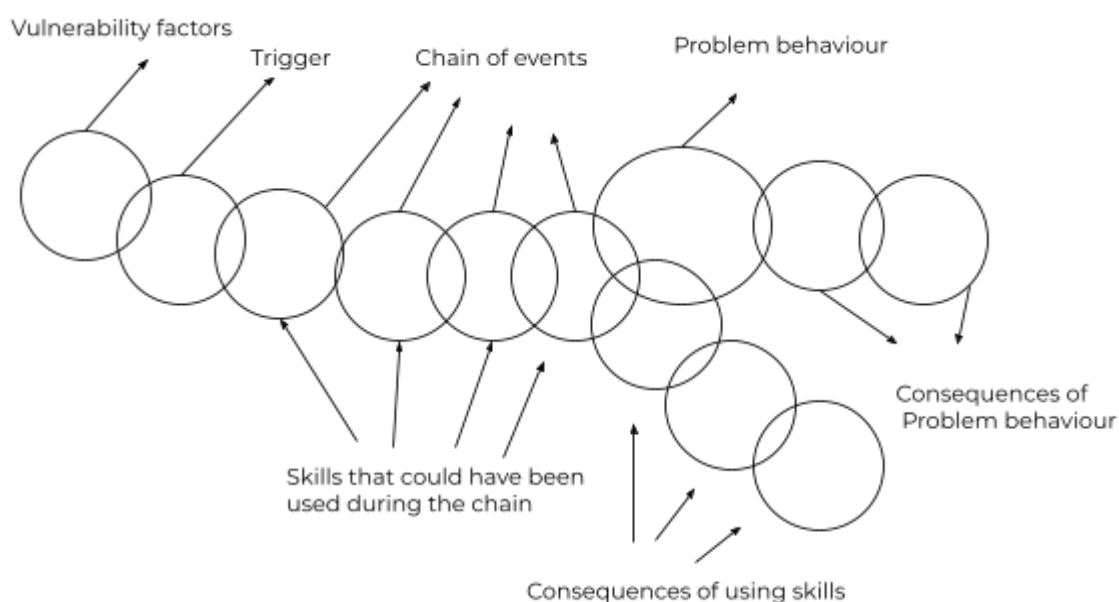


Chain Analysis: A Must-Do After Engaging in Problematic Behaviour

Chain analysis is a core technique used to break down and understand the sequence of events that lead to problematic behaviours. For those who struggle with unsafe or risky behaviours, chain analysis can be a powerful tool. It allows you to:

- **Identify Patterns:** By repeatedly analysing similar incidents, you can begin to see patterns in your behaviour and thinking. This awareness is the first step toward change.
- **Understand Triggers:** Recognizing what triggers your behaviours can help you avoid or better prepare for these situations in the future.
- **Develop New Strategies:** Chain analysis helps you brainstorm alternative ways to respond to triggers, reducing the likelihood of engaging in harmful behaviours.
- **Enhance Self-Compassion:** Understanding the complex factors that lead to your behaviours can reduce self-blame and increase self-compassion, which is crucial for recovery and growth.

Chain analysis is like detective work for your mind and behaviour. It involves examining a specific event or behaviour in detail to understand what led up to it, what happened during it, and what followed after. The goal is to uncover the links in the chain of events that culminated in the behaviour you want to change. Once these links are identified, you can learn to break the chain at critical points, replacing unhelpful behaviours with healthier alternatives.



How to do a Chain Analysis

1. **Identify the Behaviour:** Start by selecting a specific behaviour you want to analyse. This should be a behaviour that has caused problems for you, such as self-harm,

substance use, or an outburst of anger. Be as specific as possible about the behaviour, including when it occurred, where it happened, and who was involved.

2. Describe the Prompting Event: The prompting event is what started the chain reaction leading to the behaviour. Ask yourself:
 - What happened right before the behaviour?
 - Was there a specific event, interaction, or thought that triggered your response?
 - What were you feeling or thinking at that moment?
3. It's important to dig deep here. Sometimes, the prompting event is something seemingly small or insignificant, but it's crucial to identify it.
4. List Vulnerability Factors: Vulnerability factors are conditions or circumstances that make you more susceptible to reacting in a certain way. These might include:
 - Physical factors: Lack of sleep, hunger, illness, etc.
 - Emotional factors: Feeling lonely, stressed, anxious, etc.
 - Environmental factors: Being in a chaotic environment, experiencing a significant life change, etc.
5. Acknowledging these factors helps you understand why you were more prone to reacting in a problematic way.
6. Break Down the Chain: Now, map out the sequence of thoughts, feelings, and actions that occurred between the prompting event and the behaviour. Each step is a link in the chain. Ask yourself:
 - What were you thinking and feeling after the prompting event?
 - What did you do next? How did others respond?
 - How did your thoughts and emotions evolve as the situation progressed?
7. Be thorough in identifying each link, as even small thoughts or actions can be significant.
8. Identify Consequences: After the behaviour occurred, what were the immediate and long-term consequences? Consider:
 - How did you feel immediately after?
 - How did others react?
 - What were the positive or negative outcomes of the behaviour?

9. Understanding the consequences can motivate you to change, as it often highlights the negative impact of the behaviour.
10. Brainstorm Alternative Responses: With the chain laid out, think about where you could have acted differently. Consider:
 - What could you have done instead at each link in the chain?
 - What skills or strategies could you use next time to change the outcome?
 - How can you prevent the chain from starting in the first place?
11. This step is crucial for learning and growth. By identifying alternative actions, you prepare yourself to respond differently in the future.
12. Plan for the Future: Finally, develop a plan for how to handle similar situations in the future. This plan might include:
 - Practising specific DBT skills that can help you interrupt the chain.
 - Setting up reminders or cues to help you recognize when a chain is starting.
 - Seeking support from others when you notice the first signs of a chain reaction.
13. The goal is to be better prepared and more resilient when faced with similar challenges.