Brief Behavioural Activation for depressed adolescents: Doing more of what matters

Introduction:

Adolescent depression is a common and significantly impairing mental health problem, affecting social, academic and family functioning. This workshop will provide training in Brief Behavioural Activation for depressed adolescents (Brief BA; Pass & Reynolds, 2014), with a focus on engagement and how values can be used to identify activities that are personally rewarding to the individual.

Content:

Symptoms of depression in adolescence include anhedonia (loss of interest/pleasure), negative self-perceptions including worthlessness, cognitive difficulties, sleep disturbance and fatigue. These factors can make day to day life (e.g. school/college, peer and family relationships) significantly challenging for depressed young people, and present additional barriers to successful engagement in psychological therapy.

Behavioural Activation (BA) appears to be a very effective treatment for depression in adults and may be a promising treatment for young people. We have adapted brief BA (BATD-R; Lejuez, et al., 2011) for use with adolescents (Brief BA; Pass & Reynolds, 2014). Brief BA is designed to be delivered by a range of professionals who do not require specialist qualifications or extensive training and has been piloted with promising outcomes in adolescent mental health services, and when delivered in secondary schools.

Brief BA is simple to explain and easy to understand. It is also reasonably straightforward to incorporate into an adolescent’s life, involving 6-8 weekly sessions of up to 1 hour, and a 30 minute review session one month later. Pilot data shows that engagement in treatment has been very good, that Brief BA is acceptable to young people, parents and school staff, and that it leads to reductions in depression symptoms and improved functioning in most young people (Pass, Lejuez, & Reynolds, 2017; Pass et al., 2018).
Key elements of the Brief BA for adolescents include:

- A focus on engaging young people in BA
- Scaffolding therapy based on developmental/cognitive constraints
- The involvement of parents/carers
- A focus on identifying young people’s values
- Identifying and scheduling activities that fit with personal values
- Including problem solving and contracting, with parental/carer involvement
- Session by session workbooks for young people and their parents

This workshop will demonstrate the use of Brief BA with adolescents who are experiencing significant depressive symptoms. It will focus particularly on how to engage young people in treatment, how to identify their values and link values to activities, and how to work with parents and young people as well as relevant others including school staff. Case examples will be used to highlight specific challenges and techniques.

This workshop would be suitable for clinicians who have experience of working with depressed young people in mental health settings. It would also be suitable for clinical staff with experience of Behavioural Activation who would like to adapt it for use with young people.

Learning objectives:

- Understand how Brief BA draws on behavioural theory to treat depression in adolescents
- Engaging depressed young people and their parents or carers in brief Behavioural Activation
- Helping young people to identify their values in three key areas - self, people that matter and things that matter
- Linking young people’s values to activities and planning these in to daily life
- Dealing with conflict and disagreement between young people and parents/carers
Dr Laura Pass
University of East Anglia

Wednesday, 26th February 2020
Venue: University of Reading

Training modalities:

This workshop will be very practically based. Brief BA will be taught through instruction, group discussion, Q&A, modelling through case examples and video clips, and practice (role-plays). Participants will have a chance to discuss their own cases.

Key references:


About the presenter:

Dr Laura Pass is a Clinical Psychologist and Clinical Lecturer at the University of East Anglia (UEA). She developed Brief BA in collaboration with Professor Shirley Reynolds during their time working together at the Charlie Waller Institute. Laura has delivered international training on Brief BA to diverse audiences, and provided expert supervision across numerous services and settings. Laura’s current clinical research is focused on adapting and improving psychological treatment for depression in young people.

For further information contact the Charlie Waller Institute:
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Cost of 1-day workshop:
£130 including lunch

All workshops, unless otherwise indicated are intended for a cross/mixed ability audience, and are held local to Reading.