

ILLNESS MANAGEMENT AND RECOVERY:

Helping Clients Build Skills

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Overview of Presentation

- The powerful advantages of providing Illness Management and Recovery (IMR) to clients
- Details of the contents of IMR
- Details of the methods for providing IMR

Powerful Advantages of Providing IMR to Clients

- People with major mental illnesses deserve the most comprehensive treatment possible
- IMR is based solidly on research results
- IMR will provide practical information, strategies and skills that clients can USE
- IMR clinicians learn how to build clients' skills step-by-step

Powerful Advantages, cont'd

- IMR encourages independence and reduces sequential crises.
- IMR brings RECOVERY into the forefront
- Providers of IMR will be on the cutting edge by being among the first generation of practitioners to implement this practice

What is "Illness Management and Recovery"?

- Illness Management and Recovery (IMR) is a step-by-step program that helps people set meaningful goals for themselves, acquire information and skills to develop more mastery over their psychiatric illness, and make progress towards their own personal recovery.

Core Ingredients of the IMR

- A minimum of 3 months of weekly sessions conducted by trained practitioners. Individual or group format.
- A collection of 9 educational handouts that contain practical information, strategies and worksheets.
- A practitioner's guide with tips for each handout.
- People set personal goals and work on them throughout the program

Core ingredients, cont'd.

- People actively practice skills in the sessions.
- People put skills into practice outside the sessions.
- Significant others participate in some sessions.
- EVERYTHING IS TAILORED TO THE INDIVIDUAL!

Research Supporting the Components of IMR

- 3/4 studies supported providing education as part of IMR
- 6/7 studies supported providing behavioral tailoring for medication
- 5/5 studies supported providing training in relapse prevention
- 4/4 studies supported providing coping skills training

The Important Role of Recovery

- “Recovery involves the development of new meaning and purpose in one’s life as one grows beyond the catastrophic effects of mental illness.” (Anthony, 1993)

Recovery is defined by the individual

- For some, recovery means absence of symptoms or decreased distress from them.
- For some, it means leading life with meaning and a sense of purpose.
- For some, it means having strong relationships and feeling connected to a larger community.

IMR Emphasizes Personal Goals as a Fundamental Recovery Tool

- For many people, the whole point of recovery is to be able to move forward in life, and being able to set and pursue personal goals.

Examples of Personal Goals Set by IMR clients

- “Get along better with my sister.”
- “Look at a magazine at the library.”
- “Eat one piece of fruit every day.”
- “Save a dollar each week to buy a poster.”
- “Make friends with someone who doesn’t do drugs.”
- “Try going to services at my old synagogue.”

Logistics

- Individual or group format
- Weekly sessions
- Session length: 45 to 60 minutes
- Program duration: 3-9 months

Logistics, cont'd

- Curriculum developed for schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression
- Location of sessions: home, peer support center, clinic, coffee shop, etc.,
- Program is structured and step-by-step
- Educational handouts with ample worksheets and checklists are provided to participants

Topics Covered in IMR

1. Recovery Strategies
2. Practical Facts about Mental Illness
3. The Stress-Vulnerability Model & Treatment Strategies
4. Building Social Support
5. Using Medication Effectively

Topics Covered in IMR, cont'd.

6. Reducing Relapses
7. Coping with Stress
8. Coping with Problems and Symptoms
9. Getting Your Needs Met in the Mental Health System

IMR Practitioners Must Use 3 Different Teaching Strategies

- Motivational strategies
- Educational strategies
- Cognitive-behavioral strategies

Motivational Teaching Strategies

- Help person see how learning information and skills is related to achieving personal goals
- Convey hope, belief and confidence that person can make desired changes and accomplish goals
- Help person explore costs and benefits of maintaining the status quo versus costs and benefits of changes

Educational Teaching Strategies

- Interactive teaching, not lecturing
- Asking questions to review information and check comprehension
- Using a variety of methods to present handout material, such as summarizing the key points, giving examples, taking turns reading aloud, or asking people to read on their own
- Adopting the person's language to facilitate comprehension of material

Cognitive-Behavioral Strategies

- Reinforcement
- Shaping
- Modeling
- Role Playing
- Cognitive Restructuring
- Reframing
- Relaxation Training

Home Practice/Homework

- Collaboratively agreed upon by the practitioner and the person at the end of EACH session
- Related to the person's goal and/or the curriculum topic
- Individually tailored to the person

Examples of Home Practice/Homework

- Practicing a skill (e.g., striking up a conversation)
- Getting more information about achieving a goal (e.g., checking out cost of a poster)
- Taking a step towards a personal goal (e.g., asking one's sister to go out for coffee)
- Practicing a coping strategy at home (e.g., using a relaxation exercise)
- Reviewing a handout, checklist or plan with a significant other (e.g., asking one's mother to be part of the relapse prevention plan)

Involvement of Family & Other Supportive People

- All participants are asked to involve family members and other supportive people in the IMR program
- They can help in a variety of ways: attending sessions, reading handouts, assisting with homework, helping develop a relapse prevention plan, taking a role in the participant's plan for achieving a goal, etc.

Contents of the IMR Workbook

- Part 1: Basics of IMR. Describes the practice and includes important appendices such as the orientation sheet and progress note.
- Part 2: Practitioners' Guidelines for Educational Handouts.
- Part 3: Educational Handouts

Outcomes

The following outcomes may be expected to improve following full participation in Illness Management and Recovery:

- Relapses & rehospitalizations
- Symptom severity
- Knowledge of mental illness
- Taking medication as prescribed

Improved Outcomes, cont'd

- Coping self-efficacy
- Progress towards personal goals
- Hopefulness and optimism
- Perceived social support
- Treatment alliance with mental health professionals

- What supports do practitioners need in order to implement IMR competently and effectively?

Supports Needed by Practitioners to Implement IMR Effectively

- Training
- Weekly supervision devoted to IMR (time not counted against productivity quotas)
- Time to prepare for IMR sessions
- Time to document IMR sessions

Supports Needed by Practitioners, cont'd

- Clear priorities about which clients will be offered IMR first and how they should be referred to the program
- Consistent message that IMR should be used as a vehicle for approaching daily problems with the goal of teaching skills that make the client more able to meet their needs independently
- Guidelines for maintaining a balance between helping clients meet their day-to-day living needs and helping clients learn long-term recovery skills

Some Guidelines for IMR Sessions

- Conduct IMR sessions in a consistent setting, at the same time, etc, to develop a pattern
- During scheduled IMR sessions, unless a crisis has occurred, first teach IMR material & leave case management to the last 15 minutes
- Plan IMR sessions collaboratively with the client
- Praise the client abundantly for all efforts at implementing skills and strategies learned in IMR

Summary

- IMR was developed with consumer input and is compatible with consumer-led programs and recovery programs
- IMR contains psychoeducational materials, but emphasizes putting information into ACTION, including pursuing personal goals
- Practitioners use motivational, educational, and cognitive-behavioral strategies.

Summary, cont'd

- People are asked to do home practice/homework
- Families and other supportive people are included
- IMR is designed for a wide range of people, including those who experience severe ongoing symptoms

Closing Thoughts

“Having strategies for coping with mental illness is extremely important. It’s hard to enjoy your life if you are constantly sick with mental illness. . .

. . . However, believing in yourself, having hope that things will continue to get better and looking forward to your future are also vital in overcoming mental illness. Our hopes and dreams are not delusions. Our hopes and dreams are what makes us human.”

David Kime, artist, writer, floral designer, person in recovery from bipolar disorder.