

Case Study: Impact of effective psychological treatment after stroke

This case study was submitted by Dr Geoff Hill, Clinical Psychologist in Neuropsychology at South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

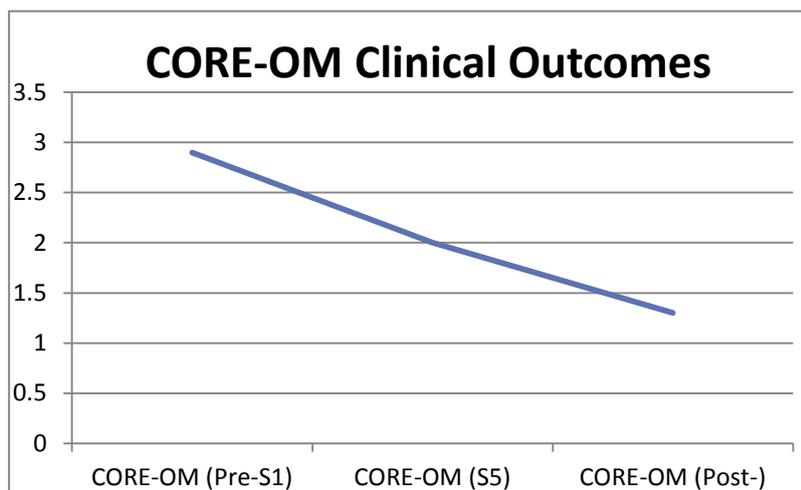
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Andrew was 52 when he had his stroke. He had a number of medical problems including diabetes and arthritis and was also struggling with the loss of his parents and the memories of childhood trauma before the stroke. He was referred by the Stroke Coordinator following his 6 month assessment to the Stroke Neuropsychology team at his local hospital, because of major concerns about his low mood. Andrew said that he felt completely unable to cope since the stroke and had been heavily relying on drinking to block out his emotional pain. Often having suicidal thoughts, he said that if anything further happened to his health he would end his own life. He was very tearful, and felt hopeless.

He was able to engage well with the neuropsychologist to help him understand his distress, and then started on a course of talking therapy. This focused on helping him to explore new, more flexible ways of coping using techniques such as mindfulness. This also supported him to live a richer and healthier life such as eating better, taking regular exercise, starting up his hobbies again, and spending more time with his family and friends.

He quite quickly reported less depression and anxiety, no longer had suicidal thoughts, and was beginning to enjoy life again. He was discharged after 4 months of treatment showing how specialist neuropsychology support can make an enormous difference to peoples' lives.

Figure 1



Andrew's self-ratings on the Clinical Outcome in Routine Monitoring (CORE-OM) showed a reliable improvement from a 'severe' level of clinical distress prior to therapy, to that within the 'mild' range on discharge following a total of eight sessions over four months.

More information on the CORE-OM measurement tool is available

here http://www.coreims.co.uk/About_Measurement_CORE_Tools.html