

Peer Review

Review of: "Online Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) for Concerned Significant Others in Rural Australia: A Randomized Controlled Trial"

Michael Baigent^{1,2}

1. Discipline of Psychiatry, College of Medicine and Public Health, Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia; 2. Flinders Centre for Gambling Research, Flinders Medical Centre, Adelaide, Australia

This is a well-written paper and a meaningful contribution to the field. As reflected in the write-up, the group under study and the intervention warrant investigation.

Hope my comments below will help.

Abstract

Can it follow the latest CONSORT conventions (Boutron et al 2017)?

The aim did not reflect that it was to evaluate the effectiveness to CSOs of substance users.

Eligibility was not mentioned in the abstract, and although the CRAFT intervention was originally designed for use in substance use problems, it could also be trialled for other problems or addictions.

Recruitment method could be included.

Trial registration not mentioned in the abstract.

Introduction

Line 4'higher prevalence of mental health conditions.....' - more accurate to say *symptoms* than conditions.

Methods

Participants – prefer some mention of eligibility here rather than having to find supplementary file A and the study protocol.

Treatment for CSOs – clarify if this was by video conference or audio, messages, etc. Were there any fidelity checks of the interventions?

Therapists – please clarify some points below.

1. Were the training and accreditation sessions not included in the outcomes?
2. 18 therapists attended a 2-day workshop, 10 proceeded with the accreditation, etc. How did this attrition arise?
3. 6 were accredited during the project delivering 628 sessions, and 4 who were not accredited delivered 22. Was clustering by this possible intervention variation considered or addressed?

Results

Flowchart 1

1. In Allocation, can the N of intervention providers and the average number of sessions per provider be included?
2. Follow-up – were reasons for loss to follow-up included?

Discussion

1. Page 22 ‘this study indicated that the reading materials..... were insufficient to improve CSO psychological health’. The statement may overstate the findings – can this sentence be reconsidered?
 - What has been demonstrated was that there were no significant differences between CRAFT and control groups on some outcomes. There were improvements for CRAFT that were statistically different from the control group for some areas as outlined in the paper. There were no statistically significant findings that the reading material group fared better than the CRAFT group in other measures.
 - However, both groups showed improvements, including the control group (e.g., DASS anxiety score reduction OM1 – OM3). Your waitlist group had an intervention – reading materials (unclear how many read them).
 - Therefore, it is not accurate to conclude that the control condition was ‘insufficient’ – it may have had *some* beneficial effects, just not significantly different from CRAFT.
2. Although the mean difference in DASS-21 depression scores (2.92) reflects a shift from the ‘extremely severe’ to the ‘moderate’ range, and other statistically significant improvements were reported, it may be

beneficial to calculate the Reliable Change Index (RCI) to determine whether these changes are not only statistically significant but also clinically meaningful.

3. It may be too complicated to include the information in this paper, but I would have liked to have seen what the substances were that the IPs were using. CSO responses to CRAFT might vary according to IP substance use. This study is more than a feasibility study, so one would imagine this data is available.

Limitations

As discussed, this is quite a specific selection of participants – predominantly middle-aged, Caucasian females with tertiary education, concerned about parents (more than partners). I would have guessed that more partners of IPs would have enrolled. Can the strategies that were used for FB and IG recruitment for this be elaborated on – were targeted ads, budget, groups, etc. used?

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.