

A report on a Community Matters research project from TOP UK

Seeking Help: A Comparison between the NHS and a Mental Health Charity.

Our Community Matters project was a collaboration between Triumph Over Phobia (TOP UK) and the Dept of Psychology at the University of Bath.

The research was carried out by: highlights

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This project aimed to try and understand why it takes people with anxiety so long to seek help. Many anxiety sufferers have years of suffering before they finally decide to seek help and get treatment. It is well documented that despite being highly disabling, common, and for the large part, treatable (Bream et al., 2017; Challacombe et al., 2014), people with anxiety disorders often endure the problem for many years before seeking help.

In obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), which has been dubbed 'the secret illness', this seems to be the norm rather than the exception, with one UK study finding that the average time to seek treatment after the onset of OCD symptoms was approximately 10yrs (Stobie et al., 2007).

Our project methodology utilised questionnaires and interviews to gather qualitative and quantitative data. Participants were recruited from TOP UK groups, anxiety conferences and via the University of Bath website.

Project Findings

From our results we were able to show that in general people who attend TOP UK groups are more satisfied with their treatment when compared with other treatments. The results also show that whilst most people have a preference for individual therapy, most TOP UK members were more positive towards group therapy.

Our results were presented at a Community Matters Gala Event held in Bath in September 2017. At this event was a BANES Commissioner. The Commissioner approached the charity after our presentation to ask for more information about our research and a meeting was arranged.

Following on from this meeting we have been included in a review for commissioning in 2019 and the process is on going.