WRAP to Improve Measures of Recovery in Adolescents Enrolled in an Outpatient Educational/Mental Health Facility

Dr. Janet Merritt PhD, PMHCNS-BC
Assistant Clinical Professor, Catholic University of America

Disclosure
- This study was funded by the Inova Kellar Center Foundation, Fairfax, VA.
- This speaker received no funds or reimbursements from this research.
- There are no known conflicts of interest in this study or presentation.

Objectives
- Describe one Recovery focused intervention for adolescents: WRAP
- Understand the need for evidenced based recovery focused interventions
- Examine the strengths and weaknesses of a small repeated measures design research project
- Evaluate components of WRAP that may be applicable to your own clinical settings
The Problem

- SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) estimates that "many as one in five children and adolescents may have a mental health disorder that can be identified and require treatment" (2004).
- Preliminary research indicates that utilization of a WRAP Training Program for such adolescents may increase their self-efficacy, sense of hope, sense of empowerment, sense of self-advocacy and decrease their perceived mental and medical symptoms.
- Practitioners need evidence based interventions that are recovery focused.

Recovery Focused Care

- SAMHSA identified recovery as the 'single most important goal' for transforming the mental health delivery system (2004).
- Defined by SAMHSA as ‘a journey of healing and transformation enabling a person with a mental health problem to live a meaningful life in a community of his or her choice while striving to achieve his or her full potential’ (SAMHSA, 2004).
- Recovery is conceptually defined as learning to live with and despite of limitations of psychiatric illness (Buckley, Bahmiller, Kenna, Shevitz, Powell & Fricks, 2007).

What are evidence based recovery focused interventions?

- There has been minimal research that provides evidence to support interventions that are recovery focused.
- One study by Cook et al. (2009) supported the use of WRAP with adults.
WRAP: Wellness Recovery Action Plan

- Developed by Mary Ellen Copeland (2002).
- This plan is consumer driven and guided.
- All WRAP facilitators in the study were trained through WRAP Facilitator Training workshops and all successfully completed the course and became certified WRAP workshop leaders.

WRAP

- Developing a Wellness Toolbox
- Daily Maintenance Plan
- Triggers
- Early Warning Signs
- When Things are Breaking Down

The Study

- IRB approval obtained from the academic institution and the clinical site organization.
- The Clinical site is a fully licensed, accredited therapeutic day school for students grades 3-12 identified as in need of special education services due to an emotional or learning disability that is interfering with their ability to learn. Only high school students were included in the study.
The Study continued

- Prior to the WRAP program: battery of instruments taken by all participants
- The WRAP class was completed
- Two repeated measures: one just after the end of the WRAP program and one at the end of the academic year (5 months post program)

The Experience of the WRAP program

- Most students liked the WRAP program
- We used the Children’s WRAP book; (an adolescent work book was not available). The adult book seemed to ‘dense’ especially for students with learning disabilities or mental illnesses that affected attention.
- Some students found the Children’s WRAP book ‘silly’; examples were somewhat juvenile for them. However, they were able to relate to many of the scenarios presented.
- To enhance the program we augmented the Power Point Presentations with cartoons and video clips that helped to capture the participants interest in the program.

Experiences Continued

- Those who knew the students the best; the teachers and counselors, found that the students who had received the most previous experiences with mental health treatments took the program most seriously
- They also believed that overall, students at the school for behavioral disorders/ conduct disorders were not as serious about the program
- The program was very consistent with the principles of CBT
- Some of the participants said that they would use the skills they learned in WRAP to help adjust to college
Results/Outcomes

- Unfortunately no significant changes found in the response to the instruments
- This was not unexpected due to the very small sample size
- This was viewed from the beginning as a feasibility study

Discussion

- We found the Copeland Center slides were somewhat boring for the adolescent students. We stayed true to the concepts of WRAP, not necessarily to the delivery as suggested.
- Use of social media especially for teens may be helpful for teens learning WRAP
- In an academic setting, it may be best for WRAP to be offered as an elective

Discussion Continued

- The participants and facilitators all agreed to importance of peer support. A peer support group might be an outcome of the WRAP.
- Help with work toward an WRAP book for adolescents.
- WRAP is a very practical, easily understood, concrete approach that is appropriate for adolescents in psych/mental health educational settings.
Future Research

- More research must be done to establish what recovery focused interventions are effective and practical in the clinical areas.
- This research must be conducted across the life span and in all types and levels of treatment facilities.
- Psych/mental health nurses must lobby for more funding for research to evaluate Recovery Focused interventions.
- Multi site studies may be the most practical method to conduct this type of clinical research.

Next Steps

- Publish the results of this feasibility study.
- Provide feedback to the Copeland Center regarding WRAP for adolescents.
- Seek funding for a multi-site study with this population.
- Support students who have learned WRAP to help teach it to those new to the program.

References


SAMHSA (2010) Children’s Mental Health Facts Children and Adolescents with Mental, Emotional