

Student Mental Health: Improving Joint Working Meeting
Tuesday 19 June 2012, 12.00pm – 2.00pm
Meeting Room, Gaskell House Psychotherapy Centre

Represented: University of Manchester Counselling Service, Manchester Royal Infirmary A&E Department, Eating Disorder Service, Manchester Metropolitan University Counselling Service, The Docs, Early Intervention Service, Bodey Medical Centre, University of Manchester Occupational Health

Minutes

1. Introduction

Sarah Littlejohn, Head of UoM Counselling Service, welcomed those present to the meeting, members of the forum then introduced themselves.

2. Student Mental Health Forum (SMHF) Website

The SMHF website has been created to provide an online equivalent to the SMHF meetings, where up to date information about support services can be found, along with guidance on how to navigate services and support students with mental health difficulties. Minutes of the SMHF meetings will also be available through the SMHF website.

Wendy Spruce (UoM Counselling Service) advised the forum the SMHF website is now live, and can be accessed at www.smhf.manchester.ac.uk. All members of the SMHF were asked to review the website, and send any suggestions for changes or improvements to wendy.spruce@manchester.ac.uk

The website currently looks like a University of Manchester website, due to where the site is hosted, therefore it was requested that the different services represented by the SMHF send their logos (with organisation approval) to wendy.spruce@manchester.ac.uk. Service logos will then be added to the main page to clearly show the collaboration across the SMHF.

The forum discussed whether it is appropriate for the meeting minutes to be available through the SMHF website, as these can be accessed by those outside the forum. It was agreed that minutes would be available, and that during meetings it would be agreed if there were any items of reserved business which would then only be distributed to the SMHF email distribution and would not be included on the minutes on the website.

3. Eating Disorder Service

Martin Gill, the Psychotherapist/Clinical Lead at the Eating Disorders Service (EDS) in Gaskell House gave an overview of the Eating Disorder Service, and provided information about the referral process and service accessibility.

The EDS began initially as a research project offering brief CBT for bulimia sufferers. Since then, the service has continued to develop, to try to meet demand. The EDS is a relatively small service, with one full time member of staff and two part time members of staff. Taking about 220 referrals a year, the EDS aims to be a responsive service, accommodating urgent referrals as flexibly as possible. Like many services supporting students, the EDS is particularly busy around the start of the academic year in September/October, Christmas and exam periods

A referral to the EDS can be made for someone suffering from anorexia, bulimia, binge eating disorder or an eating disorder not otherwise specified (EDNOS). A student can be referred by a GP or healthcare professional, if they have a BMI of 14 or less. Martin described how people with an eating disorder can generate anxiety for those supporting the sufferer, and this can be difficult when wanting to make a referral to the EDS, in terms of meeting the referral trigger and waiting times. The EDS has become stricter in accepting referrals due to the demands on the service. If a referral is deemed to be urgent, this should be stated with the referral along with a sense of why it was an urgent referral.

Support services, such as the counselling services within the Universities, raised concern about the possible impact that stricter EDS referral criteria would have on demand for non-specialist services. Yvonne Harris from MMU Counselling Service suggested it would be beneficial in managing the potential increase in demand on the counselling services, if the EDS could provide training on how to manage clients with an eating disorder, and when to refer to a specialist service.

Those referred to the EDS, from a GP or healthcare professional, will receive an assessment. Following the assessment, where appropriate, support will be provided by the EDS. The EDS can refer patients to PCT's (ideally near the patients home to be close to support networks). The EDS also uses private providers, one based in Cheadle Royal and one based in the Wirral. Re-feeding requires the patient to be admitted for 6 months, although the provider in the Wirral offers a shorter admission of 3 months, and so is potentially more helpful for students.

The current waiting time for an assessment at the EDS is 4 – 6 months, which is a relatively long time, although comparable to other similar services. The EDS sees a high number of students, and so waiting times are a problem. Because of this, the EDS held a review last year, and as a result a pilot was run to see students more quickly – a fast track service. The fast track service offers an assessment within six weeks, followed by six sessions of CBT brief intervention therapy.

As part of the pilot, students were telephoned to confirm appointments, this proactive approach seems to have helped with take-up, which is about 50%. Of those, about half attended all six sessions and had a positive outcome and moved on from the service, although some others require a longer intervention. The pilot has proved a success.

The forum discussed the possibility of providing an in-house EDS clinic at the University of Manchester and/or Manchester Metropolitan University, to improve student access further. However, this is just not feasible for the EDS, a possible alternative would be to provide CBT trainees a University based placement, this could provide a discrete and accessible service to students.

A challenge faced by the EDS is securing medical monitoring alongside the intervention provided by the EDS. The forum discussed ownership of the patient, and how this can be problematic if patients are pushed between services rather than working together to support the patient. Often an eating disorder may be a part of an array of mental health difficulties, and so a number of services may be involved.

Matt Jocelyn from The Docs raised concern for what is likely to be the majority of students who are unwell, but not 'bad enough', to be referred to a specialist service such as the EDS, and the difficulty there can be in accessing support, and the anxiety this can generate for non-specialist services. In response, Martin Gill from the EDS informed that advice can be sought from the EDS where there is concern. In addition, the counselling services at the UoM and MMU can be considered as an option

for providing support to students whilst waiting for specialist intervention, or for guidance for referrals to specialist services, due to quicker access.

The forum asked if there was guidance available on how to manage patients with an eating disorder whilst waiting for specialist intervention. Martin advised of a report by the Royal College of Psychiatrists called MARSIPAN (Management of Really Sick Patients with Anorexia Nervosa), which will be distributed to the SMHF members following the meeting.

The forum also discussed the difficulty in managing students expectations when they move to Manchester as a student, as previous support may have been very different. The forum also discussed their experience of patients being discharged from CAMHS (Eating disorder service for under 18yrs) and facing a lack of support.

Fliss Anderson from UoM Occupational Health advised that Fitness to Practice guidance means that students registered on a professional programme, such as Nursing, are classed as not fit to practice with a BMI of less than 16. Students with a BMI of less than 16 are required to see the consultant at occupational health, and are then regularly reviewed. Having very clear boundaries helps the University support students. The forum discussed the potential gap in support for students on non-professional programmes, although these students can also access support through the UoM occupational health service. Yvonne Harris from MMU discussed the difficulty in lack of service provision as MMU does not have an occupational health service.

The forum discussed the benefit of having a simple 'help guide' for managing support for students with an eating disorder, such as what signs or symptoms to look for in mild/moderate/severe cases, how to support and at what point and where to get specialist support from. However, due to possible complexity of an eating disorder, and differences in support services inside and outside Manchester, this is not something that could be provided.

Martin Gill also advised the forum that the EDS is restricting patients referred due to morbid obesity. It was thought that specialist support may be accessed through Hope Hospital Weight Management Service or through a weight management service based in Levenshulme.

4. Maintaining SMHF meeting membership

The forum considered how membership at SMHF meetings could be maintained, and in particular how GP's could be encouraged to engage with the forum. It was suggested inviting the Community Mental Health Team to attend or speak at the forum would be valued by local GPs.

Sarah Littlejohn UoM counselling service, and Yvonne Harris MMU counselling service would like to attend the Friday lunchtime GP forum, as this may provide a good opportunity to raise awareness of the SMHF. This is likely to be September now in order to have greater impact, and at a peak time.

It was also suggested that it would be beneficial to invite a representative from the newly commissioned drug and alcohol support service, possibly Serco .

The forum would be interested for a representative of CAMHS to attend to discuss the transition from youth to adult support services.

It was agreed that it would be beneficial to have an overview from the SAFE team self harm service.

It was suggested that SMHF meetings be held three times per year; September/October, January/February and June going forward.

5. A.O.B

Early Intervention Service

Alison Lancaster, Service Manager at the EIS, advised that they are now fully staffed and so they are in a position to be able to offer advice to other support services over the phone if they have concerns about a student.

MEETING ACTION POINTS

1. **Forum members:** Review the new SMHF website, and send any comments or suggestions to improve the site to Wendy Spruce (UoM Counselling Service) at wendy.spruce@manchester.ac.uk
2. **Forum members:** Send service logos (with organisation approval) to Wendy Spruce (UoM Counselling Service) at wendy.spruce@manchester.ac.uk to be added to the new SMHF website
3. **Martin Gill (EDS):** To send Marzipan guidance report to Wendy Spruce on managing patients with eating disorders until specialist support is accessed, the document will then be included with the distribution of the meeting minutes
4. **Sarah Littlejohn (UoM Counselling Service) and Yvonne Harris (MMU Counselling Service):** To attend a Friday GP Forum to raise the profile of the SMHF meetings to local GPs
5. **Forum members:** Any suggestions of how to maintain forum membership or ideas for future speakers to be sent to Wendy Spruce (UoM Counselling Service) at wendy.spruce@manchester.ac.uk
6. **Wendy Spruce(UoM Counselling Service):** To arrange the next SMHF meeting for September/October, and to organise a speaker if possible from the SAFE team, or the Drug and Alcohol team, or CAMHS, or the Community Mental Health Team