

COMPLEX NEEDS SERVICE

Manzil Way, Oxford OX4 1XE

Tel: (01865) 455872/455815 Fax: (01865) 455859 Email: tni@obmh.nhs.uk

Date

Oxfordshire Therapeutic Community Study

Dear Colleague

We are carrying out a randomised study of the Oxfordshire Complex Needs Service to find out if it is helping people who have long standing emotional and interpersonal problems, who might be or have been diagnosed with personality disorder. People who enter the study will either be offered treatment in the Oxfordshire Complex Needs Service, or given assistance to construct a crisis plan, which will then be reviewed with them on a regular basis.

Who might be suitable?

Personality disorder falls into a number of categories. All display longstanding traits that adversely affect them socially, occupationally or personally in some way. The dysfunction often expresses itself in interpersonal relationships.

Dependent – reliant on others and feel helpless when alone, submissive and clinging behaviour with an excessive need to be taken care of.

Avoidant/anxious – chronically anxious, tendency to avoid new or challenging social situations

Obsessive/compulsive – not the same as obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). Careful and rigid in day to day life, preoccupation with orderliness, perfectionism and control.

Borderline – unstable relationships, unstable mood and sense of self, self harming, impulsive or irresponsible.

Antisocial – disregard for the rights of others, antisocial behaviour.

Histrionic – impressionable, over-emotional, attention seeking behaviour.

Schizoid – emotionally detached, difficulty seeing the point of relationships. May or may not be lonely.

Paranoid – suspicious and mistrustful.

People's difficulties may fall into more than one of the categories above. People with personality disorder almost always have interpersonal problems, sometimes engage in deliberate self harm or feel suicidal from time to time, may present with somatic symptoms without physical pathology, suffer symptoms of depression and anxiety or eating disturbances, often have problems parenting, may misuse substances, display behavioural difficulties, and in general display a high use of NHS, housing and social services.

People referred to the study would need to be prepared in principle to enter therapy for 18 months in a series of groups; 50% of people accepted into the study will be randomised to this treatment, the remainder would have a crisis plan constructed to help them negotiate emotional setbacks.



What is the nature of the study?

We are looking for participants who are willing to fill in some forms and be interviewed by a researcher, and who would then be randomised either to treatment in the Complex Needs Service, or to the construction of a crisis plan to be shared with professionals involved.

The **Complex Needs Service** is a nationally funded pilot service which treats people with personality disorder and similar longstanding emotional and interpersonal problems. It provides a group based intervention which lasts for 18 months. We have included a leaflet describing the service.

The **Crisis Plan**, which is the alternative intervention, involves the co-construction of a three page plan detailing what strategies patients might use when in crisis. This might include phoning a friend, attending a day centre, or making use of distraction techniques. They will also receive a list of numbers to call in a crisis. They will meet with a member of the complex needs service at intervals, although they will not join the complex needs service clinical caseload.

The *Therapeutic Community Intervention Trial* is a randomised controlled trial which has received NHS ethical approval (ethics number:08/H0605/87)

Any questions?

If you are uncertain whether a particular patient might be suitable, or want to discuss the study, feel free to call the number above and ask to speak to *Dr Steve Pearce* or *Gill Attwood*, alternatively email steve.pearce@obmh.nhs.uk

How do I refer to the study?

If you would like to refer one of your patients to the study, please write to:

Therapeutic Community Intervention Trial

c/o Dr Steve Pearce
Consultant Psychiatrist
Complex Needs Service
OBMH Partnership NHS Trust
Manzil Way
Oxford
OX4 1XE

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Dr Steve Pearce
Oxfordshire Complex Needs Service



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