

## Introduction



Attrition from psychological therapy within the NHS is a well documented and costly affair (Layard et al, 2007). This is particularly prevalent in those with a personality disorder, with as many as two-thirds not completing their assigned treatment (Crawford et al., 2007). This attrition has been linked to personality traits such as impulsiveness (Kelly et al., 1992), anxiety (Rusch et al., 2008) or low mood (Wang, 2007).

Psycho-educational group interventions in the form of Mentalizing Skills Groups and Emotional Intelligence Groups such as Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) have a substantial evidence base for their effectiveness (Bateman & Fonagy, 1999; 2008; 2009, Linehan, 1993; Linehan et al., 2006), and are recommended by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) to support people with personality disorders. However these are primarily aimed at those with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) as this is the most common disorder presenting to services. However these individuals have been shown to drop-out of treatment approximately 70% of the time (Dingfelder, 2004). It is therefore unclear whether other personality disorders have a similar association with completion/attrition in therapy.

### Aim of this study

Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (BHFT) Personality Disorder Psychological Therapies Team decided to analyse data on personality traits in relation to attrition rates from psycho-educational skills groups from the last 3 years (September 2013 to January 2016).

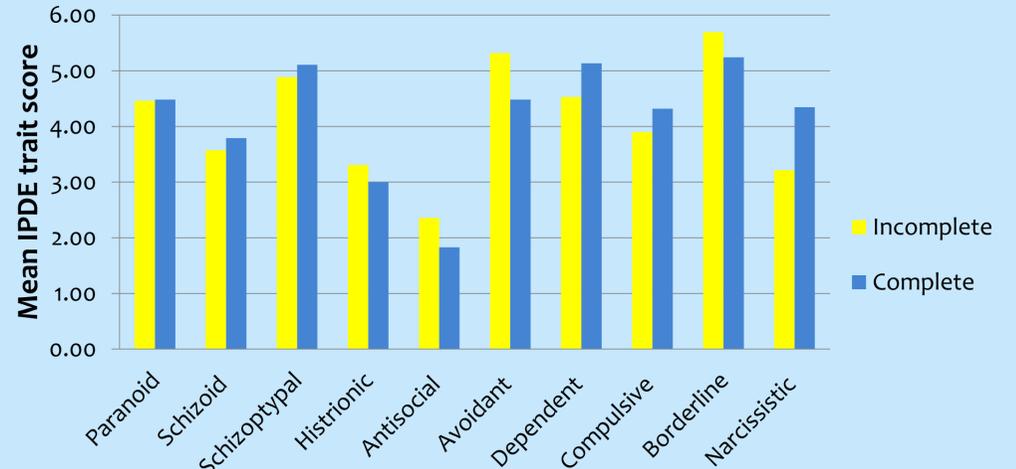
## Method

- Data of 202 service users who attended a 10-week psychoeducational skills groups based on MBT ( $n=123$ ) or DBT ( $n=79$ ) were used. Service users were aged 18-74 years ( $M=35.5$ ,  $SD=12.14$ ). 84% of service users were White British. The sample were taken from the catchment area of Berkshire (45%=Reading, 13%=Bracknell, 10%=Slough, 32%=other).
- Service users were identified as 'completed' a group if they attended 8-10 out of 10 sessions and 'dropped-out' if they attended 1-7 out of 10 sessions.
- The International Personality Disorder Examination (IPDE) measures ten dimensions of personality traits; Paranoid, Schizoid, Schizotypal, Histrionic, Antisocial, Narcissistic, Borderline, Compulsive, Dependent, Avoidant. IPDE questionnaires were completed by service users prior to starting the psychoeducational skills groups.
- IPDE questionnaires scores of service users who completed ( $n=104$ ) and dropped out ( $n=98$ ) of a psychoeducational skills group were analysed using a regression analysis.

### Hypotheses

- Service users who completed the groups will be associated with higher scores for Narcissistic, Borderline and Dependent personality traits.
- Service users who dropped out of the groups will be associated with higher scores for Paranoid, Schizoid, Schizotypal and Avoidant personality traits.

## Results



Graph 1: IPDE Personality Traits and Attrition and Completion of Psycho-educational Groups

- A preliminary binary logistic regression revealed that:
  - Narcissistic personality traits were positively associated with completion of skills groups ( $p=.036$ )
  - Antisocial personality traits were negatively associated with completion of skills groups ( $p=.017$ )
- The remaining personality traits were not found to be significantly correlated with completion and/or incompleteness of skills groups
- The highest mean IPDE trait score were Borderline traits, while the lowest mean trait score were Antisocial traits

## Discussion

The results from the study revealed that both narcissistic and antisocial (cluster B) personality traits were significantly associated with completion/attrition of skills groups, respectively. Previous research has identified that those with antisocial traits may be less likely to seek treatment, and have poorer motivation to complete treatment (NICE Guidelines). However the mean antisocial trait for those in the service was 2.09, well below the clinical cut-off of 3. Alternatively those with Narcissistic Personality traits have been found more likely to seek treatment due to their need to seek admiration which may increase their motivation to complete treatment (Campbell and Miller, 2011).

While these findings are not in line with the predicted hypothesis, they have revealed useful discussion points with regards to trait domains and attrition. The finding that borderline traits were the highest mean score was expected due to a diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder being the predominant intake at this service.

### Further Research

Further research into associations between personality profiles (traits in combination) and attrition would be useful. This research could have clinical implications in terms of providing future treatments for people with personality disorders.

### Study Limitations

- The group interventions delivered by BHFT have changed over time. they have been adapted and delivered by different facilitators.

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