**PLANNED EXPOSURE**

We have 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 ‘Exposure: facing one’s fears in a planned manner’.

What is planned exposure?

Planned exposure is any form of therapy where young people try to confront their fears in a planned and step-wise manner, and also to stop them avoiding the things they fear [2].

Why is planned exposure important?

Facing fears in a planned way is thought to be a major component of how we help some people with anxiety and depression to get better.

What did the research show?

The researchers looked at research from 64 published research articles, and found that only a few of the studies had looked at this area in depth, but the ones that did showed that it can be helpful for young people with anxiety.

What did young people think about planned exposure?

Young people reported that exposing to fears in this way is most helpful when they felt they had autonomy in the process and clearly understood the rationale for doing it, and the change mechanism involved.

How could a young person could try planned exposure?

Some young people with anxiety or depression want to shy away from things that make them anxious, such as meeting with other people, so it might be helpful to spend even a small amount of time talking to someone, and then see if it gets better over time.

Are there any other resources to help with planned exposure?

The following website has some good resources to help with confronting your fears: <https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/confronting-your-fears/>

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. Teunisse, A.K., et al., *A scoping review investigating the use of exposure for the treatment and targeted prevention of anxiety and related disorders in young people.* JCPP Advances, 2022. **2**(2): p. e12080.