

re: Referrals for MindWise groups now open

Kia ora,

Recently, a 12-week psychoeducation intervention (the *MindWise Programme*) demonstrated that early intervention holds promise for people struggling with emotional dysregulation and self-harm. Funding and Planning are now funding a formal evaluation of this programme, and these groups will be available again, over the next 12 months.

The project is being coordinated by Stepping Stones Trust, with input being invited from other NGO's. Evaluation of the trial is being undertaken through the University of Canterbury, Department of Psychology. Development and oversight of the programme material is being provided by SMHS MindSight clinicians and MBT-NZ.

Mindwise is based on Mentalisation-Based Therapy (MBT), an 18-month treatment programme most commonly used for individuals with borderline personality disorder. MBT aims to strengthen mentalising (the ability to reflect on emotional experiences) to help people better manage their emotions. For individuals with diagnosable BPD with more severe symptoms, this requires lengthy treatment addressing automatic, implicit reactions. For early intervention of BPD-traits, (where people do not meet the criteria for a more intensive programme), there is emerging evidence that targeted explicit education on mentalising can assist people struggling with emotional dysregulation and self-harm.

The aim of the programme is to provide an early intervention for those who have less serious aspects of emotion dysregulation, self-harm, service use, risk to others, and interpersonal difficulties – so that we interrupt a downward spiral of alienation and developmental arrest before things get severe enough to require secondary level care.

In order to establish effectiveness, change following the 12-week programme will be compared to baseline measures. Participants in the research trial must be willing to record behaviour for 3 months before and after the intervention, and complete questionnaires at 4 points in time - on admission to the study, after 3 months of self-monitoring (immediately before the group starts), at the end of the group intervention, and 3 months afterwards.

As this is a research study, participants will be required to be involved in having their behaviours self-monitored via an app over 9 months and measured with questionnaires at the 4 time points during the study. There will be a delay of 3 months between entry to the study and the beginning of the 12-week programme to monitor baseline self-harm behaviours, and participants will be followed-up 3 months after the end of the programme for a final measure and they will be required to continue self-monitoring during this time.

Being an educational intervention rather than a separate treatment service, clinical responsibility will remain with the person's GP and any other services involved in the person's care.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria:

- Some history of self-harm (low or moderate, but not high, risk to self)
- Marked deficits in self-regulation (affect dyscontrol, impulsivity), or interpersonal difficulties disrupting adjustment
- Any diagnosed mental health issues are stable (eg, anxiety, eating disorder, depression)
- Willing/able to participate in groups and research trial
- Accommodation is stable
- No major cognitive or intellectual difficulties
- No major anti-social traits (that would place others in a group at risk)
- Not under Mental Health Act
- No concurrent therapy addressing emotional dysregulation or self-harm (other therapy for targeted issues is possible; eg., trauma work, anxiety, etc.)

Each MindWise group will involve around 10 clients and be led by two group leaders. The groups will occur weekly for an hour and a half on a weekday, for 12 weeks; probably starting around 5pm. Participants will need to be able to arrange their own transportation to and from the groups.

Please find attached a brochure which can be given to potential participants to explain the programme. Additional brochures can be downloaded here - <http://www.stepstone.org.nz/our-services/>

Individuals referred to the study will be interviewed to check suitability. If accepted, they will be assigned to an intake, undertake initial questionnaires and commence monitoring for 3 months. Referrers will be advised of the person's status with respect to the study (ie., acceptance, completion, withdrawal).

To refer a person who is interested and fits the criteria, phone 027-212.6663 or e-mail mindwise@stepstone.org.nz.



Rebecca Lamb
Masters student - University of Canterbury



Tim Butcher
CEO - Stepping Stone Trust



Prof. Martin Dorahy
Department of Psychology - University of Canterbury



Robert Green
MindSight Clinical Supervisor (SMHS)