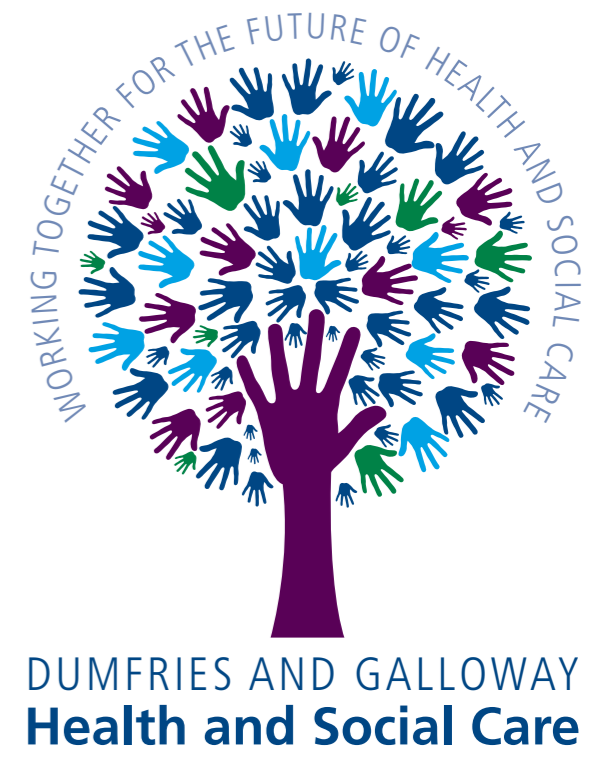


Utilising Technology to Deliver Blended Memory Strategies Interventions

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“Occupational Therapy Home Based Memory Rehabilitation (OTHBMR) ” is an individualised and tailored early intervention in post diagnostic support in dementia.

OTHBMR focuses on skills, everyday function and occupation, integrating the key principles of a cognitive rehabilitation approach.

BACKGROUND

The OTHBMR National Working Group in Scotland collaborated virtually on Microsoft Teams software to devise ways to deliver “blended” memory strategy interventions; these were required when face to face appointments were assessed as too high risk due to high levels of Covid-19 transmission.

Originally OTHBMR (RCOT, 2017) was designed to be delivered face to face by occupational therapists to people with mild cognitive impairment or dementia diagnoses in their own home. This reduced the impact of memory impairment on peoples’ abilities to live independently at home for as long as possible. OTHBMR supports delivery of Scotland’s national AHP Dementia policy, Connecting People, Connecting Support (Alzheimer Scotland, 2017; 2020)

PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT

As the pandemic developed in the UK, services accelerated implementation of digital innovations such as “NHS Near Me” which is a secure video conferencing platform to video conference with people living with dementia, their loved ones and carers and others to deliver health and social care effectively (Scottish Government, 2017). The term “blended” approach was used to describe interventions that were a mixture of face-to-face, video conference and telephone appointments.

In 2020 Nationally in Scotland new technologies and innovative ways of working were adopted at both a National and at NHS board level (Alliance Scotland, 2021). Occupational therapy staff collaborated to redesign materials for patients and carers to be delivered in a blended way using telephone and video conference appointments when face-to-face appointments were not feasible. The additional benefit of upskilling people living with dementia and their carers by showing them how to use technology and experience video conferencing is evidenced by Rafnsson et al (2021) who have researched the life experiences of 11,418 participants and found that frequent offline and combined offline and online social interactions predicted better episodic memory after adjustment for confounding variables.

EVALUATION

Utilising both patient and carer feedback via anonymous paper questionnaires and standardised outcome measures (including LACL-5, Everyday Memory Problems, QoL-AD, EQ5-D) the effectiveness of blended memory strategies interventions have been evidenced, reviewed and improved. Learning has been shared with occupational therapists virtually using online platforms.

Quote from person living with dementia

“I found it good to see a face to talk to rather than just a voice. I had to get my other half to set it up for me as I am not very good with computers”.

Quote from Family Members of People Living with Dementia

About NHS Near Me Video Conference “The appointment went very well. It was good to see the person rather than just hear a voice”.



Example of NHS Near Me Consultation (Consent obtained)

Quotes from Occupational Therapy Staff

“This has been an extremely positive experience using NHS Near Me. I, admit initially I was sceptical about everything from will I be able to use the technology to the vain thoughts of gosh I don’t like seeing myself on video”.

“Really pleased we implemented blended memory strategies as it meant we were able to tailor our support to patients and carers and provide occupational therapy at times when face to face appointments were too risky due to the potential of Covid-19 transmission. Feedback has been positive overall and it has helped us provide input more quickly and efficiently”.

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WEB LINKS

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28658937> Article reporting advantages of using technology for older adults

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