The Re-Blossoming of a Bright Man

Behavioural Activation: An integrated program of Counselling and Exercise

“A journey of a thousand miles start with a single step”
Chinese proverb
"Exercise is not an instant cure, but you need to get your brain working again, and if you move your body your brain won't have any choice."

"we sometimes lose sight of the fact that the mind, brain, and body all influence one another. In addition to feeling good when you exercise, you feel good about yourself,"

— John J. Ratey, Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain

David Perez, Behavioural Activation Project Officer
Manuel F. Morantes, Direct Services Team Leader - Counsellor
Individual Body Behavioural Activation program

- What is the Body-mind Behavioural Activation program?
- Why individual intervention in conjunction with counselling?
Aims

- Create a safe and comfortable space
- Provide useful information
- Motivate and support
- Tailored exercise program
- Introduction to fitness technology (Apps, Videos..etc)
- Support for counselling
Behavioural Activation Program

1. Mindset
2. Motivation
3. Self Regulation
About Samir

- Samir is a 65 year old man
- Homs, Syria
- Successful business man.
- Speaks multiple languages and now Fluent English
- Married, three children
- Christian
Samir’s Story

- 2012: he sent his family to Killis, Turkey
- He survived living alone...
  - The Battle of Homs
  - Two car bombs
  - Multiple terrorist attacks
  - Witnessed the death of 3 of his best friends
- He fled to Turkey after a failed attempted abduction
- June 2015 arrived in Australia
### Assessment

<table>
<thead>
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<th>SELF REPORT</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
<th>CUT OF POINT</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hopkins Symptom Checklist</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
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<td>&gt;1.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
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<td>&gt;1.75</td>
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<td><strong>Harvard Trauma Questionnaire</strong></td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>&gt;2.5</td>
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</table>
Balance of Protective Factors and Complex Interaction of Stress Factors

International event stressors

Trauma reactions

Exile, migration, resettlement stressors, cultural transition

Normal life cycle stressors

Recovery environment stressors

Cultural shock/Religious Aspects/Socio-Political Background

Protective factors (internal and external)

Aroche and Coello, 1994
Treatment Goals

- Goals:
  - Improve coping mechanisms (stress management)
  - Enhance positive life style
  - Reduce symptoms of depression
  - Reduce PTSD symptoms
  - Improve family relationships
Counselling process started on November 2015: 42 sessions (22 counselling/ 20 Behavioural Activation sessions)

Initial Interventions:
- Psychoeducation and normalisation
- Cognitive reframing
- Mindfulness/Relaxation & breathing exercises

Main Challenges
- No regular attendance after the fifth session
- Physical, mental and emotional tension
Change of the Therapeutic Strategy

- Healthy living practices (SEEDS) proposed by Dr. John Arden:
  - Social Connection/Exercise/Education/Diet/Sleep

- Referral to
  - Behavioural Activation program
  - Neurofeedback program
  - Dietary Advice
Behavioural Activation/Exercise
Our Interventions

- Meeting with Counsellor
- First appointment with the client:
  - Agreement
- Pre-Exercise screening consent form and medical clearance letter.
- Life Style Questionnaire
- Fitness test (Adapted)
- Fitness Smart band (Step counter)
- Body Composition Monitor Scale reading
Session Breakdown

- 1h sessions with the counsellor present
- 10 min of discussion about the “homework”
- 10min of Warm-up and Active stretching
- 20min strength and conditioning demonstration.
- 5min cool-down activity and breathing
- 5min Weigh in
- 10min to stablish weekly goal.
Observations and challenges

- Creating trust and hope
- Use of interpreter
- Body language observations
- Modifying behavioural patterns
  Towards physical Activity and food.
- Dealing with injuries
- Excellent response to Technology (Apps, Videos)
- Sociocultural barriers
- Ongoing Support and motivation (Weekly motivational calls)
Outcomes after 20 sessions

- Better self esteem
- Reduced muscular tension (No Lower back pain)
- More stamina and energy
- Reduced intake of cigarettes
- Much better use of English during sessions

Reported by the client
Reduction of Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety

Hopkins Symptoms Checklist

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Outcomes after 20 sessions

- Reduction of depressive symptoms. Not symptomatic for PTSD
- Significant reduction of stress/relaxation exercises
- Improved sleeping patterns
- Joined STARTTS project: Voluntary work - Social connections - business

- Counsellor Observations and facts
Future additions to the program

- More use of technology
- Integration with the new Bio-feedback protocol of treatment Developed by STARTTS
- Direct links with the new upcoming App project.
- Create links with gyms and other exercise groups.
- Mindful Bush Walks group
Acknowledgments

- Jorge Aroche, STARTTS CEO
- Mariano Coello, STARTTS Clinical Services & Research Coordinator.
- Nooria Mehraby, STARTTS Clinician trainer
- Shaheen Pordily, STARTTS Neurofeedback counsellor
References

