

Workshop title

Compassion Focused Therapy for Recovery after Psychosis

Workshop outline

The dysfunctional regulation of threats, in particular of social threats, seems to be at the heart of the development and maintenance of psychosis. Recovery after psychosis is hindered by internal and external threats including feelings of shame, stigma, entrapment and social isolation, which have been associated with increased rates of emotional dysfunction. Compassion Focused Therapy (CFT) was developed specifically to build the capacities to experience soothing, affiliation and compassion in high shame and self-critical individuals by Paul Gilbert; those who are most likely to have difficulties regulating fear with the use of affiliative systems. A key aspect of CFT in psychosis involves helping individuals to relate to each other and to difficult inner experience in an attuned, warm and caring way. Research found group CFT for psychosis to be associated with increased compassion. Increases in compassion were related with a reduction in depression and perceived social marginalization.

Objectives of the workshop:

1. Understand the basic principles and practices of CFT
2. Learn about research on emotion regulation and CFT in psychosis
3. Understand the CFT model of recovery after psychosis
4. Step-by-step guide through group-based protocol
5. Experiential practice of compassion-focused skills (imagery, reframing, mentalizing)

Presenter

Christine Braehler (DClinPsy) is a clinical psychologist. She maintains a private practice in Munich, Germany, and is honorary lecturer at the Institute of Health & Wellbeing at the University of Glasgow, UK. In her clinical and academic work she focuses on the application of compassion-based approaches to complex mental health difficulties. She is a supervisor in Compassion Focused Therapy (CFT) as developed by Prof Paul Gilbert and teacher trainer in Mindful Self-Compassion (MSC) developed by Chris Germer & Kristin Neff. She has adapted CFT to support people with psychosis in their recovery and has conducted the first randomised controlled evaluation of this approach.

Braehler, C., Harper, J. & Gilbert, P. (2013). Compassion Focused Group Therapy for Recovery after Psychosis. In C. Steel (Ed.), *Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for Schizophrenia: Evidence Based Interventions and Future Directions* (pp. 236-266). Chichester: Wiley.

Braehler, C., Gumley, A., Harper, J., Wallace, S., Norrie, J., & Gilbert, P. (2013). Exploring change processes in compassion focused therapy in psychosis: Results of a feasibility randomized controlled trial. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 52(2), 199-214.