

Effective patient–clinician interaction to improve treatment outcomes for patients with psychosis: a mixed-methods design

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Plain English summary

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Plain English summary

A common type of mental illness is ‘psychosis’. Patients in the NHS who experience this illness may hear or see things that others cannot hear or see, or have difficulties with concentration or motivation, among other issues. They often attend a community mental health team for treatment, where they have monthly one-to-one meetings with a mental health professional who is responsible for co-ordinating everything about their care. Improving communication during these meetings may help to make treatment more effective. Our previous research showed that a new approach called ‘DIALOG’, which involved the use of technology, was helpful. Using a hand-held computer, patients rated how satisfied they were with 11 key aspects of their life and treatment, and indicated whether or not they needed additional help, sharing their ratings with the professional in order to guide the conversation.

The current programme of work builds on this encouraging finding. First, we developed new, user-friendly software for the approach, guided by patients’ views and experiences. We also developed guidelines and training for mental health professionals to use the psychology of ‘solution-focused therapy’ as part of the approach. These new elements turned the approach into something new – what we call ‘DIALOG+’. When we tested DIALOG+, we found that its use about four or five times over a 6-month period improves patients’ satisfaction with life over 1 year. In addition, using DIALOG+ is likely to save treatment costs for the NHS. The experiences of patients and clinicians were largely positive. The software, guidelines and training are now freely available.

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