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Management of Mental Health Illness: an Actionable Non-Pharmacologic Approach

CODY COUPERUS, MSIII

UVM MEDICAL CENTER FAMILY MEDICINE AT MILTON, VT

ROTATION: 11/2017-01/2018

Problem

- Mental illness is commonly encountered by the primary care physician. It is estimated that 90% of patients with anxiety or depression are treated solely thorough their primary care provider (NICE, 2011).
- These patients benefit from non-pharmacologic methods in management of their illness. Examples include:
  - Mindfulness (Bohlmeijer et al, 2010)
  - Exercise (Deslandes et al, 2009)
  - Yoga (Büssing, 2012)
  - Acupuncture/Massage
- Counseling for these interventions takes time to deliver and providers are often pressed for time during patient visits (Østbye et al, 2005).

Problem (Locally)

- Chittenden county mental health provider ratio of 199:1 (2016 Community Health Needs Assessment)
- Prevalence of moderate to severe depression for adults in Burlington HSA is 6% and 34% of this population reports mental health as "not good" at least 1 of the last 30 days. (ECOS report, 2012)
- The suicide rate in Vermont, 19.8 per 100,000 in 2014, is the highest in New England and has been increasing in the last decade.

Cost

- Health care utilized 16% of the US GDP in 2006
- An estimated 6.2% of that was for treatment of mental illness
- Indirect costs incurred by mental illness in the US have been estimated to be over 300 billion per year
- This cost has been increasing with time

(Insel, 2008)

Community Perspective (interviews)

- Louise George is the clinical social work specialist and counselor at the Milton Family Practice clinic
  - What non-pharmacologic interventions do your patients utilize?
    - "Patients use all of it! Exercise, meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, CBT (thinking about thoughts and how that impacts their feelings and changing their thoughts), CBT worksheets, and nutrition is also really important.
    - "Connecting with friends is important, some patients may even start going on walks with their friends!"
  - How do you coach patients to start using these measures
    - "I try really hard not to overwhelm people. I might say 'Why don't you start exercising 5 minutes per day,' and then build from there."
  - What are barriers for your patients to implement these interventions?
    - "Transportation, weather, and money"
    - "A patient might say, 'When I get out of work it's icy, it's cold outside, and I don't have money to go to the gym.'"
  - Do you have other ides about non-pharmacologic interventions other than what we've talked about?
    - Meetup groups (anxiety social groups), nutrition, and animal therapy!

Community Perspective (interviews)

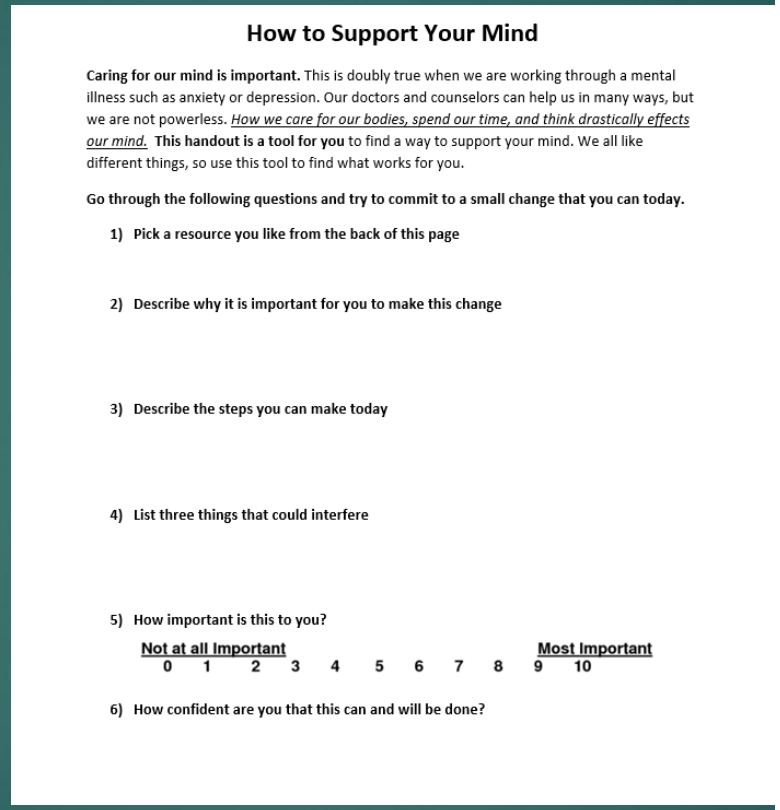
- Dr. Megan Malgeri is an attending physician at the Milton Family Practice
  - What is your opinion of non-pharmacologic management of mental illness?
    - I think it's great, especially when it is able to help patients improve some of the underlying stressors in their lives.
  - What non-pharmacologic interventions do your patients utilize?
    - Mostly exercise. Some use mindfulness/meditation or simple activities like walking
  - How do you coach patients to start using these measures
    - I've been trying to incorporate these methods into my practices more as of late. I will sometimes write things down in the discharge instructions for patients; like the name of an app or website.
  - What are barriers for your patients to implement these interventions?
    - Some patients just don't seem to prioritize these interventions in their life. Getting them to commit makes a difference.

Methodology

- Identify local non-pharmacologic resources for patients in the Milton, VT area
- Design handout for patients outlining specifics of each resource
- Design cover-page for handout that includes components of motivational interviewing
- Add handouts as “dot-phrase” to UVMMC PRISM user environment

Outcome

- Resources compiled with some great additional resources identified by Louise George (nutrition, meetups, social outreach, animal therapy!)
- Resource handout and motivational interviewing cover page designed



How to Support Your Mind

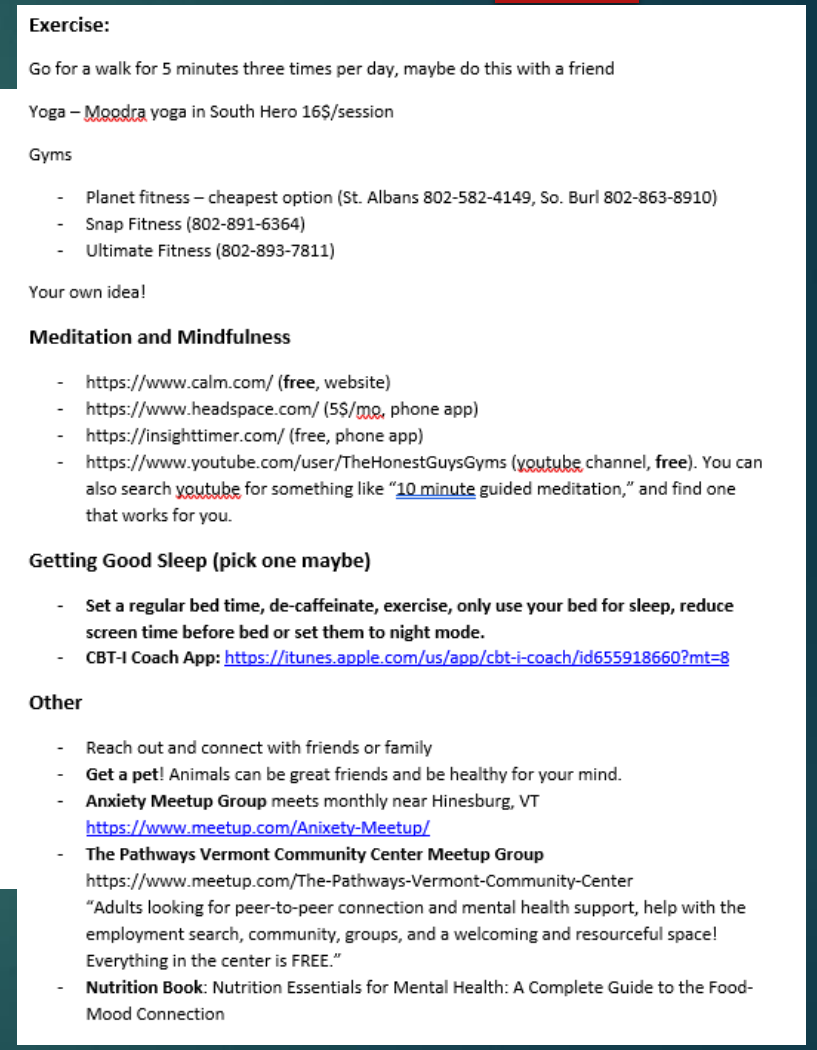
Caring for our mind is important. This is doubly true when we are working through a mental illness such as anxiety or depression. Our doctors and counselors can help us in many ways, but we are not powerless. *How we care for our bodies, spend our time, and think drastically effects our mind.* **This handout is a tool for you** to find a way to support your mind. We all like different things, so use this tool to find what works for you.

Go through the following questions and try to commit to a small change that you can today.

1) **Pick a resource you like from the back of this page**
2) **Describe why it is important for you to make this change**
3) **Describe the steps you can make today**
4) **List three things that could interfere**
5) **How important is this to you?**

Not at all Important									Most Important
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

6) **How confident are you that this can and will be done?**



Exercise:

Go for a walk for 5 minutes three times per day, maybe do this with a friend

Yoga – Moodra yoga in South Hero 16$/session

Gyms

- Planet fitness – cheapest option (St. Albans 802-582-4149, So. Burl 802-863-8910)
- Snap Fitness (802-891-6364)
- Ultimate Fitness (802-893-7811)

Your own idea!

Meditation and Mindfulness

- https://www.calm.com/ (**free**, website)
- https://www.headspace.com/ (5$/mo, phone app)
- https://insighttimer.com/ (free, phone app)
- https://www.youtube.com/user/TheHonestGuysGyms (youtube channel, **free**). You can also search youtube for something like "10 minute guided meditation," and find one that works for you.

Getting Good Sleep (pick one maybe)

- **Set a regular bed time, de-caffeinate, exercise, only use your bed for sleep, reduce screen time before bed or set them to night mode.**
- **CBT-I Coach App:** https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/cbt-i-coach/id655918660?mt=8

Other

- Reach out and connect with friends or family
- **Get a pet**! Animals can be great friends and be healthy for your mind.
- **Anxiety Meetup Group** meets monthly near Hinesburg, VT https://www.meetup.com/Anixety-Meetup/
- **The Pathways Vermont Community Center Meetup Group** https://www.meetup.com/The-Pathways-Vermont-Community-Center "Adults looking for peer-to-peer connection and mental health support, help with the employment search, community, groups, and a welcoming and resourceful space! Everything in the center is FREE."
- **Nutrition Book**: Nutrition Essentials for Mental Health: A Complete Guide to the Food-Mood Connection

Intervention Assessment

- For patients with a mental health illness randomly provide handout and deliver motivational interviewing as outlined. Control group would include standard care.
- Quantify utilization of non-pharmacologic measures by patient report by mail survey with goal of getting at least 100 responses.
- Primary outcome: patients receiving handout and motivational interviewing would use non-pharmacologic methods at a greater rate than control
- Secondary outcomes: severity of mental illness, rate of pharmacologic intervention use, rate of suicide.
- The hypothesis would be that patients receiving the handout would utilize these interventions at a higher rate and that this would correlate with decreased severity of mental illness.

Future Project Idea

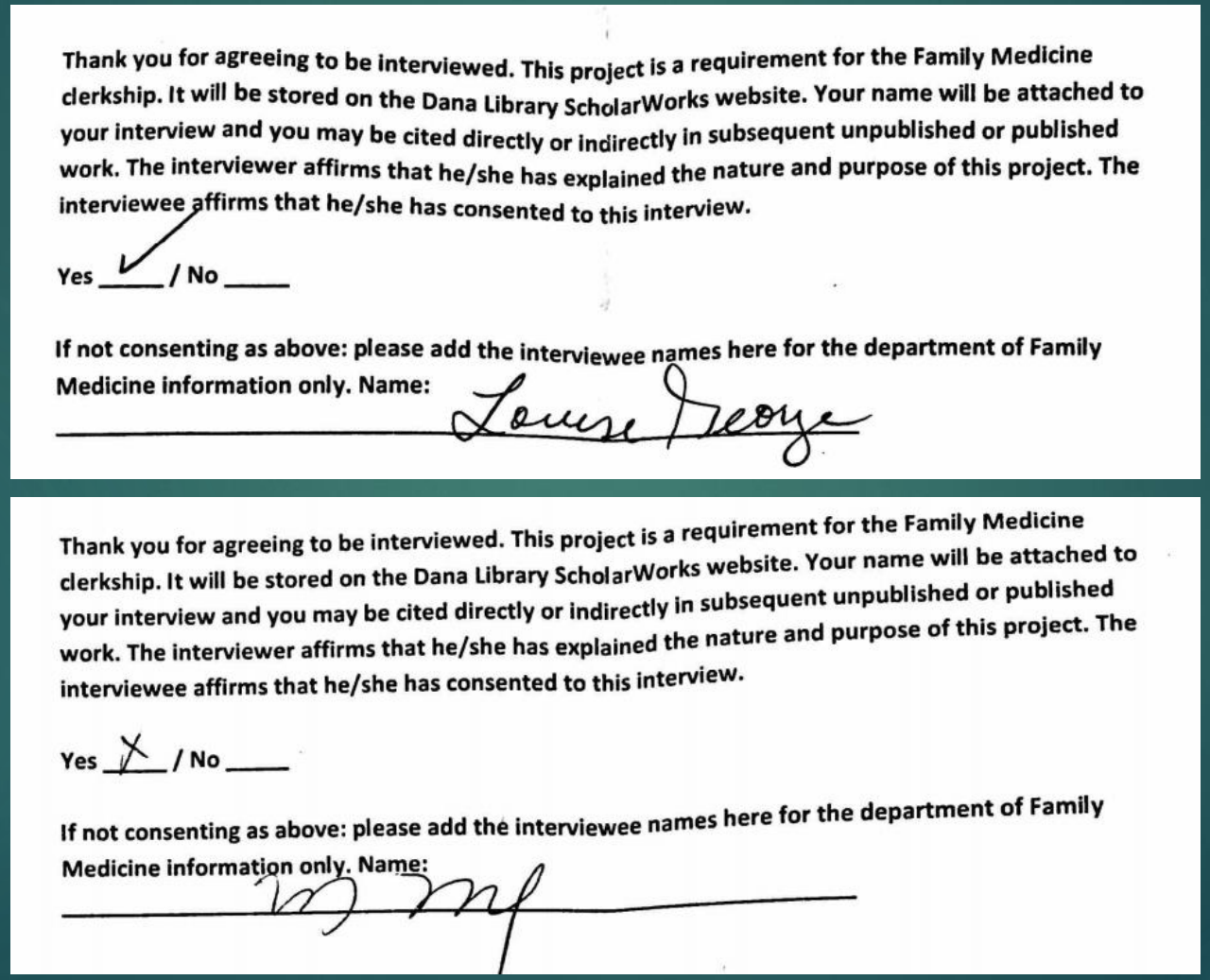
- Develop quality improvement (QI) project to increase provider delivery and patient utilization of non-pharmacologic interventions for mental illness.
- Identify method to quantify utilization by providers
- Develop QI project to reduce barriers and increase usage
- Re-evaluate

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Interview Consent Forms



Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. This project is a requirement for the Family Medicine clerkship. It will be stored on the Dana Library ScholarWorks website. Your name will be attached to your interview and you may be cited directly or indirectly in subsequent unpublished or published work. The interviewer affirms that he/she has explained the nature and purpose of this project. The interviewee affirms that he/she has consented to this interview.

Yes ✓ / No ____

If not consenting as above: please add the interviewee names here for the department of Family Medicine information only. Name: Louise Deoye

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. This project is a requirement for the Family Medicine clerkship. It will be stored on the Dana Library ScholarWorks website. Your name will be attached to your interview and you may be cited directly or indirectly in subsequent unpublished or published work. The interviewer affirms that he/she has explained the nature and purpose of this project. The interviewee affirms that he/she has consented to this interview.

Yes X / No ____

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