungry, or lonely.
- **Links in the chain:** Events or choices that eventually led to the problem behavior.
- **Trigger:** The "last straw," or the final event before the problem behavior.

