Development of ‘Arbour’
An app to support early disclosure of mental ill health for doctors and medical students

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Overview of ‘Arbour’ development

• Medical Research Council (MRC) guidance on developing a complex intervention (MRC, 2000):
  • Identifying the evidence-base
  • Identifying/developing appropriate theory
  • Modelling processes and outcomes
Overview of ‘Arbour’ development
(MRC guidance)

- Synthesise evidence
- Develop a logic model
- Create & review draft tool
- Create & review web-based final version
- Create app for mobile devices
What is already known

• Doctors and medical students delay seeking support and/or treatment for mental ill health.
• Some doctors and medical students are ambivalent about disclosing their mental ill health
• Knowledge of where to seek mental health support among doctors and medical students is poor

Intervention Aim: To increase levels of earlier help-seeking by doctors and medical students for mental ill health.
Identifying the evidence-base

• Online anonymous survey (Cohen et al., 2016)
• Structured literature review
• Qualitative interviews (n=46) with doctors and medical students with experience of mental ill health
• Focus group with experts within physician health
Anonymous survey

Online survey with 1,946 UK doctors, both with and without a history of mental ill health.

• For all doctors, what they think they would do is different to what they actually do when they become unwell.
• Doctors not fully aware of their disclosure options or use established support pathways
• Age and speciality are a risk (younger and hospital doctors more at risk)
Qualitative study (n = 46)
Focus of the interviews

• Drivers and enablers to disclose
• 25% had symptoms prior to medical school
• 44% first experienced symptoms whilst at medical school

Initial primary disclosure often enabled further disclosures

An act of kindness
Identifying/developing appropriate theory

• Manage ambivalence
• Guide and support decision making
• Developing autonomy
• Support self efficacy

motivational interviewing
(‘guiding’ decision making not ‘telling’)
Overview of ‘Arbour’ development
(MRC guidance)

- Synthesise evidence
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Modelling processes/outcomes

Environmental influences:
- Organisational culture
- Visibility of support structures

Indecision about speaking to someone about own mental ill health

Individual influences:
- Beliefs about mental health
- Personal support network
- Personal experiences

Intervention

Outcomes:
- Users feel supported in their disclosure decision
- Increased confidence in disclosing
- Increased importance in disclosing
- Increased knowledge of who to disclose to
- Increased knowledge of mental health support services
- Increased awareness of own mental health
- Behavioural intention (reach a decision)

Impact:
- Increased levels of earlier help-seeking
- Increased self-referral to mental health support services
- Increased awareness of the importance of self-care
- Increased mental health awareness
- Increased patient safety
- Normalisation of mental ill health

Speak to someone about mental health

Don't speak to someone about mental health
Arbour: a new app for doctors and medical students deciding whether to speak to someone about their mental health
The next stage: evaluation of ‘Arbour’

- The app is available for both smartphones and tablets (Android devices version 5.0 and above, and iOS version 8 and above).
- To download the app please visit Google Play or the App Store and search for Arbour.
Thank You

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