

The impact of using specialist groupwork practitioners to facilitate self-awareness groups in a training course for trainee cognitive behaviour therapists

Submission date 16/02/2022	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	☐ Prospectively registered ☐ Protocol
Registration date 15/03/2022	Overall study status Completed	☐ Statistical analysis plan ☐ Results
Last Edited 15/03/2022	Condition category Other	☐ Individual participant data ☐ Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

NHS talking therapies services are also known as Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services. Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) is a type of talking therapy provided in IAPT. Training of IAPT therapists is difficult and stressful, and can result in patients feeling like the therapist is working from a textbook, meaning patients are dissatisfied.

The self-practice/self-reflection (SPSR) model works to support development of the 'personal self' and the 'therapist self' through two interrelated processes called 'self-practice' and 'self-reflection' whereby the practitioner practises CBT strategies on themselves and then reflects on how their thoughts, feelings and behaviour interact. SPSR has been shown to be acceptable to trainees, and to have several positive effects on trainees.

The overall aim of the project is to evaluate the impact of using Group Analysts and/or Groupwork Practitioners to facilitate self-practice/self-reflective (SPSR) groups in a Pg. Dip. Training course for trainee high intensity cognitive behaviour therapists.

Who can participate?

The participants will be a convenience sample recruited at the beginning of the next cohort of approximately 40 students on the Post Graduate Diploma Cognitive Behaviour Therapy course beginning in January 2022.

What does the study involve?

The study involves participants completing questionnaires about self-awareness, confidence in using relational skills in everyday practice, self-perceived stress, and satisfaction with the course. Recording role plays and attending SPSR groups is what all students would be expected to do during training.

SPSR Groups will last for 1.25 hours and there will be approximately 4 students in each group. There will be six group sessions over the 12 months of the study.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Participating in SPSR groupwork has the potential to improve students' relational skills and self-awareness. It is hoped that by doing so students will have a better experience on the course and will report less perceived stress. Benefits of participating include a potentially positive impact on patients. Some students may be motivated by an altruistic desire to contribute to better training in psychotherapy because this may indirectly improve patients' care and treatment in the long-term (Khatamian Far, 2018).

Some people find taking part in groupwork difficult and distressing. There is the potential to be disturbed by hearing about other members' experiences, or to become involved in disagreements or conflict. The Group Analysts and/or Groupwork Practitioners who will be co-facilitating the SPSR groups are aware of the need to support members to manage their discussions in a constructive manner.

In addition, it is possible that participants may feel embarrassed by completing the self-awareness questionnaire. However, questions about how one thinks and feels are routine in the training of psychotherapists. The questionnaire has recently been used in a similar study evaluating the impact of using SPSR with trainees and no adverse events were reported (Scott et al. 2021).

All students will complete a self-care and safety plan before the groupwork begins. Support will be offered by a member of staff not directly involved in the project if a student is distressed or destabilised by doing any of the exercises. All students will have access to student services if they need more support.

Where is the study run from?
Teeside University (UK)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
July 2021 to July 2023

Who is funding the study?
The Institute of Group Analysis (UK)

Who is the main contact?
Dr Nicola Walker, n.walker@tees.ac.uk

Contact information

Type(s)
Principal investigator

Contact name
Dr Nicola Walker

ORCID ID
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1744-4498>

Contact details
Centuria Building
Victoria Road

Middlesbrough
United Kingdom
TS1 3QD
+44 7469776070
n.walker@tees.ac.uk

Additional identifiers

Study information

Scientific Title

The impact of using Group Analysts/Groupwork Practitioners to facilitate self-practice/self-reflective groups in a Pg. Dip. Training course for trainee high-intensity cognitive behaviour therapists

Acronym

SPSR Groupwork

Study objectives

What is the impact of involving Group Analysts and/or Groupwork Practitioners to facilitate self-practice/self-reflective groups in a Pg. Dip. Training course for trainee high-intensity cognitive behavioural therapists?

Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)

Approved 20/01/2022, Health Research Ethics Committee (Teesside University, Campus Heart, Southfield Rd, Middlesbrough, TS1 3BX, UK; +44 1642 342410; M.Islam@tees.ac.uk), ref: 7656

Primary study design

Interventional

Study design

Interventional non randomized

Study type(s)

Other

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Incorporating self-practice/self-reflection groups facilitated by Group Analysts/Groupwork practitioners in the training of high intensity Cognitive Behaviour Therapists.

Interventions

The overall aim of the project is to evaluate the impact of using Group Analysts and/or Groupwork Practitioners to facilitate self-practice/self-reflective (SPSR) groups in a Pg. Dip. Training course for trainee high intensity cognitive behaviour therapists.

The study uses a one-group pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design to measure change within-subjects using an analysis of variance in the data (ANOVA) when involving Group Analysts

and/or Groupwork Practitioners to facilitate self-practice/self-reflective groups during the Consolidating Knowledge and Skills (CKS) module.

THE EXISTING COURSE

The existing course incorporates many procedures required for the study. For examples, role plays are standard elements of CBT training courses and are recorded for review by students. Lectures, seminars, and readings about SPSR were introduced into the CBT training course at this university in 2021 and are included in a module entitled 'Consolidating knowledge and skills for the practice of CBT' (CKS). All students are expected to complete a workbook in their own time via distance learning which involves self-practice and self-reflection. The module is assessed by submission of a 500-word reflective account based on their experiences across the three CBT modules.

GROUPWORK FACILITATORS

Groupwork facilitators will be qualified Group Analysts or Groupwork Practitioners and will be recruited through the Institute of Group Analysis (IGA). Some written materials about SPSR groupwork i.e., Chapter 4: 'Guidance for Facilitators' from *Experiencing CBT from the Inside Out: A Self-Practice/Self-Reflection (SPSR) Workbook for Therapists* (Bennett-Levy & Thwaites, 2015) will be sent to anyone interested in finding out about the project. Once approximately twelve facilitators have been engaged, an online orientation session lasting 2-3 hours will be convened to introduce them to the project and to answer any questions they have about it.

Groupwork facilitators are not part of the study team (i.e., they will be external, employed on a casual contract, paid at £60 per group session). Their contract will include a section on the limits of confidentiality and will also outline the responsibilities of a SPSR groupwork facilitator and their remuneration. Once agreed and signed, contracts will be emailed to successful recruits with a copy of the claim form. Times for the groups will be agreed and Microsoft (MS) Teams invites will be set up by the Lead Researcher/s.

INDEPENDENT OUTCOME ASSESSORS

CTS-R assessors will be accredited Cognitive Behaviour Therapists and will be recruited through the British Association of Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP). Some written materials about rating the roleplay i.e., the Manual of the Revised Cognitive Therapy Scale (CTS-R) (James et al., 2001) will be sent to anyone interested in finding out about the project. Once approximately twelve independent assessors with experience of using the CTS-R in practice have been engaged, an online orientation session lasting 2-3 hours will be convened to introduce them to the project and to answer any questions they have about it.

CTS-R assessors are not part of the study team (i.e., they will be external, employed on a casual contract, paid at £30 per role play). As above, their contract will include a section on the limits of confidentiality and will also outline the responsibilities of a CTS-R assessor and their remuneration. Once agreed and signed, contracts will be emailed to successful recruits with a copy of the claim form. Instructions will be provided for downloading videos and for uploading completed CTS-R forms.

SPSR GROUPWORK

During the induction week (Friday 28th Jan to Friday 4th Feb) students will be introduced to the CKS module through attending four interactive seminars (6.5 hours teaching). They will be given Chapter 3: 'Guidance for Participants' from *Experiencing CBT from the Inside Out: A Self-Practice/Self-Reflection (SPSR) Workbook for Therapists* (Bennett-Levy & Thwaites, 2015).

All students are expected to complete the CKS module and participation in the SPSR groupwork will be mandatory. However, data will only be collected from students if they have given informed consent.

All students will be asked to express a preference regarding the most convenient day and time for them to join an SPSR group. We will assign students to different groups based on their preference. Each SPSR group will comprise a mix of students who have given informed consent to take part and those who have not. The group facilitator will not know which student is a participant of the study unless individual students inform them.

The groups are for students to reflect on their personal practice of CBT based on six modules from the SPSR workbook which they will have online access to (Bennett-Levy & Thwaites, 2015). The SPSR groups will be facilitated by Group Analysts or Groupwork Practitioners approved by the Institute of Group Analysis and will start after the Easter break.

The groups will meet six times during the training programme and electronic announcements will be made at least one week before each group session to prompt students to complete the specific SPSR exercise timetabled for that group.

Intervention Type

Other

Primary outcome(s)

Changes in students' level of specific relational skills (i.e., interpersonal effectiveness, collaboration and eliciting appropriate emotional expression) in standardised role plays will be measured at two points (at baseline and at 12 months) through observation of video recordings and assessment using the Cognitive Therapy Rating Scale-Revised (CTS-R) (Blackburn et al., 2001).

Key secondary outcome(s)

Measured at two points (at baseline and at 12 months)

1. Change in students' self-rated level of self-awareness (using The Counselor Self-Awareness Scale, Oden et al., 2009)
2. Students' experience of training (using, The Course Experience Questionnaire Ramsden, 1991)
3. Change in their level of perceived stress (using The Perceived Stress Scale, Cohen et al., 1983)
4. Change in their self-rated confidence in using relational skills in everyday practice (using a questionnaire designed for the study)

Completion date

30/07/2023

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

All students will be included if they have given informed consent, both verbal and written, to the video recordings of standardised role-plays and the collection of questionnaire data. Retention will be promoted by thanking students on a regular basis.

Participant type(s)

Healthy volunteer

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group

Adult

Sex

All

Total final enrolment

30

Key exclusion criteria

No student will be excluded.

Date of first enrolment

28/01/2022

Date of final enrolment

04/02/2022

Locations**Countries of recruitment**

United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre**Teesside University**

Centuria Building

Victoria Road

Middlesbrough

United Kingdom

TS1 3QD

Sponsor information**Organisation**

Teesside University

ROR

<https://ror.org/03z28gk75>

Funder(s)

Funder type

Research organisation

Funder Name

The Institute of Group Analysis

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

All data generated or analysed during this study will be included in the subsequent results publication

IPD sharing plan summary

Published as a supplement to the results publication

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Participant information sheet	version 5	01/02/2022	17/02/2022	No	Yes