

Using Flo as an interactive information tool

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What is FLO?

- Flo is an NHS product, delivered through NHS Stoke
- It is a simple text messaging service
- Has been used across various patient pathways with promising results – not in mental health
- Growing evidence base for services using FLO as a tool to support efficiency and quality
- Cheap / cost effective (? 8p per text)

Locally

- Healthy Minds service had started to deliver more interventions via groups
- BUT Attendance was poor and recovery was also poor (as measured on PHQ9 and GAD7)
- Heard about FLO and read how it had been used in other services – **could it help us???**
- Could having an interactive information process help us to improve quality and reduce non-attendance as it had done in other patient pathways such as diabetes and smoking cessation???
- Pilot - Aim was to improve commencement and completion of stress and anxiety groups (stress class) and low mood / depression groups by 15% and improve clinical outcomes by 10%

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The concept & implementation

- Protocol was developed within the service
- Patients signed up to FLO at initial screening appointments
- 7 texts were sent out each day leading up to the commencement of the groups – aim was to try and reduce anxiety re attendance and improve motivation
- Further texts were then sent on day 2 & day 5 after each session, of each week reminding patients about what had been covered in the session and a reminder of what their homework was
- After each initial text ('parent text') patients could press # up to 5 times to receive additional information – each subsequent text built on the previous one

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Examples

Pre-course:

‘Well done on signing up for stress class. You have taken your first step towards recovery and we look forward to seeing you on [date]’

‘Don’t forget that your group starts tomorrow. It’s normal to feel anxious, but we are here to support you and we look forward to meeting you’

‘1 in 4 people will suffer from a common mental health problem at some time in their lives – you are not alone’

Examples

After session 1:

‘Don’t forget to have a go at drawing out your own ABC-E model of emotion’

#

‘Think about what physical symptoms you might notice – have you noticed changes to your sleep or appetite for example?’

#

‘What might have changed in your behaviour? Are there things that you have stopped doing recently or have been avoiding?’

#

‘What have your thoughts been lately? About yourself, other people and the world?’

Etc, etc.

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Outcomes & recommendations

- Total of 56 people were recruited to use FLO
- DNA rate for those using FLO was 26% and the DNA rate of those not using FLO was 41%
- Recovery was measured using significant improvement (a drop of 5 points on the PHQ9 and GAD7). The use of FLO showed a 22% improvement over the control group
- Therefore, both original aims of the pilot were achieved and we would recommend the use of FLO as an interactive tool to support the delivery of step 2 groups within IAPT services

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Recognition

- 2 national awards:
 - ‘Most innovative use of FLO’ – implementing effective digital health – FLO simple telehealth conference (November 2014)
 - ‘Innovation in mental health award’ – Health Business Awards (London, December 2014)

- Now working with the University of Manchester to carry out a larger RCT of the use of FLO in this way

Innovation in Mental Health Award

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Want more info?

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