**COLLABORATIVE GOAL SETTING**

We have recently been discussing results from a recent science report titled ‘What science has shown can help young people with anxiety and depression: identifying and reviewing the 'active ingredients' of effective interventions’ [1]. The next part of this series that we will discuss is ‘Collaborative goal setting and tracking’.

What is Collaborative Goal Setting?

Collaborative goal setting occurs within therapy and refers to the agreements made between young people and their therapist about what they want to achieve throughout their time in therapy [2].

Why is Collaborative Goal setting important?

Collaborative Goal Setting encourages emotional connection and trust between the young person and the therapist, and also helps young people to feel supported and have ownership of their care and recovery.

What did the research show?

The researchers looked at research on around 10 000 people, but found most of the research was done on adults. However, they concluded that goal setting was generally helpful for young people, but a lot depended on whether the young person wanted to engage with this technique or not.

What did young people think about Collaborative Goal Setting?

Young people reported that it can provide a channel for open communication, and allow them to feel in control of their own care. There were some contexts where it was felt to be not so helpful, such as in longer-term therapies.

How could a young person could try Collaborative Goal Setting?

If you are in therapy, you could talk with your therapist about whether or not they would be able to work with you to plan out goals for the therapy, if this isn’t something that has already been done.

Are there any other resources to help with Collaborative Goal Setting?

The following website gives some helpful tips for setting yourself goals as part of your treatment journey: https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/goal-setting/

References

1. Wellcome. *Report summary: What science has shown can help young people with anxiety and depression*. 2022; Available from: <https://wellcome.org/reports/what-science-has-shown-can-help-young-people-anxiety-and-depression>.

2. Jacob, J., et al., *Goal setting with young people for anxiety and depression: What works for whom in therapeutic relationships? A literature review and insight analysis.* BMC Psychology, 2022. **10**(1): p. 171.