Peer consultation groups for psychotherapists working with BPD – our experience of enhancing team effectiveness

Cumberland/WSLHD Adult DBT team

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Purpose of Peer Consultation group

• Communication

• Boost morale; provide alternative perspectives when therapy seems stuck

• Reminding of DBT skills and adherence to structure

• Change can only occur in the context of acceptance; needs to be safe and confidential
Structure of Meeting

1. Mindfulness task
2. Allocate Roles for next week (chair & time-keeper, minutes, mindfulness, everyone as observer)
3. Set agenda & time requested
4. Group update
5. Case presentation(s)
   - Life threatening behaviours and/or imminent risk clients
   - At risk of treatment drop-out clients
   - Severely more dysfunctional behaviours of clients
6. Other issues on agenda
   - **Effective behaviours** of clients and/or therapists
   - **Team interfering behaviours**, examples include: doing two things at once; treating other as fragile; displaying defensiveness; offering solutions before the problem is clearly defined; engaging in self-invalidation; being late; remaining silent during the meeting.
   - **Therapy interfering behaviours**

7. Learning topic, Chain analysis
Agreements

• Punctuality and attendance
• Dialectical approach
• Accept others limits
• Search for “non-pejorative, phenomenologically empathic interpretation of behaviour”
• Accept all therapists are fallible
• Accept feedback and supervision non-defensively
Elephant in the room

• Everyone has a responsibility to utilise DBT skills and raise Team Interfering issues
• Anxiety: Use Wise Mind, Avoid Avoiding and Opposite to Emotion Action
• Possible difficulties with relationships and roles outside the DBT group
Structure of case presentation

• What do you want?
  • Problem asst?
  • Solution asst?
  • Validation for self?
  • Empathy for client?

• 3 minute summary
• Validation, assessment, generate solutions and troubleshooting
• Cheerleading & Making lemonade out of lemons
What works for us

• Voluntary participation; commitment to work in model
• Rotate roles; firm time-management
• Regularly raise and discuss issues particularly adherence to model
• Attend DBT workshops
• Learning/teaching topics
• Experienced members demonstrating thinking dialectically, being vulnerable, raising elephants
DBT Jazz

- Structure too strict? Excessive regulation?
- Unwavering centredness balanced with compassionate flexibility
- Doing our best and can always do better