

Title Evaluation of a group based programme for adults with Anorexia Nervosa
(project number 36-14)

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Eating disorders are severe mental health problems with devastating consequences (Hay 2013). High mortality rates associated with these disorders emphasise the relevance of developing successful treatment interventions. Existing literature regarding group psychological interventions for eating disorders is limited. This project funded by Swiss Anorexia Nervosa foundation allowed us to evaluate Cognitive remediation and Perfectionism groups for anorexia nervosa (AN) in adults.

Background

Traits of cognitive rigidity and perfectionism are both implicated in models of AN as risk and maintaining factors (Schmidt and Treasure 2006; Fairburn et al, 1999) and there is strong, empirically supported evidence for these traits in the literature (Tchanturia et al, 2012, Lloyd et al 2014). Both perfectionism and inflexibility can make engagement in therapy difficult and impede recovery and therefore represent important targets for treatment (Lloyd et al 2015). Group based interventions are effective form of treatment, and are associated with several benefits including learning from others, facilitating communication and being in social environment.

Cognitive remediation therapy (CRT) aims to target rigidity and increase flexible thinking, „bigger picture approach“ in AN and has been found to be successful in an individual format (Tchanturia et al 2014). However, adaptation and evaluation of a group format of the intervention needs more research. It is also important to clarify how patients with and without comorbid conditions in addition to AN respond to CRT. There is also increasing evidence that it is possible to reduce perfectionism through cognitive behavioural approaches (Lloyd et al, 2014). However, the evidence for group based perfectionism interventions for AN is limited at present.

Aim

The overall aim of this project was to manualise and evaluate two group based interventions for adults with Anorexia Nervosa (AN) which target traits of perfectionism and cognitive rigidity.

Method

Manuals for both CRT group and Perfectionism group were developed and evaluated by principal investigator and research and clinical team involved in the study.

Both manuals are available from www.katetchanturia.com publication section.

Two six session group based interventions for adult patients with AN in an inpatient setting were delivered several times. Key traits (perfectionism and cognitive rigidity) were measured pre- and post-intervention in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions in reducing these core aspects of the disorder. Qualitative data from patients feedback questionnaires and focus groups were analysed. All results from this

project are published (provided in the reference section). Finding from the research we have conducted both CRT and Perfectionism groups are acceptable for the adult patients in the inpatient setting. For detailed analysis of data and evaluation of the outcomes please see peer reviewed publications in the reference section). Self report outcome measures in both groups improved. Further studies will be needed with stronger design (e.g randomised treatment trials), however preliminary proof of concept pilot studies conducted in this project show promise.

References:

- 1.Sparrow K, Tchanturia K (2016) Inpatient brief group therapy for anorexia nervosa: Patient experience. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*. DOI:10.1080/00207284.2016.1156406 ISSN- 0020-7284 print/1943-2836 online
- 2.Tchanturia K, Larsson E, Adamson J (2016) How anorexia nervosa patients with high and low autistic traits with respond to group Cognitive Remediation Therapy; *BMC Psychiatry*; DOI: 10.1186/s12888-016-1044-x
- 3.Larsson E, Lloyd S, Westwood H, Tchanturia K (2016) Participant's feedback on a brief perfectionism group intervention in Anorexia Nervosa: A qualitative study *Journal of Health Psychology*-10.1177/1359105316660183
- 4.Tchanturia K, Larsson E, Adamson J (2016) Brief group intervention targeting perfectionism in adults with anorexia nervosa: empirically informed protocol; *European Eating Disorders Review* DOI: 10.1002/erv.2467
- 5.Tchanturia K, Larsson E, Brown A (2016) Benefits of groups Cognitive Remediation Therapy for Anorexia Nervosa: Case series *Neuropsychiatry*; 30:42–49 DOI: 10.1007/s40211-016-0177-y
- 6.Lloyd S, Fleming C, Schmidt U, Tchanturia K (2014) Targeting perfectionism in Anorexia Nervosa using a group based cognitive behavioural approach: a pilot study *European Eating Disorder Review* 22(5):366-72;

Book:

Brief Group Psychotherapy for Eating Disorders: Inpatient protocols - *Routledge Mental Health* Edited by Kate Tchanturia 2015;

<http://www.routledgementalhealth.com/books/details/9781138848917/>. ISBN: 978-1-13-884891-7

<http://www.routledgementalhealth.com/books/details/9781138848917/>

Appendix:

Figure 1 Patient feedback questionnaire from the CRT groups:

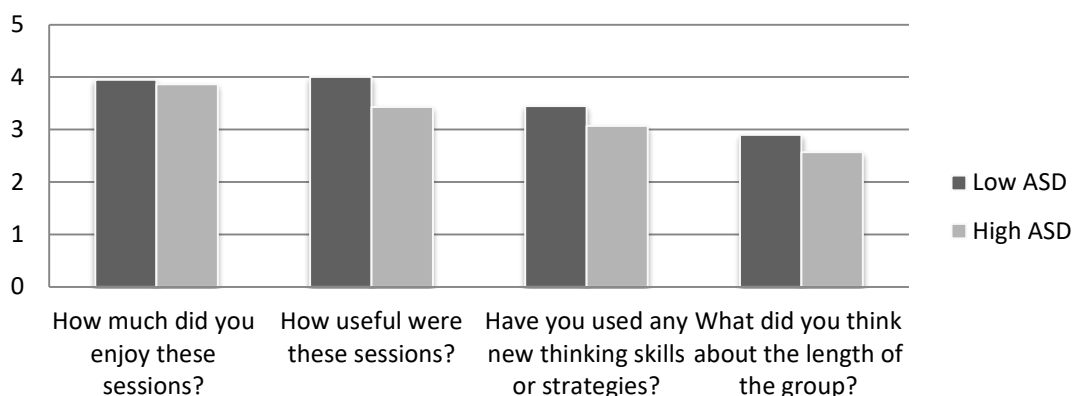


Figure 2 Patient feedback questionnaire from the Perfectionism groups:

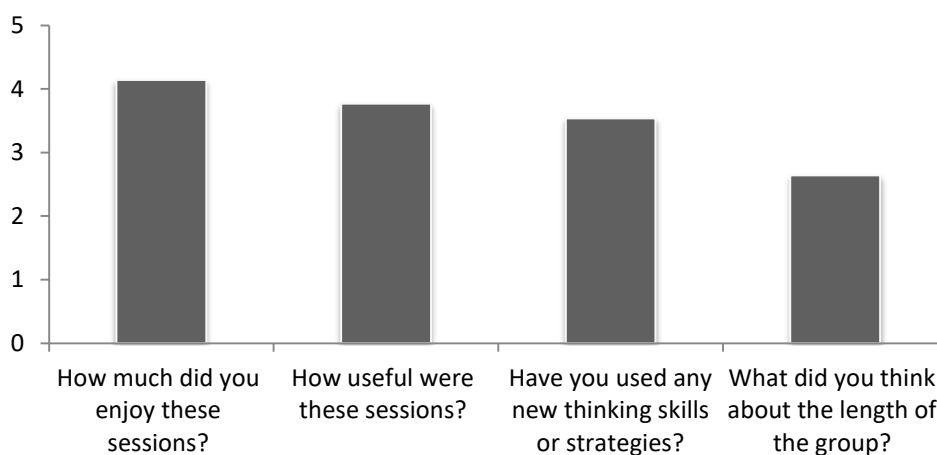


Table 1. Themes and subthemes from focus groups with patients after perfectionism group:

Perceived benefits	<p><i>Sharing experiences and learning from others</i></p> <p><i>Awareness of similarities and differences in experiences of perfectionism</i></p> <p><i>Extension beyond sessions</i></p> <p><i>Challenges of the group setting</i></p> <p><i>Awareness of perfectionism</i></p> <p><i>Recognising the negative impact of perfectionism</i></p> <p><i>Excellence versus perfectionism</i></p> <p><i>Bigger picture thinking</i></p>
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