



Service Priorities and Programmes
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Mindfulness based carers support program to promote clients' recovery

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Introduction

Carers play an important role in recovery journey of client with mental illness. Being a carer is challenging. According to Shah, Wadoo and Lato (2010), one-third to one-half of carers suffer significant stress and they experienced higher rates of problem in mental health than the general population. Stresses can worsen carers' health as well as wellbeing which in turn worsen the recovery journey of client. According to Chiao, Wu & Hsiao (2015), mindfulness based stress reduction program was effective in decreasing stress, anxiety and burnout. Besides, carers participated in the support group reported that connecting with peers who understand their feelings and experiences is the most important ingredient. Also, they can be empowered (Ohaeri, 2003). Carers are essential element in promoting client's recovery and carers support is part of our service scope. Thus, mindfulness based carer support group was organized in order to reduce carers stress, hopelessness as well as empower their skill and knowledge about mindfulness based stress reduction. The mindfulness based carer support program consisted of 7 sessions, each session last for 1.5 hours. The program involved: skill practice in mindfulness based stress reduction, sharing and ventilation of carers' experience, community resources in carers support.

Objectives

(1) To reduce carers' stress. (2) To reduce carer's hopelessness toward possibility of recovery of their family members. (3) To empower carers in skills and knowledge about mindfulness based stress reduction and mental illness. (4) To empower carers to utilize social and medical resources. (5) To strengthen carers' support from peer.

Methodology

The mindfulness based carer support program consisted of 7 sessions, each session last for 1.5 hours. The program involved: skill practice in mindfulness based stress reduction, sharing and ventilation of carers' experience, community resources in carers support. A 'Pre-test' and 'Post-test' designed was used. Two measurement tools: Questionnaire of stress level and Chinese Beck Hopelessness Scale(C-BHS)

were employed. The target participants were carers of mental illness clients. Mean score of two assessments were compared over two time points: Pre and Post program. Outcome measures were categorized (1) stress reduction (2) hopelessness reduction (3) satisfaction of the program.

Result

From September 2017 to November 2017, 19 carers attended the recruitment talk and 15 carers participated in the mindfulness based carer support program. Attendance rate was over 90%. Mean score of stress level decreased 40.3% from 10.9 to 6.5. Mean score of Chinese Beck Hopelessness Scale decreased 48.3 % from 8.9 to 4.6 after the program. Over 90% of carers satisfied with the program. To concluded, a mindfulness based carer support program was effective in reducing stress and hopelessness toward carers. Finally, a booklet "減壓同行路-家屬支援錦囊" was produced at the end and distributed to NTEC CPS office for caseworkers given to carer facilitating their stress management.