

Does training physiotherapists in mental health care improve patient outcomes?

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Background: Four community physiotherapists are part of the Sheffield Physical Health and Psychological Wellbeing Project, a Yorkshire and Humber Health Education (LETB) initiative. The physiotherapists have undertaken low intensity CBT training over one year with Sheffield IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies), and qualified as Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners (PWP). They are now integrating their new knowledge and skills into physiotherapy practice.

Service Review Aims: Dual trained physiotherapists are undertaken service reviews to assess the impact of integrating PWP knowledge and skills on patient experience and outcome, and practitioner experience. The reviews are looking at changes in outcome measures used in current practice (EQ5D, PHQ9, GAD 7, WASAS), case studies and feedback questionnaires. The project is also exploring the contribution of IAPT PWP intervention skills to the facilitation of self-management in people with long term health conditions (LTCs)



- 1 •Recording and analysing pre and post patient recorded outcome measures (PROMS)
- 2 •Recording anonymised case studies illustrating qualitative patient journeys
- 3 • Delivering training to therapy staff and collating staff feedback
- 4 •Evaluating impact of dual training on delivery on a LTC management group
- 5 •Contributing to an evaluation report for wider dissemination

Key Learning: The learning from this project suggests that addressing mental health needs integrated with physiotherapy interventions has the potential to improve both physical and mental health outcomes and enhance self management. IAPT PWP knowledge and skills are highly relevant to the physiotherapy role. This is an important area for research, particularly in the context of the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health (2016).

