

Oxford AHSN case study

Date: Q3 2019/20

Programme/Theme: Patient Safety and Clinical Improvement

Title: Therapy support app helps patients steer a course to recovery

Overview summary

A new smartphone app has been launched to support patients to stay well and maintain their therapeutic gains following a course of psychological therapy treatment for a common mental health disorder. The digital application puts patients in control, storing all their treatment-related information in a single secure location that they can access easily and immediately when needed. Co-designed by patients, the app is called Paddle because it's a tool to help people steer their way through life's choppy waters.



Challenge identified and action taken

The vast majority of patients do well during and after treatment for anxiety and depression. However, they can find it difficult to organise and store all the information and knowledge gained during therapy to help them stay well. The period immediately after treatment comes to an end can be particularly challenging and going it alone can be a daunting prospect. One in three people seek additional help in the six months after they are discharged.

The Paddle digital application was co-designed by patients in response to feedback from the patient forum of the Oxford AHSN Anxiety and Depression (A&D) Network that extra support was needed. The app puts patients in control, storing all their treatment-related information in a single secure location. It's called Paddle because it's a tool to help people steer their way through life's choppy waters. The app enables individually tailored support, empowering people to effectively manage their condition and reduce relapse rates. It brings benefits to the individual, clinicians and the wider health system. Following a pilot with a small group of patients at the end of 2019, the Paddle app will be rolled out across Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes from February 2020. This will be by invitation only for people who have started a course of therapy from NHS talking therapies (IAPT) services.

Impact

In the Oxford AHSN region over 3,500 patients enter treatment for a common mental health disorder every month and all of them will be offered the app once piloting and evaluation are completed. It is hoped that most of these will choose to use Paddle.

Future plans

Once Paddle is rolled out successfully across the Thames Valley, the A&D Network will explore ways of making it available on a national level. The network is also hoping to secure additional funding to:

- explore if Paddle can be used to improve the longer term patient outcomes are monitored
- explore if Paddle data can be used to predict which patients may need additional booster sessions to maintain their therapeutic gains following a course of psychological treatment
- understand if offering certain patients booster sessions following treatment would constitute a positive return on investment for the healthcare system

Key learning/tips for adoption

It is essential to:

- co-design with patients and an extensive expert reference group to ensure user perspective is at the centre of the design, and technical/governance/operational issues are addressed
- appoint staff as champions in each service provider to guide the piloting, initial evaluation and roll-out
- incorporate evaluation design from the beginning especially in a 'before and after introduction' evaluation design
- ensure all service leads remain informed and involved in the project
- find an app developer you feel you can relate to and work with as there will inevitably be many niggles/issues/decisions to work out along the way
- cost the project in full e.g. make sure project funding includes penetration testing, ensure there is funding to develop a supporting website/user guide video/training video etc.

Priorities addressed

AHSNs

- Speeding up adoption of innovation into practice to improve clinical outcomes
- Building a culture of partnership and collaboration
- Positive experience of treatment and care

NHS England

- Care and quality
- Health and wellbeing



Start and end dates

2019-ongoing

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