

Title

Focussed Psychological Strategies – *what are they and how to use them?*

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Background

The General Practice Mental Health Standards Collaboration (GPMHSC) strives towards optimal mental health for the Australian population by ensuring that GPs receive high quality education and training in mental health. As GPs are the most common referring professional for the Better Access Initiative and see more than 80% of the population each year (Pirkis et. al, 2011), Focussed Psychological Strategies (FPS) play an important role in the management and treatment of mental health conditions.

Aims

Under the Better Access Initiative, GPs who are registered FPS providers can use a range of evidence-based psychological therapies. These can include psychoeducation, cognitive behavioural therapy, interpersonal therapy, motivational interviewing, relaxation strategies and skills training. Other key interventions may include narrative therapy is central in the provision of mental healthcare to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This workshop aims to give participants an understanding of the different types of FPS, where they may be useful with your patients and how they can add to the mental health consultation.

Method

The workshop will consist of practical demonstrations that highlight a range of FPS that GPs require to become proficient providers of FPS.

Results

FPS has shown to be effective psychological interventions, aimed towards replacing dysfunctional thoughts with more rational ones. This helps alleviate problematic thoughts, emotions and behaviour (Blashki et. al, 2008). By educating GPs on how to use these skills, we hope to see better patient treatment and management options for mental health conditions.

Conclusion

The growing need for more GP providers of FPS is reflective of the increasing demand of primary mental health services in Australia. Approximately 12.4% of all GP encounters in 2015-16 were mental health related (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018) which means that by using FPS, GPs are given the opportunity to better assist their patients who experience mental health illnesses.

References

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