

Understanding and coping with PTSD: Preparing for treatment group

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Why did we set this up?

- **Clients with symptoms or a diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can present with the toughest and most severe problems**
- **Long waiting lists!**
- **Get individuals seen quickly and empower people to take control and start to reclaim their lives**



Inspiration

- **Judith Herman: The three phased approach to treating PTSD – Stabilisation, Trauma Processing and Reintegration (or reclaiming life)**
- **Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust conference (2014) on supporting military veterans in mental health**
- **Colleagues – Cambridgeshire IAPT service and Marion Barnbrook (CBT Therapist with IAPT MK)**



The Group

- **Four, 75 minute, stand-alone sessions. Patients could join the group at any week and complete all four sessions in whichever order. All patients who attended at least one session received the trauma stabilisation manual which accompanies all sessions.**
- **Psycho-education around PTSD and techniques on reclaiming your life, relaxation, grounding techniques and nightmare re-scripting.**



The Group

- **Session 1: Introduction to Trauma and Understanding Panic**
- **Session 2: Compassion Focussed Therapy, Relaxation and Imagery work**
- **Session 3: Understanding PTSD, Re-scripting nightmares and Stimulus Discrimination**
- **Session 4: Sleep hygiene and grounding techniques**



Outcome measures

- The IAPT Minimum Data Set (PHQ-9, GAD-7, IAPT Phobia Scale and W&SAS) were completed at every session.
- Impact of Events Scale-Revised (IES-R) were completed at the first and fourth session attended.
- On the fourth and final session, clients were given anonymised feedback forms to reflect on the course.



So far

52 clients enrolled into the group since February 2017 (figures correct as of August 2017)

Fig 1. Shows the number of sessions patients (pts) attended.

*One patient has postponed attending the groups until their children return to school following the summer holidays.

	Number of Sessions attended				
	4	3	2	1	Paused*
Number of Pts:	24	12	8	7	1



Outcome measures for the 24 patients who engaged with all four sessions of the stabilisation group:

- **PHQ-9**
 - -12 had a reduction in scores (mean average 4 points)
 - -9 had an increase in scores (mean average 2 points)
 - -3 had no change in scores
- **GAD-7**
 - -14 had a reduction in scores (mean average 4 points)
 - -4 had an increase in scores (mean average 2 points)
 - -6 had no change in scores
- **W&SAS**
 - -7 had a reduction in scores (mean average 6 points)
 - -14 had an increase in scores (mean average 4 points)
 - -1 had no change in scores
- **IES-R**
 - -11 had a reduction in scores (mean average 9 points) – Reliable improvement!
 - -6 had an increase in scores (mean average 7 points)
 - -7 had no change in scores



Outcome measures for the 12 patients who engaged with three sessions of the stabilisation group:

- **PHQ-9**
 - -6 had a reduction in PHQ9 scores (mean average 4 points)
 - -5 had an increase in PHQ9 scores (mean average 2 points)
 - -1 had no change in PHQ-9 scores

- **GAD-7**
 - -6 had a reduction in GAD7 scores (mean average 2 points)
 - -2 had an increase in GAD7 score (mean average 4 points)
 - -4 had no change in GAD7 scores

- **W&SAS**
 - -8 had a reduction in WSAS scores (mean average 10 points) – Reliable improvement!
 - -2 had an increase in WSAS scores (mean average 9 points)
 - -2 had no change in WSAS scores



Case study: Mr A

- **Single event trauma which left him with physical injuries. He attended all four sessions of the group and went on to have individual high-intensity CBT sessions.**
- **Mr A was engaged in the group and in particular found relaxation exercises (Progressive Muscle Relaxation, Guided imagery) helpful to manage his symptoms and ground him during flashbacks.**
- **Mr A was discharged as recovered on MDS and IES-R after 7 individual sessions.**
- **Therapist reflection: “The group essentially covered the first 4 sessions of 1-1 treatment, therefore we could start the reliving process sooner. It helped to see how much Mr A understood and tested his motivation for change before entering treatment”**



Future developments

- **Video sessions and/or Online sessions**
- **Peer support – expert by experience!**
- **Project comparing the clinical effectiveness of the group: Waiting list only vs. Group whilst on waiting list**





EMPOWERMENT



Image sources: Google



Feedback!

“Relaxed welcoming atmosphere – safe environment. Being a group session helps identify you’re not alone. I’ve found the techniques helpful for dealing with my PTSD”

“Therapists were kind, caring and patient”

“The sleep session!”

“I like the diagram explanations. I like how we don’t have to talk if we don’t want to”

“Learning more about what’s going on in my head and learning to cope with it. The group has helped me start to control my drinking and I’ve cut down on my smoking massively so thanks”

“Staff were very friendly and taught me how to cope with my feelings e.g. talking to people”

