Project TEACH: Using A Participatory Approach to Improve Mental Health Literacy During Final Report

Implementation

Project TEACH was awarded an Alliance for Health Education Initiatives (AHEI) grant for $500 on March 20, 2018. The goal of the project was to improve mental health literacy among individuals with serious mental illness through the development of recovery-oriented, visually-based, culturally relevant psychoeducational tools. The project was implemented from June 1, 2018 to May 1, 2019.

Project deliverables include two psychoeducation workbooks that were developed and implemented with psychiatric patients in Houston, Texas. The first workbook was developed for patients receiving psychiatric services at an academic safety-net psychiatric hospital and the second workbook was developed for patients receiving psychiatric services at a homeless day program. The workbooks were developed by faculty, staff and students at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth), McGovern Medical School Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. The psychoeducation workbooks aim to improve patient education about mental illness and engage patients in illness self-management.

The Patient Psychoeducation Workbook was developed through a collaboration that included Jane Hamilton, Ph.D., the project director, Bernice Yau, M.D., a fourth-year medical student at UTHealth McGovern Medical School (currently a psychiatry resident at UT Southwestern Medical School Department of Psychiatry), and Alia Warner, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist at UTHealth Harris County Psychiatric Center (HCPC). The authors met regularly from June 1, 2018 to December 30, 2018 to develop the content of the workbook and to obtain patient feedback through a focus group. The final version of the 45-page Patient Psychoeducation Workbook included the following sections:

• Mental Health History
• Basics of Mental Health
• Basics of Treatment
• Taking Charge of My Mental Health Journey
• Therapeutic Activities
• References and Further Resources
**Patient Focus Group**

On 12/7/2018 a focus group was conducted with psychiatric patients at the UTHealth HCPC to illicit patient feedback about the *Patient Psychoeducation Workbook* including its content and format. The Focus group questions are included in Attachment A. The practical, plain language workbooks were developed to encourage collaborative health communication between psychiatric patients and their providers, improvements in mental health literacy, and illness self-management.

**Adaptation of the Patient Psychoeducation Workbook for the Homeless Population**

The second version, *UTHealth HOMES Patient Psychoeducation Workbook*, was adapted for individuals experiencing homelessness with serious mental illness. The activities were revised to be relevant to the lives of individuals experiencing homelessness, specifically focusing on treatment barriers faced by the homeless population. The adaptations were made by the project director Jane Hamilton, Ph.D. and Christina Im, LMSW, lead clinician for the UTHealth Homeless Outpatient Mental Health Expansion Services Program (UTHealth HOMES) funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

**Use of AHEI Funds**

The total grant award was $500. The total amount of the grant, $499.19, was used to print the workbooks for distribution at UTHealth HCPC and UTHealth HOMES. A total of 12 mental health providers and 5 MSW interns to date have been given copies of the workbook to use as manuals. The remaining manuals will be distributed to mental health providers and interns at the implementation sites. Electronic versions of the workbooks have been emailed to mental health providers who will print activities for patients as needed. Grant funding was also used to print a set of activities from the workbook on cardstock to be used as visual aids during psychoeducation groups.

**Meeting Project Objectives**

Because we did not receive the full amount of AHEI grant funding requested, we focused on workbook development and dissemination. We did not have the resources to administer the validated outcome measures in the original proposal; however, we believe the use of focus group data to evaluate the workbook enabled us to incorporate the patient’s perspective. Additionally, receipt of SAMHSA funds for the UTHealth HOMES program enabled us to adapt the workbook for a second population not included in the original proposal.

**Outcomes**

**Provider Outcomes**

During project implementation, 12 mental health providers and 5 MSW interns were given printed copies and an electronic version of the *Patient Psychoeducation Workbook* to utilize with their patients. Additionally, several activities from the workbook were enlarged and printed on cardstock to utilize as visual aids during individual and group therapy sessions. During implementation, Jane Hamilton, Ph.D.
met weekly with the providers at HCPC and UTHealth HOMES to discuss the use of the workbook activities to improve psychoeducation groups. The providers reported that the workbook activities were easy to implement in psychoeducation groups and were well received by patients.

**Patient Outcomes**

Project TEACH aims to increase mental health literacy across multiple domains including: (a) the ability to recognize specific psychiatric disorders and symptoms of psychological distress; (b) knowledge and beliefs about risk factors and causes of mental illness; (c) knowledge and beliefs about self-help interventions; (d) knowledge and beliefs about professional help available; (e) attitudes which facilitate recognition and appropriate help-seeking; and (f) knowledge of how to seek mental health information. Feedback obtained from patients during the focus group indicates that patients did not know how to engage in collaborative discussions with their providers.

The focus group participants reported that the content of the workbook was easy to understand and was visually appealing. Additionally, the participants reported that the workbook activities increased their knowledge of their mental illnesses and provided them with tools to communicate with their providers and address mental health symptoms. A few patients identified areas where the language in the workbook could be simplified. The focus group’s findings were used to further improve the workbook, which was printed and distributed to HCPC clinicians from December 2018 to January 2019 and from April 2019 to May 2019.

**Project Areas for Improvement**

We are very grateful to have received funding from AHEI to develop the *Patient Psychoeducation Workbook* and the *UTHealth HOMES Patient Psychoeducation Workbook*. In the future, we would like to pursue funding to develop the psychoeducation activities into an app that patients could access via smartphones. The development of interactive tools to help the target populations has the potential to improve mental health literacy and patient engagement in mental health treatment.
Attachment A. Project Collaborators and Project Implementation Sites

Jane Hamilton, PhD, MPH, LCSW, is an assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences and Director of the Mental Health Services and Outcomes Research Program at UTHealth McGovern Medical School. She has presented and published research in the areas of mental health quality, utilization, and outcomes, program evaluation methods, early intervention in mental illness, patient engagement in mental health services and mental health disparities. Over the last eight years, Hamilton has conducted research on mental health disparities, cost and outcome studies of mental health, substance use and emergency department services. She has also evaluated programs funded at the local, state and national levels.

![Jane Hamilton, PhD, MPH, LCSW](image1)

Bernice Yau, MD is the recipient of the Helen and William Guynn Award in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. This award recognizes the graduating medical student with the greatest accomplishments in psychiatry. Yau also received the McGovern Medical School Gold-Headed Cane Award, which is given by the graduating class to the student most exemplifying the art of medicine and dedication to the welfare of patients. She will begin her psychiatry residency training at UT Southwestern in Dallas, Texas in July 2019.

![Bernice Yau, MD](image2)
Alia Warner, PhD is an assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, a clinical psychologist and the Project Director for the Early Onset Treatment Program at UTHealth Harris County Psychiatric Center. Her expertise includes cognitive behavioral therapy for psychotic disorders and evidence-based practice. She has published in the areas of psychiatric utilization for individuals with serious mental illness.

Christina Im, LMSW is the lead therapist for the UTHealth HOMES program. She received her MSW degree from New York University and has expertise in patient engagement, cognitive behavioral therapy, and cultural competence.
Project Implementation Sites

UTHealth Harris County Psychiatric Center

The Beacon Homeless Day Program
Facilitators(s): ________________________________  Date: ___ / ___ / ___
Number of Participants: _______________________
# Males _________
# Females __________
Age (Range, Mean, SD) _______________________
# Prior HCPC Hospitalizations (Range, Mean, SD) _______________________
Primary Psychiatric Diagnoses of Participants _______________________

Introduction:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this focus group. The goal of this focus group is to illicit feedback about the “Patient Psychoeducation Booklet.” The goal of this booklet is to improve patient education about mental illness and increase active patient engagement in their own medical care. The evaluation’s findings will be used to further improve this booklet, which will be distributed to patients admitted to HCPC. We expect the focus group to take approximately 45 minutes.

Confidentiality:

Please be open in answering focus group questions. Anything you say will be held in the strictest confidence. Your participation in the focus group will not be revealed to HCPC administration or clinical staff. Your responses will be combined with those of other participants in any published reports or feedback to the HCPC.

Questions: Before we start, do you have any questions or concerns?
Facilitator: “We are glad you are attending this focus group, If it is ok with you, we would like to talk with you about your feedback about the “Patient Psychoeducation Booklet.”

1. Prior to reading the booklet, describe your understanding of mental illness and its treatment.
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

2. What topics in mental health would be the most helpful to learn about?
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

3. What are your opinions of the booklet? What was helpful? What was not helpful?
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

4. Content
   a. Were the topics included in the booklet helpful to you?
      ____________________________________________
      ____________________________________________
   b. What topics were useful?
      ____________________________________________
      ____________________________________________
   c. What topics were not useful?
      ____________________________________________
      ____________________________________________
   d. What topics were confusing?
      ____________________________________________
      ____________________________________________
   e. What other topics would be helpful to include?
      ____________________________________________
      ____________________________________________
   f. Any specific feedback for each section?
      i. My Mental Health History
         ____________________________________________
         ____________________________________________
      ii. Basics of Mental Health
iii. Basics of Treatment

iv. Taking Charge of my Mental Health Journey

v. Therapeutic activities. Which activities were helpful or not helpful?

5. Format
   a. Was the booklet an appropriate length?

   b. Were the topics explained in a way that was understandable?

   c. Did the pictures make sense in the context of the booklet? Did they appropriately represent the diversity of patients?

6. For family members and friends of patients—was this booklet helpful to you in learning about mental illness and supporting your loved one?

7. What would you like to change about the booklet?

8. Do you feel that this booklet improved your understanding of mental illness? Do you feel that this helped destigmatize mental illness?

9. Do you feel more confident to be an actively engaged in your care?

10. Are there any other thoughts about the booklet that we have not yet talked about?