The Effects Of A Multi-Family Group Programme Targeting Individuals With Early Psychosis And Their Families In Singapore

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The Effects of a Multiple Family Group Programme on Individuals with Early Psychosis and their Families in Singapore

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Psychosis

- Mental health condition characterised by:
  - Hallucinations
  - Delusions
  - Disorganised behaviour
  - Decline in functioning

- Families of individuals with first episode psychosis (FEP) experience significant stress and difficulties
EPIP

- Nationwide initiative formed in 2001
- Early detection and treatment of individuals (16-40 years old) with FEP in Singapore
- Based at the Institute of Mental Health
- A multidisciplinary team:
  - Psychiatrists
  - Psychologists
  - Case Managers
  - Nurses
  - Occupational Therapists
  - Social Workers
  - Peer and Caregiver Support Specialists
To provide holistic support to clients across inpatient, outpatient and community settings

Case management is the core of the programme
Multiple Family Group Programme

- Combines the theory and practice of group and family therapies
- Facilitate mutual support and learning between families
- Incorporated as part of EPIP service since 2013
- 4 weekly sessions, each lasting 3 hours
Multiple Family Group Programme

The programme includes:
- Constructing the image of psychosis
- Family tree
- Sculpting
- Timeline of family life
- Letter to psychosis
- Multiple family group discussions
- Separate group discussions
Multiple Family Group Programme

- It enables clients and their families to:
  - Share how psychosis has affected them
  - Express their hopes and dreams
  - Discuss challenges and anticipated obstacles
  - Explore coping strategies and management plans
Objectives

- Various family interventions have been developed to address the impact of psychosis on families.

- Multiple Family Group Programme (MFGP) has been shown to:
  - Reduce caregiver distress
  - Improve the functioning of sufferers and family members
  - Improve hospitalisation outcomes

- Limited understanding about the specific therapeutic mechanisms as well as the subjective experiences of participants.
Objectives

Aims of the study:
- Gather subjective experiences of participants
- Explore the effects of MFGP
- Understand participants’ perspectives of a successful MFGP
- Programme evaluation and development
Methodology

- Qualitative methods of data collection and analysis
- Stable clients with FEP and their respective family members who have undergone MFGP in EPIP
- Focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted in English
- Participants divided into two different groups;
  1) Clients with FEP
  2) Family members
- 4 to 8 participants per group to enhance engagement and contribution
Methodology

- Facilitated by an interviewer using a semi-structured topic guide in the presence of a recorder
- Lasts between 40 to 60 minutes
- Audio recorded and transcribed into anonymous verbatim written reports for thematic analysis
- 4 to 6 FGDs required for each group of participants to achieve data saturation
- Study is still currently ongoing
Results

- 4 FGDs have been conducted with 19 participants (9 clients, 10 family members)
- 10 themes emerged - 7 on experiences of MFGP and 3 on recommendations for improvement:

1. Enhancing Insight
   “I think I become more aware like of the diagnosis, I start to realise that I am more like more alert, more watchful...”

2. Honing Coping Skills
   “…it help us to learn how to cope better with our everyday tasks with our condition...”
3. **Improving Family Relationships**

“Now we spend more time with him, we lay out our life goals...we handle this situation as a family.”

4. **Group Learning**

“...learn from others, pick up things from others and then to understand your child more...get experience from people.”

5. **Mutual Support**

“I felt that I am not alone, I have people facing the same problem with me that gives me courage.”
Results

6. Sense of Safety
“I feel is it is a place where we do not judge each other, help our relationships...be a bit more frank about things...”

7. Hopes for MFGP
“What a successful programme would do for my family would be like for them to understand that there is actually a recovery that is actually like hope, there can be recovery in this illness.”

8. Additional Networking and Follow-up Sessions
“Maybe just to create more follow-up platform...just to know how things are going...”
9. More Focus on Coping Strategies

“It should focus some aspects on helping the individual or family cope with the problems...”

10. Sharing Success Stories

“Maybe it will be also good to actually get...people who have children who have pass through the stage of psychosis fairly successfully...to come in and talk to us, to offer that glimmer of at least hope...”
Discussion

- Multiple family context created a safe environment which promoted mutual learning and support, bolstering the findings of previous research.
- Participants reported better understanding of psychosis, improved coping strategies and relationships in the family.
- Supports earlier studies that indicated improved functioning and coping through enhancing the knowledge and understanding of illness.
Discussion

- Further networking opportunities beyond MFGP
- Focusing the intervention on recovery rather than on psychosis
- Inviting other individuals to share their success stories to inspire hope
- More studies to examine therapeutic aspects of MFGP as well as subjective experiences
References and Further Reading

Thank You