

The Best Practice of Unguided Internet Delivered Therapy

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INTRODUCTION

Scientific literature can be dense and difficult to parse, so this report seeks to make such knowledge more accessible. Specifically, it focuses on unguided internet-delivered therapy for depressive symptoms. For a deeper dive into the topic, the original article can be accessed here: <http://tinyurl.com/5hb4sjce>



This report aims to shed light on unguided internet-delivered therapy, a growing field in the digital era, and its effectiveness in managing depressive symptoms. **It compiles and analyzes data from various studies**, comparing these digital interventions against traditional care (psychotherapy) and control conditions (waiting list).

The Problem:

The Global Challenge of Depression

Depression and anxiety are pervasive issues worldwide, often compounded by obstacles such as cost, accessibility, and social stigma. Traditional therapy, while effective, is not always accessible to everyone, leading to a gap in mental health care.

The Solution:

Unguided Internet-Delivered Therapy

Unguided internet-delivered therapy has emerged as a promising solution. It utilizes digital platforms to deliver various therapeutic techniques, like cognitive-behavioral therapy and mindfulness, without the need for direct therapist involvement.

Our Question:



Assessing Digital Therapy Effectiveness

The central question of this review was to evaluate the effectiveness of unguided internet therapies compared to traditional therapy or waiting list controls. This involved a detailed analysis of various studies in the field.

The Process:



Detailed Review and Analysis

The review started off with an extensive literature search examining studies from several databases like Pubmed and Psycinfo. The focus was on adult studies that used validated depression measures and offered a range of self-guided online interventions, yet the review included a mix of different samples in terms of age and depression severity.

Best Practice **Summary**

The systematic review revealed several key practices and strategies in unguided internet-delivered therapy by observing the practices of the most effective intervention attempts. These are outlined below:



Cognitive Skills Development

A critical component of unguided internet therapy is the teaching of cognitive skills. This involves engaging users with diverse media forms, such as text, videos, and interactive tasks. These interventions aim to help users modify negative thought patterns associated with depression, offering a dynamic and engaging learning process.



Mindfulness and Stress Management

Mindfulness techniques emerged as a significant aspect of these therapies. They focus on developing a non-judgmental awareness of the present moment, which aids in managing depressive symptoms and regulating emotions. These practices vary from guided meditations to cognitive exercises, all aimed at fostering resilience to stress.



Behavioral Activation

Encouraging physical and social activities, known as Behavioral Activation, is another vital strategy. By promoting engagement in positive activities, these interventions combat the inertia often associated with depression, enhancing mood and social interaction. This approach is adaptable to individual preferences, making it a versatile tool in diverse contexts.



Relapse Prevention

A focus on relapse prevention is crucial for sustaining the benefits of therapy. This involves teaching patients to identify early warning signs of depression and develop personal coping strategies. The goal is to maintain long-term treatment effectiveness by preventing the recurrence of depressive symptoms.



Challenges and Future Directions

Engaging users in unguided therapies remains a challenge, particularly in the absence of a therapist. Future approaches could benefit from incorporating elements such as progress tracking, rewards, and interactive challenges. These gamification elements can transform the therapy process into a more engaging and rewarding experience, addressing key challenges in self-guided therapy.

Conclusion

Unguided internet-delivered therapy offers a promising and innovative approach in the realm of mental health care, especially for those with depressive symptoms. Its potential for wide accessibility and personalized care, coupled with the effectiveness demonstrated in various studies, underscores its value in the mental health landscape. **As digital technologies continue to evolve, these therapies may become a cornerstone in mental health services**, providing effective solutions for a global userbase.

This article is a literature review designed to help practitioners to assess and understand the status quo of unguided internet delivered therapy. The literature search work sheet and bias report documents are included in the review are available to other researchers directly from the OSF repository at **<https://osf.io/bd5t9/files/osfstorage>**





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