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Psychology And The Enhancement Of Medication Adherence.

Abstract

It has long been understood that the prescription of medications alone is insufficient to meet the needs of persons suffering from severe mental illness. A wide variety of psychosocial interventions have emerged to support traditional medical treatment approaches, including family based interventions and cognitive behavioural therapy. However the importance of medication, especially in the management of the positive symptoms of mental illness, cannot be understated. Notwithstanding the proven efficacy of the newer atypical antipsychotics, consumers are variable in their effective use of these medications. This paper reports on the development of a new training program, *Medication Alliance*, which aims to provide staff at the coalface with skills to assist consumers to make better use of prescribed medications. A pilot study of the effectiveness of the training on staff knowledge, skills and competencies was undertaken through the provision of two training workshops for generic mental health workers. Measures used included blind rated videotapes of clinician interviews in role-play situations, and pencil and paper measures completed before and after training. Results indicated significant changes across a number of measures. Preliminary findings are encouraging with regard to immediate training outcomes on clinician attitudes and skills but there is a need for further investigation of clinical outcomes with consumers.

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