

# Development, Implementation & Evaluation of a Nursing-delivered Psychosocial Intervention for Psychological Distress

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# Aim

To develop, implement and evaluate a nursing-delivered manualised psychosocial intervention for psychological distress for use in mental health services

# Background

- While clients are often described as being 'in distress', the concept remains underdeveloped in the literature.
- In the psychometric literature, there is reference to psychological distress as *anxious-misery*, relating to factors such as lethargy, negative affect and agitation
- There is reference to 'distress' being related to variables thought to contribute to unmet need in mental health care.
- Qualitative health literature highlighted various forms of expression of 'suffering', including *demoralisation and pessimism towards the future, anguish and distress, self-depreciation, social withdrawal and isolation, and withdrawal into oneself.*
- Such expressions of psychological distress are common in mental health inpatient services

# Background cont.

- Mental health nurses have a significant responsibility to help people experiencing psychological distress
- Studies indicate consumers expect nurses to be:
  - accessible, respectful and understanding;*
  - to boost confidence and independence;*
  - to manage aggression;*
  - to know about medical/physical problems, medication and it's effects, experiences of life, communication skills and talking therapies/ problem solving skills.*
- Providing training and support for nurses to deliver focused psychosocial interventions using a self-paced manual could improve the help available to consumers experiencing psychological distress.

# Method

- The intervention manual will be developed by the project team and reviewed by clinical nurse specialists/ clinical nurse consultants and consumer representatives.
- It will comprise of cognitive-behavioural techniques and other interventions adapted for use by mental health nurses, designed to enhance therapeutic engagement and reduce psychological distress.
- It will cover descriptions of the use of distress tolerance skills, mindfulness practice, radical acceptance skills and behavioural chain analysis, with examples from clinical practice.
- It will include coverage of professional and ethical issues such as clinical supervision.

# Implementation

- The manual will be designed to facilitate learning in a self-paced, self-directed fashion
- 4-6 staff in each participating facility will undertake a one-day training workshop in the use of the manual and how to provide effective support for colleagues using it.
- Group clinical supervision will be provided for 6 months following implementation, after which standard clinical supervision arrangements will apply.

# Implementation timeline

April-May 2007	Development of intervention manual
May- June 2007	Draft intervention manual reviewed by CNS's/CNC's, consumers
July 2007	Finalisation of revised intervention manual Preparation and submission of ethics application for focus group study
August 2007	Final editing, formatting, printing of intervention manual Publicising project to staff in participating facilities
September 2007	Pre-implementation focus group interviews Transcription/ analysis of pre-implementation focus group data Staff training workshops on use of intervention manual Implementation of intervention manual in participating facilities
February 2008	Post- implementation focus group interviews
March 2008	Transcription/ analysis of post- implementation focus group data preparation and submission of final report

# Costing

Preparation and production of self-training manuals	\$2500
Staff release to attend training workshops (x3)	\$2250
Conducting pre- & post-implementation focus groups (x6)	\$2000
Transcribing focus group interview tapes for analysis	\$750
Development & distribution of resources (brochures advertising project, education materials)	\$250
Clerical support to project	\$1500
Costs involved in training, supervision and admin	\$750
<b>Total costs (including on-costs)</b>	<b>\$10000</b>

# Outcomes and Evaluation

- The main outcomes of the project will be the development, implementation and evaluation of a psycho-social intervention which nurses can use to help consumers suffering from psychological distress.
- The project will be evaluated using focus group techniques involving 4-6 consenting nursing staff (n=12-18) in each of the participating facilities, before (stage 1) and after (stage 2) implementation of the intervention.
- In both stages participants will be asked questions regarding how they detect psychological distress, respond therapeutically, and evaluate the effectiveness of such responses.

# Evaluation cont.

- Focus group discussions will be audio-taped and transcribed for analysis using qualitative descriptive methods.
- Participant responses pre- and post-implementation will be compared, to determine the impact of the intervention on participants' knowledge and experience of working with consumers experiencing psychological distress.

# Level of Innovation

- The project will adapt and build upon existing therapeutic approaches targeting psychological distress.
- The manual will provide clear descriptions of various psychosocial techniques, examples of how these can be used in practice, activities designed to test knowledge of the intervention, and suggested resources.
- The manual is self-paced allowing nurses flexibility in learning the intervention.

# Impact on nursing practice and consumer outcomes

- The proposed project addresses an important issue in mental health services.
- Successful implementation would imply the availability of a practical, manual-based, cost-effective intervention which nurses can use to help consumers experiencing psychological distress.
- Trialling the intervention with nurses working in non-acute or rurally based services will indicate the extent of its effectiveness in such service settings.

# Future Scope

- The manual will be made available in a PDF format
- Upon completion of the project the intervention will be made available throughout HNEMH and other interested mental health services.