

Summary Report of an Anonymous Online Evaluation of Positive Mental Training in Halton and St Helens

Introduction

An anonymous online questionnaire was sent between April and July 2011 to all those who were invited to attend Positive Mental Training sessions, 203 professionals, in Halton and St Helens in 2010: Between 43-50 responses were collected for each question.

1. Background

Of those who completed the questionnaire 35% were nurses, 21% were GPs, 10% were counsellors, and the remaining consisted of health professionals i.e. smoking practitioners, occupational therapists, complementary therapists, hospital consultants, health improvement specialists, consultant in elderly care, midwife, health trainer, private hospital worker and other nurses.

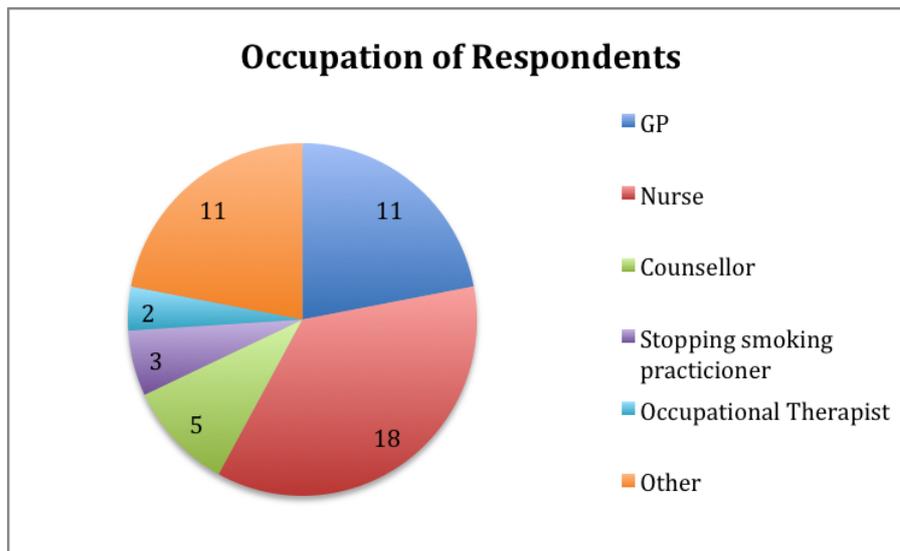


Figure 1 - Occupation of respondents to the online questionnaire

There was roughly an even mix between those who work in the community (54%) and those who work in GP surgeries and health centres (44%). Only 6% work in hospitals. 94% of respondents work in the NHS.

2. Treatment

Nearly all, 89%, of respondents who attended training offer Positive Mental Training [PosMT] as a treatment option.

All GPs and nurses who attended training offer it as a treatment option.

“I feel it should be used as part of treatment interventions to help the patient to reduce anxiety and depression.”

PosMT is offered for **depression, anxiety and panic, sleep problems, pain** and for help with **stopping smoking**. Figure 3 shows how many respondents use it as treatment for each of these conditions. It is most widely used for anxiety and panic with all but one respondent using it to treat this condition. Other conditions it is used to treat include: **Stress, IBS, relaxation, low self-esteem, headaches, stopping drinking, and weight management**.

“Stress, aggravated problems eg IBS Migraine”

“I use the tape as a very useful programme to help the patient to develop a self help tool to learn to relax on a daily basis which can then become an effective positive habit for him or her.”

Figure 2 shows what respondents like about using PosMT as a treatment option.

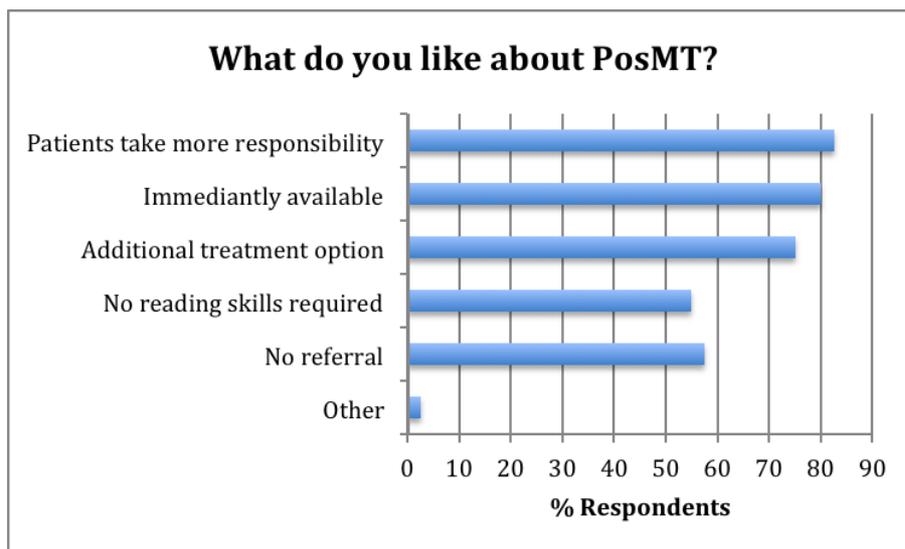


Figure 2 – What respondents like about using PosMT as a treatment option

Other comments about what respondents like about using PosMT as a treatment option:

“Feel that it empowers the patient, especially useful step 1 and 2”

3. Anti-depressants & Referrals

82% of GPs say they are less likely to prescribe anti-depressants to a depressed patient as a result of having PosMT as a treatment option.

All GPs said they give out PosMT instead of anti-depressants. PosMT is also given out by some GPs in addition to anti-depressants or when stopping anti-depressants. Averaging

the estimated percentage reduction in anti-depressant prescribing, these numbers suggest that GPs are prescribing 19% fewer anti-depressants.

- Over half of the GPs, 54.5% feel they are referring fewer patients to other specialities as a result of using PosMT as a treatment option.
- Over a quarter, 26%, of those working in other specialities felt they were referring less.
- 36.5% were unsure.

4. Patient Use, Uptake and Return of CDs

Most respondents give out individual CDs rather than the whole programme.

The results of the uptake of CDs 1, 2 and 3 showed that the number of people using the programme drops off after the first CD. Averaging the results:

- 51% of patients introduced to CD1 decided to use it
- 32% move onto CD2
- 29% move on to CD3

5. Impact of PosMT

- 90% of respondents feel better able to cope with their mental health patients either to a great extent (40%) or somewhat (50%)
- 72% of respondents felt better able to cope with their patients with other problems to a great a extent (27%) or somewhat (46%)
- 46% of respondents felt better able to cope with their wider working practice generally to a great extent (18%) or somewhat (27%)

75% of respondents felt that they had learnt something useful about coping with their own stress from attending the training, and having PosMT as a treatment option.

Comments on coping with stress as a result of attending training and having PosMT as a treatment option include:

"I control my stress and anxiety better and don't find that life or work gets me as worked up as they used to, I am able to focus and analyse the situation better"

"CD one totally relaxing when I come home from a stressful day. CD two I can relate with finding the tools personally"

"Self use for insomnia"

6. Personal use of PosMT

Just over half of those who attended training, 52%, have used the PosMT programme themselves. Figure 4 shows the benefits that they have felt personally from using the programme.

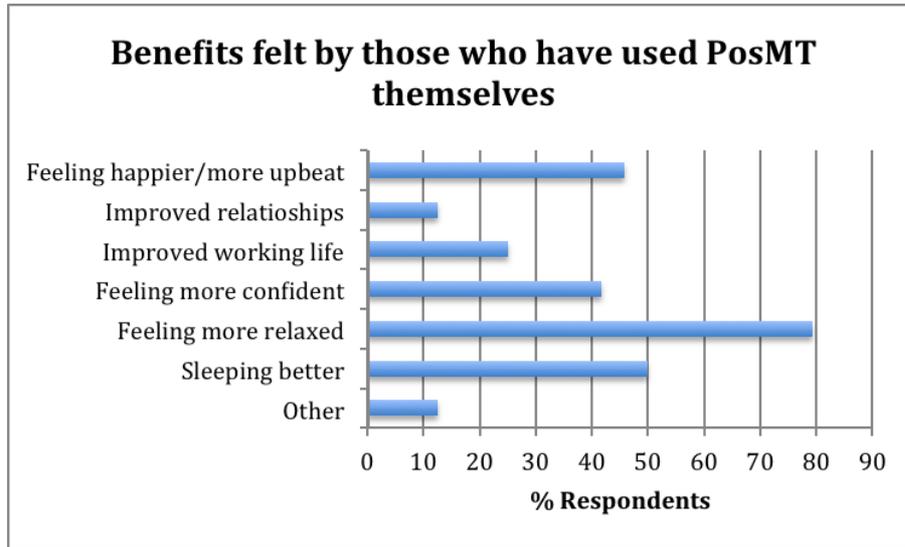


Figure 3 – Personal benefits felt by those who have used PosMT themselves.

7. Future Use and Supply of PosMT

25% of respondents have run out of CDs and about a third do not know where to get supplies in the future. Only 10% use MP3 downloads.

91% said, given a constant supply, they can see themselves using PosMT in the future (figure 4).

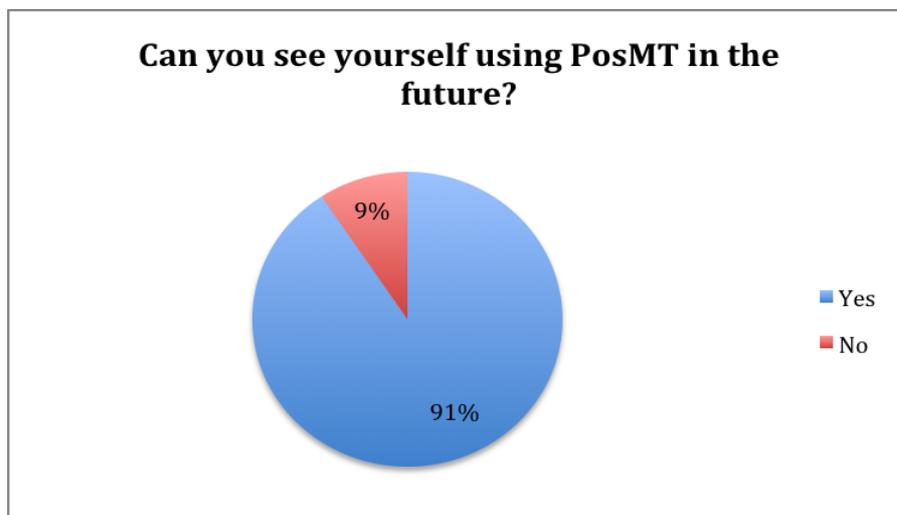


Figure 4 – Can you see yourself using PosMT in the future assuming a constant supply?

63% of respondents said that they would like a follow up session (session 3), to support and enhance their use of the PosMT. Comments include:

“I wish I felt more confident with using it. A short follow up after 1 year may be helpful to those who are not GPs who may find a follow up session beneficial.”

72% of respondents said they would use a discussion forum as a support tool.

When asked if they would be interested in having the option of offering their patients download coupons so they could access the programme for roughly the price of a prescription (£6.50), 48% said yes, 33% said maybe and 19% said no.

8. Training

84% of respondents had attended both PosMT sessions, 16% only session 1.

92% of respondents felt the training gave them sufficient expertise to offer PosMT as a treatment option.



Figure 5 – Feedback on PosMT training sessions

9. Final Comments

Final comments included:

“Continue funding please: note to PCT”

“I have found using PMT helpful personally and for my patients. I mainly find patients have only needed to use CD1 (especially palliative patients) and they have found it very helpful with pain, anxiety and to help with sleep problems. Many thanks.”