

Feasibility of an Active Control Group Therapy for Use in a Randomized Controlled Trial of Collaborative Decision Skills Training

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Background

Context:

- Guided by a theoretical model (Granholm et al., 2014), we developed *Leveling Up* as an active control for a group therapy called *Collaborative Decision Skills Training (CDST)*.
- Leveling Up* was designed for Veterans with serious mental illness to receive therapist and peer support without exposure to core functions of *CDST*.

Study Objective:

Assess the feasibility of *Leveling Up* as an active control for *CDST*.

Methods

Key Components of *Leveling Up* Once a week for ten weeks (1 hour)

Check-in and Discussion

Address concerns, find topics of interest to facilitate discussion

Psychoeducation

Veteran-specific resources and relevant topics: depression, anxiety, substance use, employment, etc.

Befriending

Talk about topics such as: movies, pets, weather, sport teams

Clinician reports Veteran engagement and attendance for every session

4 of 10 sessions monitored for Fidelity

- Demonstration of 7 group leader skills
- Exclusion of 27 CDST active ingredients and 3 goal setting activities

Results

Cohort 1

N=5

September 2022 – November 2022

Clinician Reports

Veteran Engagement

83%

Veteran Attendance

90%

Fidelity

Group leader skills*

96%

Exclusion of CDST Features

100%

* Partial delivery of therapist praise in Session 3
Full delivery of all group leader skills in Sessions 1, 6, & 9

Clinician-Reported Fidelity Violation

Following session 5, which was not monitored for fidelity, the clinician reported a fidelity violation that occurred when the clinician and Veteran used problem-solving to resolve a personal crisis. Although *Leveling Up* excludes problem-solving skills, clinicians must provide post-session support to Veterans experiencing a crisis.

Conclusion

High attendance, engagement, and fidelity indicate feasibility of *Leveling Up* for use as an active control in RCTs. Future cohorts will further elucidate the feasibility of *Leveling Up* for *CDST* and future trials, as well as potential benefits to participants.