Using CBT to support patient self-help for depression and anxiety

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Aims

• To familiarise you with the principles of supported self-management (SSM) / guided self-help (GSH)
• To introduce relevant CBT models and two techniques
• To increase confidence in supporting patients with using evidence-based CBT self-help techniques
What is SSM?

• Patient uses a self-help tool e.g. book or guidance to a website **plus** support from a healthcare provider

• Low intensity intervention between a clinical treatment and method of knowledge transfer
  – Stand-alone
  – Adjunct to antidepressant medication
  – Waiting list initiative (getting started)
  – Booster following treatment (review of treatment)
  – Relapse prevention/management (in place of immediate re-referral)
Why SSM/GSH

• Evidence-based: providing cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT)-based self-management material to people dealing with mild depression is an effective intervention (Bilsker, 2009)

• Adding the element of support increases the positive impact of self-management workbooks

• Consistent with the emerging chronic disease management approach: fosters self-management (Bilsker and Goldner, 2010)
Impact of SSM

• Self-management alone has 50% impact of standard depression treatment, whilst SSM yields a similar effect to standard depression treatment

• Aimed at mild-moderate presentations (can be an adjunct to other treatment in more severe presentations)
Reasons for using SSM

• Effective
• Low cost
• Potentially feasible in primary care
• Easily taught/learned
• Helps the patient become the expert on their condition
GP role

• As a coach, not a CBT therapist:
  – Suggest/prescribe self-management
  – Teach self-management
  – Provide access to evidence-informed tools
  – Explain key concepts
  – Give encouragement
  – Help patient set goals
  – Help patient apply skills of behaviour change
Introducing ‘antidepressant skills’ (Bilsker & Goldner, 2010)

• **Key messages to impart to patients:**
  – We can work together to change how you feel
  – Others have found these ideas very helpful
  – You’ll need to do some reading and practice
  – I’m happy to work with you on this -- we’ll set some regular visits to check how you’re doing and work out problems

• *Does this seem like something you’d like to try?*
General resources

• Books on Prescription
• Websites
  – Get Self-Help: www.getselfhelp.co.uk
  – Living Life to the Full: http://www.llttf.com
  – MoodGYM: https://moodgym.anu.edu.au/welcome
  – Moodjuice: http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk
• Apps
  – Android
  – iTunes
Self-help books and pamphlets

• Rethink: a recovery programme for depression: Karina Lovell and David Richards
  – http://www.rethink.org/about_mental_illness/mental_illnesses_and_disorders/depression/

• Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust self-help leaflets
  – http://www.ntw.nhs.uk/pic/selfhelp

• Camden NHS: Depression and low mood: your self-help guide

• Antidepressant Skills Workbook (Canadian)
  – http://www.carmha.ca/selfcare/
# Problem matching: depression

| Patient is: inactive, isolated, or avoidant | Behavioural activation | Increase structure and rewards  
Reduce dysphoria  
Face fears |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Patient has overly negative/catastrophic thoughts | Fair and realistic thinking – cognitive reconstruction | Reduce self-criticism  
Increase attention to positive  
Realistic appraisal of danger/coping |
| Patient is feeling overwhelmed, chronically worried, and/or has real-world problems | Problem solving | Reduce poor/negative problem orientation  
Increase perceived control  
Increase specificity of concerns |
Activation skills

• Overcoming avoidance of activities that are anticipated to be painful or unenjoyable
• Creating opportunities for positively reinforcing experiences
• Re-sensitizing to pleasure and achievement
• Increasing self-regulation through improved diet and exercise
Breaking TRAPs

- Trigger – response – avoidance pattern

Negative life events

Less rewarding life: fewer rewards, more punishment

Depressed mood: sad, tired, indifferent etc.

Avoidance and rumination

Impoverished support and increased conflict
Behavioural Activation: 6 steps

1. Identify activities to increase
2. Choose two activities
3. Set goals
4. Carry out activities
5. Review activities
6. Keep going
Step 4: Carry out your activities

• “It’s important to realize that you probably won’t feel like doing your planned activities. In depression, your motivation to do things is much less than usual. But if you wait until you feel like it, it’s likely that it won’t happen. Do the activity because you set a goal for yourself and because it will help you get better. After you’ve done and ticked off each activity, you will see what you’ve accomplished.”
Have a go yourself

• In pairs use the worksheet in turn to choose one or two areas of your own life where you’d like to increase your level of activity
Cognitive analysis: distorted appraisals

**Situation**
Negative life events activate schemas regarding loss and powerlessness: perceptions of being trapped and defeated

**Beliefs**
- Cognitive triad:
  - I am worthless or a failure
  - World is unfair or cruel
  - Future is hopeless
- Negative automatic thoughts
- Cognitive distortions and negative appraisals e.g.
  - Polarised (all-or-nothing) thinking
  - Catastrophising – assuming the worst
  - Jumping to conclusions
  - Selective attention

**Consequences**
- Depressed mood
- Sad
- Tired
- Worthless
- Indifference
- Self-blame
- Hopelessness
Fair and realistic thinking: depression

- Identify depressive thoughts
- Examine the evidence (judge and jury)
- Come up with a more balanced perspective
- Notice the impact on your mood
Anxiety: generic model (Beck, 1976)

- Misappraisals of danger and resources
  - Anxiety is proportionate to:

$$\text{Anxiety} = \frac{\text{Probability} \times \text{Awfulness}}{\text{Coping} + \text{Rescue}}$$

- Safety-seeking behaviours and avoidance: prevent disconfirmation
- Attention and reasoning bias: ‘looking for trouble’
- Anxiety symptoms themselves orient patients towards perceived threat
- Cognitive specificity for different anxiety disorders
Fair and realistic thinking: anxiety

• What are the chances?
  – Putting your money where your mind is
  – Weighing the evidence

• What is the worst thing that could happen?
  – Making a specific prediction

• How would I cope?
  – Assessing resources

• The five year rule
  – The history game – how will this look in five years’ time?

• What is this worth?
  – What is the cost - is life too short?
Practice: challenging worry

• Think of something you could worry about
• Get into pairs
• Use the worry log handout and take turns to make a specific prediction and plan to evaluate it against what actually happened
Vulnerability to relapse

• The differential activation hypothesis (Teasdale, 1988): ordinary low mood triggers depressive thinking that leads to a depressed “thought-action-feeling” pattern

• Thinking you’re getting depressed can lead you to act depressed and then become depressed
Relapse prevention

• Keep up your efforts - schedule
• Plan ahead for stress
  – Introduce stress gradually
  – Lighten up on ongoing responsibilities
  – Keep up your self-care
If you’re feeling overwhelmed or starting to get down

- Increase rewarding activities
- Reduce your obligations: scale back but don’t over-avoid
- Get professional help: come back and see me
- Get support: practical and emotional
- Manage your lifestyle: maintain a balance of exercise, healthy diet, regular sleep, and involvement in supportive relationships
Discussion

• What do you think about working with self-help resources?
• How confident do you feel about following up on what patients are doing to self-manage depression or anxiety?
• What support would help you to help patients make better use of self-help materials?
Thank you

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References