Psychotherapy Treatment of Bipolar Disorders

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Overview

- Overview of research-based psychotherapies
- How to find and choose a therapist
- Getting started
Why is psychotherapy important?

- Relapse is common even with optimal medication treatment
- There is something else you can do!
- Psychotherapy can improve illness course
- Knowledge about therapy helps in choosing a therapist
“At this point in my existence, I cannot imagine leading a normal life without both taking lithium and having had the benefit of psychotherapy. Lithium...keeps me from ruining my career and relationships, keeps me out of the hospital, alive, and makes psychotherapy possible. But, ineffably, psychotherapy heals.”

Kay Jamison

*An Unquiet Mind*
Goals of Treatment

- Treat Mood Episodes
- Prevent Relapses
- Restore Functioning
Treatments Supported by Research

Psychoeducation
- Information about bipolar disorder and treatment
- Recognition of early warning signs to prevent relapse

Family-Focused Therapy
- Psychoeducation
- Communication skills
- Problem-solving skills

Interpersonal & Social Rhythm Therapy
- Psychoeducation
- Relationship skills
- Regulation of sleep and social routines

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Psychoeducation
- Skills to challenge negative thoughts and beliefs
- Skills to change ineffective behaviors
Shared Targets of Psychotherapy Treatments

Psychoeducation

Recognize Early Warning Signs

Improve Functioning

Prevent Relapse

Medication Understanding & Adherence

Mood Charting

Recognize Early Warning Signs

Improve Functioning

Prevent Relapse

Medication Understanding & Adherence

Mood Charting
Adding Psychotherapy Decreases Relapse

- Psychoeducation Group vs Non-structured Group
  - PE: 92%
  - Control: 67%
- Family Focused Therapy vs Crisis Management
  - FFT: 54%
  - Control: 36%
- Cognitive Therapy vs No Psychotherapy
  - CT: 75%
  - Control: 44%
Adding Psychotherapy Facilitates Recovery from Depression

Intensive Psychotherapy vs Brief Psychoeducation

Miklowitz et al (2007)

Percentage of Patients with Recovery

- IT: 64%
- Control: 52%
Additional Benefits of Psychotherapy

- Fewer\(^1\text{-}^3\) and shorter\(^2,^6\) hospitalizations
- Fewer days in episodes\(^4\)
- Improved medication understanding and adherence\(^1,^3,^7\)
- Improved social\(^3\) and global\(^5\) functioning
- Increased stability of social routines\(^8\)

\(^6\) Colom et al (2004); \(^7\) Miklowitz et al (2003) \(^8\) Frank et al (1997);
### Dialectical Behavioral Therapy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychoeducation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance of acceptance and change (dialectics)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cognitive Behavioral Therapy</td>
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<td>Mindfulness</td>
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**Future Directions**

- **Early Data in Adults:**
  - Improved mood symptoms
  - Improved functioning

- **Early Data in Adolescents:**
  - Decreased depression
  - Decreased suicidality

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1 Culver et al (2005)  
2 Goldstein et al (2007)
Which Therapy?

- Almost all studies showed some benefit of psychotherapy
- No clear evidence comparing therapies
- Therapies overlap in targets for change
- Treatment choice influenced by:
  - Availability of therapist
  - Patient choice
  - Individual client characteristics
Resources to Find a Therapist

Professional Organizations

- Association for Behavioral & Cognitive Therapies
  [www.abct.org](http://www.abct.org)

- American Psychological Association
  [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)

- American Psychiatric Association
  [www.psych.org](http://www.psych.org)

- National Association of Social Workers
  [www.socialworkers.org](http://www.socialworkers.org)
Resources to Find a Therapist

Local Organizations

- Santa Clara County Psychological Association  [www.sccpa.org](http://www.sccpa.org)
- San Mateo County Psychological Association  [www.smcpsychassoc.org](http://www.smcpsychassoc.org)
- San Francisco Psychological Association  [www.sfpa.net](http://www.sfpa.net)
- California Psychological Association  [www.cpa.org](http://www.cpa.org)
Resources to Find a Therapist

• Your psychiatrist, support group leader, peers
• University psychiatry or psychology departments
• Local hospitals and clinics
• Clinical trials www.clinicaltrials.gov
Resources to Find a Therapist

- Check with your insurance company for in-network providers
- For low-cost options, consider local psychology training programs

PGSP Gronowski Clinic (Los Altos): [www.menthalhealthclinic.org](http://www.menthalhealthclinic.org)

UC Berkeley Psychology Clinic: (510) 642-2055
How to Choose a Therapist

• You have a choice!
• Talk to more than one therapist on the phone before setting up an appointment
• Ask questions:
  ▪ What experience do you have treating bipolar disorder?
  ▪ What type of psychotherapy do you do?
  ▪ How frequent are sessions?
  ▪ How long will therapy last?
  ▪ Do you include family members in therapy?
  ▪ What insurance do you accept?
  ▪ What are your fees?
  ▪ Are you currently accepting new patients?
How to Choose a Therapist

• Consider meeting with more than one therapist in person before choosing

• Factors to Consider:
  ▪ Expertise of therapist with your problem(s)
  ▪ Your comfort/compatibility with therapist
  ▪ Practical issues (fees, location, etc)
Getting Started: Psychoeducation

- Psychoeducation
  - Ask your providers for information
  - Attend support groups
  - Read structured psychoeducational materials
Getting Started: Psychoeducation

- NAMI Peer-to-Peer Education Course
  - Free 9-week course with focus on relapse prevention
- NAMI Family-to-Family Education Course
  - Free 12-week course for friends and family to provide education about disorders, medications, communication skills, and strategies for handling relapse

www.nami.org
Getting Started: Mood Monitoring

- Mood charts available online:
  - [www.bipolarnews.org](http://www.bipolarnews.org)
  - [www.bpso.org/medandmoodchart.pdf](http://www.bpso.org/medandmoodchart.pdf)

- Online mood tracking (free service):
  - [www.moodtracker.com](http://www.moodtracker.com)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medication Name</th>
<th>Dose per tablet</th>
<th>Total # of tablets TAKEN per day</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lamictal</td>
<td>100 mg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wellbutrin XL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serquel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ambien</td>
<td>10 mg</td>
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| Hours Slept Last Night | 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 |

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Days of the Month</th>
<th>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31</th>
</tr>
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</table>

| MANIA             | SEVERE | HIGH MODERATE | LOW MODERATE | MILD | EUTHYMIA (NORMAL MOOD) | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 |
|-------------------|--------|---------------|--------------|------|------------------------|
| DEPRESSION        | MILD   | LOW MODERATE  | HIGH MODERATE| SEVERE|                       |
Getting Started: Early Intervention

- Elements of Relapse Prevention Plan
  - Develop plan with providers when mood is stable
  - Identify and educate support system
  - Examine early symptoms and triggers of past episodes
  - Examine what helps keep mood changes from escalating
  - Develop action plan if mood begins to shift
Conclusions

- Medication alone is often not enough
- Adding psychotherapy can:
  - facilitate recovery from episodes
  - decrease or delay relapse
  - improve overall functioning
- Therapy can be helpful even when mood is stable
- Choose a therapist that is right for you
- You are an active participant in treatment
- You can get started today
Stanford DBT Group

- Skills Training in:
  - Distress Tolerance
  - Emotion Regulation
  - Interpersonal Effectiveness

- Requirements:
  - Medication treatment by a psychiatrist
  - Individual psychotherapy

- Group Format:
  - Lecture, teaching, and homework
  - Thursdays 4:00-5:30 PM
  - 10-14 participants

Contact Stanford Intake for More Information: (650) 498-9111