

### **Initial Pilot Project**

In 2010, 6 members of the North Lee Adult Mental Health Service (AMHS), based in Cork city, Southern Ireland were trained in Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT). Soon after completing their training, the team set up a DBT programme in their area. 12 clients participated in Year One of the programme. The programme was evaluated using standard psychological measures which were administered to evaluate changes in:

- Borderline symptomatology
- Depression
- Hopelessness
- Quality of Life

Frequency of service utilisation (inpatient admission & emergency department visits) was also monitored. The measures were administered prior to, during and following completion of the programme. Statistically significant reductions were found in borderline symptomatology, depression and hopelessness following completion of the DBT programme. An increase in quality of life scores was also observed. Significant decreases were noted in hospitalisation days and emergency department presentations.

### **Expansion of the Pilot Project**

Resulting from the significant positive changes in clients who participated in the DBT Programme at North Lee AMHS, the National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) granted funding to extend DBT training programmes to all adult mental health services across Cork. There are now 4 established adult teams across County Cork

A pilot early intervention programmes (U&ME) for people with poor coping skills and who are at risk of self-harm has also been established in North Lee AMHS.

### **Rationale for National Project**

Following the success of the implementation and evaluation of DBT in Cork, NOSP explored how best to co-ordinate DBT training in Ireland whilst ensuring effective governance and targeting of resources. The National DBT Project Office, Ireland was thus established in June 2013 to offer solutions, in particular to:

- support the administration of a national roll out of DBT and allied intervention programmes
- ensure continued research focussing on effectiveness and cost/benefit of training
- ensure service users meaningful involvement in DBT and allied intervention programmes

Following the securing of funding, a national steering committee was established to oversee the implementation and evaluation of the project. The committee meet quarterly and play a vital role in ensuring effective governance and overall coordination of the programme.

In June 2013, invitations were sent to all Executive Clinical Directors, Area Managers and individuals across the country who had previously expressed an interest in DBT, to outline the training available as part of this project:

1. DBT Foundational Training<sup>TM</sup> – a week long training course for professionals who wish to join a DBT team that is already in existence
2. DBT Intensive Training<sup>TM</sup> – a 2 week training programme for professionals setting up new DBT teams.

The first round of foundation training took place in Athlone, Ireland from 9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> September 2013 when 32 therapists were trained in DBT to complement existing DBT teams in place nationwide across Ireland (Cork, Mayo, Donegal, Louth/Meath, Cavan/Monaghan, Longford/Westmeath, Dublin). Further foundation training is due to take place in 2015.

Eight new teams have undergone the first week of intensive training in December 2013. These eight teams were chosen based on high levels of repetitive deliberate self-harm and suicidality in their local areas, and a strong commitment to DBT training. Four adult and four CAMHS teams were selected to undertake training in year one. A further eight new teams will be trained in 2014 as part of this National DBT Project.

### **The National DBT Project -Our Research**

A very strong component of this National DBT Project is the research it will undertake which involves an evaluation of the effectiveness and implementation of DBT programmes in Ireland. As part of each new team's commitment to the training programme, they also sign up to the research element which involves:

- a co-ordinated evaluation of the effectiveness of the DBT programmes for clients
- an evaluation of the multi-site implementation process of DBT programmes (this examines elements such as the quality of DBT delivered by each team, client and practitioner satisfaction, barriers and challenges encountered)
- an economic evaluation of DBT training and outcomes to determine the costs of running/ DBT

### **National Registry of Deliberate Self Harm – A Useful & Unique Resource**

In Ireland, we are fortunate to have a National Registry of Deliberate Self Harm available to us. This Registry, compiled by the National Suicide Research Foundation, records presentations of deliberate self-harm to all emergency departments in the country. This resource was used by the National DBT Project team as a tool to identify the areas with the highest rates of repetitive deliberate self-harm. In this manner, areas who were most in need of DBT training could be prioritised for training in year one of this project.

### **Links with British Isles DBT Training**

British Isles DBT Training has been the training provider for the National DBT Project Office, running both the DBT Foundational Training<sup>TM</sup> week in September 2013 and the DBT Intensive Training<sup>TM</sup> for 2013/2014.

The Director of the DBT Training Team, Dr Michaela Swales also serves as a member of our national steering committee.

### **LINKS**

DBT Cork website : <http://www.hse.ie/go/dbtcork/>

National Office for Suicide Prevention: <http://www.nosp.ie/>

National Suicide Research Foundation: <http://www.nsrp.ie/cms/>