

Coping Skills Group:

A brief DBT-based intervention in a Crisis setting

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Overview

- Psychologist role in Crisis team
- Purpose and history of group
- Other (non-programme) DBT skills groups
- Content and structure of group
- Outcomes

Crisis team and Psychology

- Psychologist as consultant (0.2fte)
 - Assessments to contribute to formulation, or inform treatment plan.
 - Brief interventions.
 - Case discussions/consultation/supervision – formal and informal.

Purpose

- High numbers of distressed people on PAC team caseload.
- Stretched existing resources and abilities of team members.
- Treatment as usual seemed less effective.
- Potential for team burnout.
- Previous Dealing with Distress groups.

Skills to the rescue!

- Indications that skills mediate treatment effects
 - BPD
 - Soler et al (2009), Neacsiu et al (2010)
 - And other problems conceptualised as emotion dysregulation
 - Depression – Harley et al (2008)
 - Eating disorders - Safer et al (2010)

Other skills groups

- Soler et al (2009) 13 week DBT skills group
- Nixon et al (2009) 8 week adolescent group (+ 4 parent groups)
 - Self-injury
- Neacsiu et al (2014) 16 weeks DBT skills group
 - Anxiety/depression (non-BPD)
- Chugani et al (2013) 11-week DBT skills group
 - College students, cluster B traits

Content

- DBT skills:
 - Mindfulness
 - Distress Tolerance
 - Crisis Survival
 - Reality Acceptance

Other elements

- Incorporated DBT treatment techniques and principles
 - Validation
 - Commitment strategies
 - Assumptions
- Group guidelines included no detailed discussion of problem behaviour that could be “contagious” to others (aim of maximising potential for learning)

Structure

- 6 sessions in total
- Start and end with mindfulness exercise
- First half homework/practice review
- Second half teaching new skills
- Me and a co-facilitator
 - High level of DBT knowledge not required by co-facilitator.
- Up to 15 group members identified for first session (invariably some DNAs)

Group Criteria

- Group members decided by team
 - (separate psychological assessment not required).
- Criteria:
 - Seem likely to benefit from gaining skills
 - Agree and able to attend (and practice)
 - And likely to contribute to group functioning.

Outcome Evaluation

- Pre- and post- measures
 - DASS-21, DERS-SF, DBT-WCCL
- Feedback sheet
- Follow-up 30min measures feedback session

Outcomes

- Completed 8 groups
- 39 complete data sets (group members who attended first and final session).
- Some attrition, consistent with client group and stage of treatment.

Outcomes cont.

- Group member evaluation:
 - High positive feedback
- Psychometric measures:
 - Significant change

More Outcomes

- Often followed by discharge from PAC team.
- Decreased re-referral to PAC team?
- Valued by team
- Increased skill level of PAC team members

For next time...

- Consent to share anonymised group data!
- Other settings?
- 8 sessions?