Supporting Carers, Supporting Consumers: The Integration of a Support and Education Group for Carers of Consumers in a Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) Program

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RATIONALE FOR THE CARER’S GROUP:

Throughout the course of the DBT program we have had contact from carers of consumers of the DBT program requesting:

- A rationale for the clinician’s response in a time of crisis
- Knowledge
- Support in their day to day caring role
- Understanding of BPD
CARER INVOLVEMENT IN THE PAST

- In the past individual clinicians have attempted to incorporate family sessions to augment the DBT program.
  - Individual basis
  - The focus is on psycho-education and elements of structuring the environment.

- Challenge
  - Balancing individual needs with family needs
  - Establishing and maintaining boundaries around privacy and scope of the session.
OPPORTUNITY

“Caring for Carers – A Better Practice Project”
Established to meet the priorities for action in the NSW Carers Action Plan released in March 2007

We were successful in attaining a grant of $2300
AIMS OF THE GROUP

- Provide education
- Familiarise the carer’s with the DBT program
- Provide skills that carer’s can use to manage their own emotions and improve relationships.
- Develop a sense of support and connection with other carer’s
- Consistent with LHD carer policy that supports the involvement of families and carer’s
THE GROUP

- Pilot study
- 8 sessions: 2 hours per session
- 2 facilitators
- 7 participants – 3 partners, 2 parents, 2 friends (1 drop out)
OUTLINE OF GROUP SESSIONS

- Week 1 – What is Borderline Personality Disorder?
- Week 2 – What is DBT? and Mindfulness
- Week 3 – Psychiatric Perspective
- Week 4 - Distress Tolerance
- Week 5 - Emotion Regulation
- Week 6 - Validation and Communication
- Week 7 - Consumer Perspective and Research Review
- Week 8 - Crisis Management and Review
## Evaluation

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<th>Questionnaires</th>
<th>Pre Scores</th>
<th>Post Scores</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
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Red – Undesired Direction  
Green – Desired Direction
FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- We hope to run at least one group per year.

- Design a group facilitators manual and participant workbook.

- Extend the number of sessions in order to cover material at an even pace and allow for ongoing carer interaction.

- Identify measures that more reflective of the desired outcome.
REFERENCES