

Valid/Justified/Effective Definitions

let's *THERAPIZE* that shit !!!

The DBT manual gives two definitions of "valid" that seem to contradict each other.

VALID DEFINITION 1

- a) **validation means "acknowledging that a person's emotions, thoughts, behaviors have causes and are therefore understandable."** (Interpersonal Effectiveness Handout 17 – 1st square, 2nd bullet)
I take this to mean that if something is caused, it's therefore valid.
- b) **"all things in the universe are caused"** (Emotion Regulation Worksheet 3 #19)
- c) *Putting these two statements together:*
all things in the universe = caused = valid ∴ **all things in the universe = valid**

VALID DEFINITION 2

- d) **validation means "verifying the facts of a situation."** (Interpersonal Effectiveness Handout 17 - 1st square, 1st bullet)
I take this to mean that if something fits the facts of the situation, it's valid.

WHERE CONFUSION COMES IN

- e) **validation is "NOT validating what is actually invalid"** (Interpersonal Effectiveness handout 17 - 1st square, 4th bullet)

Using Definition 1, item e) can be rephrased as: **validation is "NOT saying something is caused when it is NOT caused."**

But how can this be if everything in the universe is caused and therefore valid? How can there be anything that is INvalid?

I think item e) is actually referencing Definition 2 rather than Definition 1. Using Definition 2, item e) can be rephrased as: **validation is "NOT saying something fits the facts when it does NOT fit the facts."**

This is confusing to me because the DBT manual uses another term to mean fitting the facts of the situation:

JUSTIFIED DEFINITION

- f) **"use opposite action when emotions do NOT fit the facts"** (Emotion Regulation Handout 10)
- g) **use opposite action when emotions are NOT justified** (Emotion Regulation Handout 11)
- h) *Putting these two statements together: is NOT justified = does NOT fit the facts*
- i) *Changing this to the positive: justified = DOES fit the facts*

To make things clearer FOR ME, when I use "valid", I ONLY mean Definition 1 (is caused and comes from somewhere). When I want to refer to whether something fits the facts (Definition 2), I use the term "justified."

I believe all things (emotions, thoughts, urges, behaviors) are valid (i.e. all things are caused and come from somewhere) AND may or may not be justified (i.e. fit the facts of the situation). Their justification depends on the situation.

This brings us to the final term:

EFFECTIVE DEFINITION

- j) **Doing something effectively means being "mindful of your goals in the situation, and do what is necessary to achieve them."** (Mindfulness Handout 5)
- k) I rephrase this as: **being effective = doing what works for YOU for YOUR goals in the situation**

Something can be valid (caused), justified (fit the facts), AND not be effective. Effectiveness also depends on the situation.

I've put together a graphic showing how these three terms interact. The summary graphic has three graphical representations, and then each of these three representations gets it's own detailed graphic to explain a bit more. I call these the Valid/Justified/ Effective graphics. Putting these together helped me understand these three terms and how they interact much better. Hopefully it helps you too.