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A pre-post evaluation of an occupational therapist led group lifestyle and resilience course for well employees in a public sector workplace

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Background: The UK government is driving allied health professionals to be more influential and active in public health initiatives (Allied Health Professions Federation, 2015). In addition, there is a move to develop collaborative interventions into the workplace to help people with mental health and social problems stay within or return to work (Department of Work and Pensions, 2014). Occupational therapists have an established history in using group lifestyle intervention approaches with older adults (Clark, 2015). However, despite this and further skills in vocational rehabilitation, studies involving occupational therapy lifestyle interventions in the workplace are rarely reported. This paper describes a pre-post evaluation of an occupational therapy led lifestyle and resilience group intervention that took place within NHS workplaces.

Method: Three group courses of six sessions were provided to NHS employees (n=41). Retrospective analysis of stress, depression, fatigue, presenteeism and sickness absence was compared pre, immediately post and 3–6 months post intervention. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to explore the data collected.

Results: All three group course participants reported significant reductions in stress ($p=0.000$), depression ($P=0.000$) and fatigue ($p=0.002$) post group intervention compared with pregroup. Sickness absence was reduced. Presenteeism was noted in more than 75% of the sample but reduced to <40% overall for all groups.

Conclusion: Occupational therapist led group interventions can make a positive impact on wellbeing in the workplace and demonstrate a valuable area for future practice. The findings need to be substantiated by a larger scale, formal, randomised and controlled study.

References

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