What is Flo?

- Flo is an NHS product, delivered through NHS Stoke

- It is a simple text messaging service

- Increasingly being used across various patient pathways in the NHS (Health improvement / diabetes) – minimal use within mental health

- Growing evidence base for services using Flo as a tool to support efficiency and quality

Background

- Healthy Minds service moved to more group delivery at step 2 ('psycho-educational groups')

- Heard about Flo – could it help improve attendance and recovery?
  - It had helped improve these measures in other pathways such as smoking cessation and diabetes

- Service decided to engage in small local pilot to test this out

- Aim was to:
  - Improve commencement and completion of stress & anxiety groups and low mood & depression groups by 15% (delivered by PWPs at step 2)
  - Improve clinical outcomes by 10% (as measured using PHQ9 & GAD7)

Local implementation

- Protocol was developed within the service and with support of Flo team

- Patients signed up to Flo at initial screening appointments

- 7 texts sent out each day leading up to commencement of the groups (aim was to reduce anxiety re attendance and improve motivation):

  - Examples:

    - *'Well done on signing up for the stress & anxiety course. You have taken your first step towards recovery and we look forward to seeing you on [date]'*
    - *'Don't forget that your group starts tomorrow. It's normal to feel anxious, but we are here to support you and we look forward to meeting you'*
    - *'1 in 4 people will suffer from a common mental health problem at some time in their lives – you are not alone'*

Implementation continued ….

• Further texts sent on 2nd and 5th day after each group session (aim was to remind people about homework tasks)

• On receiving 'parent' text, user could respond (by replying #) to receive additional information about homework set (key concept in recovery)

• Potential for an additional 5 texts to be sent

– Example (after session 1):

• *'Don't forget to have a go at drawing out your own ABC-E model of emotion'* #

• *'Think about what physical symptoms you might notice – have you noticed changes to your sleep or appetite for example?'* #

• *'What might have changed in your behaviour? Are there things that you have stopped doing recently or that you have been avoiding?'* #

• *'What have your thoughts been lately? About yourself, other people and the world?'* #

• *'Is there anything that is going on in your environment that might be key – relationship issues, family / work problems, financial pressures, etc?'*

Outcomes

- 56 people were recruited

- DNA rate for those using Flo was **26%**
- DNA rate for those choosing not to use Flo was **41%**
  - **Aim of improving attendance by 15% was therefore achieved**

- Recovery was measured using significant improvement (a drop of 5 points on the PHQ9 & GAD7)
- The use of Flo had a **22%** improvement over the control group
  - **Aim of improving clinical outcomes by 10% was therefore also achieved)**

Service User Feedback

- Feedback was obtained from all individuals who used Flo

- Universally positive feedback

- Patients seemed to like the interactive nature of Flo and the fact that they were in control of the amount of information they received

- *'Flo really helped me to remember to practise and think about what I was learning in between group therapy sessions'* (Male, 59 years old, attended stress & anxiety group)

- *'I really enjoyed attending the mood group and the Flo service added to the experience'* (Female, 59 years old, attended mood group)

Recognition

- Won 2 national awards:

  – 'Most innovative use of Flo' – Flo Simple Telehealth Conference (November 2014)
  – 'Innovation in Mental Health Award' – Health Business Awards (December 2014)

- Shortlisted for HSJ award (September, 2015)

- Had work published on eWIN

- Presented at Confed June 2016

- Many services gone on to use our protocol template

Further dissemination

- Flo now used in all PWP psycho-educational groups

- Now used at other 'steps' within the IAPT pathway – e.g. mindfulness groups

- Been implemented across the Trust:

  – Supporting the self-management of wound care (50% reduction in patient visits)
  – Stroke rehabilitation (80% more likely to reach goals following group)
  – Currently developing protocol to support breastfeeding

Advantages of Flo to the PWP workforce

• Easy to use and implement – once protocol established requires minimal admin support

• Flexible / allows for creativity

• Cheap

• Effective – proven to improve both attendance and engagement

Questions????

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