

## A Culturally Adapted Cognitive Behavioural therapy (CBT) Group for Tamil people in South West London

### 1) Background

- ❑ Manashanthy was developed as part of the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies initiative in Wandsworth and Merton.
- ❑ The aims of this project were to identify needs in the Tamil community, to work with them to bring awareness about existing IAPT services and offer interventions to meet their needs.

### 3) Solution

- ❑ Tamil speaking CBT therapists were employed and trained and were able to reach out to the Tamil community by providing awareness discussions and workshops at the Wimbledon Shree Ganapathy temple as well as via other local temples and churches.
- ❑ This awareness work was supported through additional support from a Community Development Worker, reaching out to local GPs to increase their awareness of the work.
- ❑ The workshops and awareness talks covered: IAPT services in general, stepped care approach, how to access IAPT services, basic CBT and Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) interventions, culturally adapted CBT combining eastern and western philosophy/practice.
- ❑ Working together in this way helped the therapists to creatively adapt CBT and create a therapeutic model to suit the needs of a population experiencing significant levels of trauma and traumatic stress.

### 5) Lesson learnt

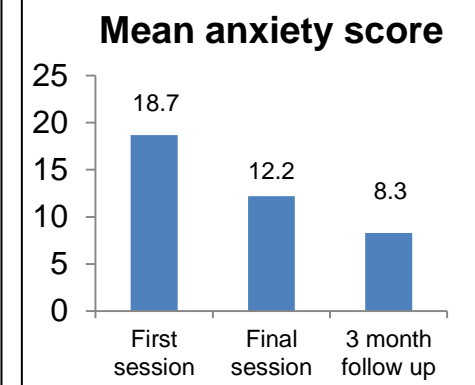
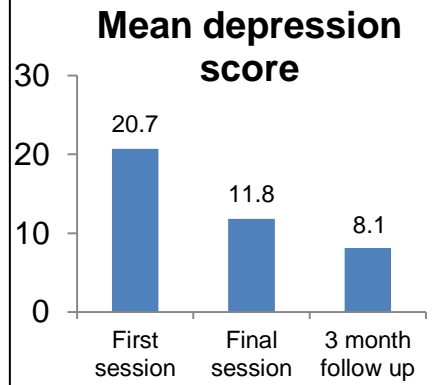
- ❑ Community engagement is strengthened by training staff from local communities to deliver interventions.
- ❑ Co-production with communities ensures interventions that are tailored to the local needs.
- ❑ Service Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) need to be able to flex to enable innovative working.
- ❑ Support to creative innovative projects within NHS and offer appropriate support to the staff.
- ❑ Listening to the service users and offering what they need, instead of imposing “ready-made” therapeutic approaches.
- ❑ Respecting cultural differences and offering interventions to meet the needs of the service users.

### 2) Case for change

- ❑ The Tamil community was identified as a marginalised community in South West London, and the Manashanthy group (mind-peace) has been developed as a joint initiative of Sutton, Merton and Wandsworth IAPT services as part of their BME project work.
- ❑ This community has experienced terrible trauma though the civil war in Sri Lanka, and many people experience mental health issues as a result of torture, imprisonment and dislocation, often in the context of refugee status.
- ❑ This leads to social isolation and suspicion of statutory services, which present further barriers in addition to the more obvious issues of language and awareness.

### 4) Impact

- ❑ The service established a good working relationship with the community and created a culturally adapted CBT Model to meet the needs of the particular population.
- ❑ The Tamil Depression Group is highly valued by the voluntary/community organisations and service users as an innovative and creative group.
- ❑ It identifies the personal, cultural spiritual and social, educational needs of the clients to achieve their goals.



### Contact

Meera Bahu, Cognitive Behavioural Psychotherapist, South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust, Meera.bahu@swlstg-tr.nhs.uk