

Pilot Trial of Evidence-Based Integrative Group Therapy to Improve Executive Functioning among Adults: Implications for Community Mental Health and Training Clinics

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Abstract : Objective: Executive functioning (EF) deficits underlie several mental health diagnoses including ADHD, anxiety, and depression. Community mental health clinics face extensive waitlists for services with many referrals involving EF deficits. A pilot trial of a four-week group therapy was developed using key components from Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), and mindfulness with an aim to improve EF skills and offer low-fee services. Method: Eight adults (M = 34.5) waiting for services at a community clinic were enrolled in a four-week group therapy at an in-house training clinic for doctoral trainees. Baseline EF, pre-/post-intervention ADHD and distress symptoms, group satisfaction, and curriculum helpfulness were assessed. Results: Downward trends in ADHD and distress symptoms pre/post-intervention were not significant. Favorable responses on group satisfaction and helpfulness suggest clinical utility. Conclusion: Preliminary pilot data from a brief group therapy to improve EF may be an efficacious, acceptable, and feasible intervention for adults waiting for services at community mental health and training clinics where there are high demands and limits to services and staffs.

Keywords : executive functioning, cognitive-behavioral therapy, dialectical behavior therapy, mindfulness, adult group therapy

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