



An Integrated approach to Anxiety Management – A pilot study

Aim of the study

The aim of this pilot study (undertaken in 2010) was to evaluate the impact of integrated therapeutic support (using psychotherapeutic methods and complementary therapies) for the management of anxiety and depression.

Method

The programme was designed to offer participating clients the experience of a structured system of integrated therapeutic support. It comprised an initial assessment, 6 weekly group sessions, 4 one-to-one sessions and a reflective journal. The group sessions included sharing reflective diary entries and experiences of the one-to-one treatment sessions, and various experiential exercises. These were CBT-based and designed to help the clients be more objective about their core beliefs, thoughts and feelings. The one-to-one sessions offered were acupuncture (with shiatsu where appropriate), aromatherapy, Bowen technique, counselling/psychotherapy, craniosacral therapy, wellbeing massage, nutritional therapy, osteopathy, reflexology and yoga. The practitioners were also required to attend reflective practice sessions and to fill in a reflective journal.

Results

All the 20 clients who completed the programme experienced an improvement in their general health, and more specifically in managing their anxiety. Analysis of the quantitative data derived from the BAI and DASS21 scores was also very positive. Sixteen clients, regardless of the severity of their anxiety at the start, had improved BAI scores at the last assessment. The DASS21 depression prestudy scores showed that nine of the clients experienced extremely severe depression, and 3 had severe, 3 moderate and 5 mild depression. At the last assessment, 2 had severe, 7 moderate and 6 mild depression, and 5 had no depression.

Conclusions

This integrated anxiety management programme was the first of its kind to be offered at Women+Health. The participants in the study overwhelmingly found the programme helped them manage their anxiety, and the quantitative results back this up. The participants also found all aspects of the programme helpful, which suggests that the integrated approach of using psychotherapeutic methods and complementary therapies is beneficial.