

Accessibility and implementation in the UK NHS services of an effective depression relapse prevention programme: learning from mindfulness-based cognitive therapy through a mixed-methods study

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Plain English summary

An effective depression relapse prevention programme

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Plain English summary

Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) is an effective treatment that helps people with recurrent depression stay well in the long term. It is in the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance but its availability across the UK remains limited. We wanted to find out why this is the case, and did this by interviewing people from across the UK and conducting 10 case studies.

We found that having champions for MBCT with skill, drive and determination was essential to making it more widely available, but their success depended on whether or not they were able to secure support and commitment from leaders, managers and commissioners.

All the sites involved in the study faced pressures that made it difficult to implement new services such as MBCT. These pressures include meeting service targets, financial pressures and changes in the organisation. MBCT is more likely to be available in sites that can successfully navigate around these issues by aligning MBCT to address those pressures and targets.

Making MBCT available is a journey that can take a number of years and can have many peaks and troughs, and the ability to cope with those is dependent on the skills and actions of the individuals involved and on the resources they have around them (financial, practical and relevantly trained and incentivised staff) and how they are mobilised.

The findings from this project are being used to develop an online, freely available, implementation plan. This will provide guidance and support to individuals or teams wishing to make MBCT available in their services or further sustain provision that already exists.

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