“Stepping Care”

Using a Stepped-Care approach to improve access to Psychological Resources

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Objectives:
- To increase access to CBT specific psychological resources in primary care
- To promote a stepped-care approach in supporting integration between primary and secondary care
- Rationalisation of combination therapy and when not to prescribe

Method:
- Each GP was contacted to advice of new service provision in secondary care.
- Requested to meet GP’s to discuss how we can work together and use the resource as efficiently as possible.
- Provided GP with recommended CBT Bibliotherapy/ online resources; CBT specific books sought for local library also.
- Active promotion of the stepped-care ethos to utilise the least intensive intervention that is likely to result in significant improvement.

Benefits/ Results:
- GP’s in Tipperary/ Cashel sector are more informed in terms of disorder specific treatment via CBT. They can refer their clients to the "Overcoming Series" of books as a first line approach to psychological intervention or can refer them to the advised on-line CBT courses readily available.
- Tipperary Town demographic is a socially deprived catchment area, thus sensitivity that all material advised is free to access e.g. CBT Library provision.
- Enhance self-reliance V’s medication reliance to ameliorate greater relapse prevention. Stat: 50% non-adherence with SSRI medication.
- GP’s have an opportunity to be involved in the client’s psychological recovery through collaborative goal setting and also in engaging the GP if they are becoming part of the maintenance cycle of a particular problem e.g. Health Anxiety Disorder / SSD

Conclusions:
- Through continued trust, rapport building and ease of access to the CBT nurse in secondary care – the GP is being supported to have greater access to CBT specific/ evidenced based psychological input - in a timely manner.
- This stepped-care intervention gives the client relief of their symptoms and increased power to self-help.
- From the time of referral, the client is getting a clinically specific intervention as opposed to being on a waiting list with no intervention.
- Communication of CBT progress/ case formulation to GP
- Future Development: Audit implementation of the model. Extend role to further assist GP and NCHD/ Nursing training needs.