

HIPS/23/19 – Behavioural Activation For Depression In Adults With Severe Learning Disabilities. A Feasibility Randomised Controlled Study Of Behavioural Activation With Treatment As Usual (TAU) Vs TAU Alone.

Research shows that people with severe learning disabilities get depressed at least as often as the wider population. Psychological therapies are recommended to treat depression, and some of these have been adapted for those people with learning disabilities who can talk about their problems. No research has properly tested a psychological therapy for people with severe learning disabilities and any mental health problem. We recently completed a study that tested a psychological therapy (behavioural activation) for people with mild learning disabilities and depression. Behavioural activation improves people's mood by helping them to re-engage in activity that has meaning and purpose for them, rather than relying on talking or thinking skills. Because of this behavioural activation might be promising for people with severe learning disabilities and depression. Along with PAMIS, an organisation for families of people with more profound disabilities, we have adapted the therapy for this group. We now want to find out if it would be possible to carry out a research project about whether behavioural activation works for depressed adults with severe learning disabilities. This is called a feasibility study. We would see if it is possible to recruit 50 adults with severe learning disabilities, and if they are willing to be randomly placed in a group who get behavioural activation or a group who get usual help from services. Other information about running a study would be collected, including about keeping in contact with participants and what measures are needed to find out if change is happening.