Problem-Solving Treatment for Depression

General overview of PST-PC
Research
Steps in PST-PC
Supervision

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Problem Solving Treatment

- Evidence-based
- Common Sense
- Brief
- Practical to Apply
- Easily Learned by Therapist and Patient
- High Patient Acceptance and Satisfaction
Depression, Problems, and Problem Solving Skills

Rationale for Problem Solving in depression treatment
- Life problems can be precipitants of depression
- Weak problem solving skills make a person vulnerable to depression
- Once depressed, problems become more difficult to solve

Rationale for Treatment Effectiveness
- Problem solving helps patients exert control over problems
- Fewer problems, increased self-efficacy, & hope improve mood
- Once learned, skills can help prevent depression in the future

Behavioral Activation is also an integral part of PST

Thomas D’Zurilla, Arthur Nezu and colleagues.
Four Broad Goals of PST-PC

A. Increase understanding of the link between current problems in living and current symptoms

B. Increase ability to clearly define problems and set concrete and realistic goals

C. Teach a systematic problem-solving strategy

D. Enhance pleasant, social and physical activation
Evidence-base for psychotherapy in treating late-life depression

Twenty-seven randomized trials of psychotherapy for late-life depression show that late-life depression can be treated with this intervention. 

*Mackin & Arean, 2006.*

PEARLS - Home based care--PST-PC guided care management, with explicit physical and social activation. PEARLS improved function and emotional well-being and was superior to care as usual.

*Ciechanowski et al, 2004*

Only PST-PC has been specifically designed for primary care patients.
Do older primary care patients do as well with PST as they would in community therapy?

Faster improvement in functioning with PST-PC
Problem Solving Process

UNIVERSE OF PROBLEMS

Problem Definition

Goal

Brainstorming

Pros and Cons

Choosing a Solution

Action Plan

Outcome Evaluation
1. Establish rationale for PST
2. Establish list of problems

Stay Focused in the present

“What problems are you facing right now?”
PST-PC Session
30 minutes

1. Clarifying and Defining the Problem
2. Establishing a Realistic Goal
3. Generating Multiple Solution Alternatives
   - Brainstorming
4. Implementing Decision-Making Guidelines
   - Pros and Cons
5. Choosing the Preferred Solution(s)
6. Implementing the Preferred Solution(s)
   - Action Plan
7. Evaluating the Outcome
Taking charge of my life
Staying in the present
Dealing with problems
Taking better care of myself
Knowing what part is my problem
Able to take care of the things my husband used to handle
What Predicts Response to PST-PC?

Patient understands the treatment rationale and readily applies the strategy early in treatment.

Treatment conducted by a therapist with a CBT background.

Homework compliance.

*Older persons respond as well as younger.

Hegel et al. 2002
IMPACT Depression Care Managers

PST-PC Competency Ratings on PST-PAC (range 0 to 50)
Across Five Learning Cases (15 consecutively rated sessions)

Mean of all CBT Therapists (Hegel, 2002)

6 to 12 months into study

PST-PC SESSION RATED
PST Training

- Case Supervision-- Known to be Effective
  - Tape record sessions
  - Review and give feedback before next session
  - Case supervision with 1-3 patients, depending on prior experience with psychotherapy and ability to follow model