

Disclosure of mental health complaints in the workplace

Catherine van Zelst, PhD

Phrenos center of expertise for severe mental illness

Conference 'Together against Stigma'

Copenhagen, September 20th 2017

Overview

- Disclosure
- Decision Aid ‘Conceal or Reveal’ (CORAL)
- CORAL.NL
 - Redesigned decision aid
 - Kick-off meeting and intervision
 - Manual for professionals

Disclosure of mental illness in the workplace: A literature review

- Workers with mental illness often worry about what will happen if others in the workplace know about their illnesses.
- Disclosure to supervisors is more common than disclosure to coworkers.
- Outcomes of disclosure have included increased support in some workplace relationships. Other relationships – especially relationships with coworkers – have become more strained after disclosure.

(Jones, 2011)

- Complexity of disclosure decisions
- Key role of stigma and discrimination

(Brohan et al., 2012)

Discrimination and work

- 32% has felt discriminated against or disadvantaged because of his/her mental health problems in the previous 12 months.
- 24% experienced unfair treatment in seeking for work or at work.
- 13% experienced unfair treatment in the domain of education.

(Factsheet Panel Psychisch Gezien, Trimbos-institute, 2014)

Why Try?

- Why try effect (Corrigan, Larson & Rüsck, 2009)
- Internalizing and anticipating stigma
- Acknowledge strengths
- Coping with stigma
- Recovery
- Work

Recovery

“A deeply personal, unique **process** of changing one’s attitudes, values, feelings, goals, skills, and/or roles. It is a way of living a satisfying, hopeful, and contributing life **even with limitations** caused by illness.”

(Anthony, 1993)

CORAL (Conceal or Reveal): A guide to telling employers about a mental health condition

- Pros and cons of disclosure
- Disclosure needs
- Disclosure values
- When to disclose
- Who to disclose to
- Making a decision

(King's College London, Dr. Claire Henderson)

Decision aid on disclosure of mental health status to an employer: feasibility and outcomes of a randomised controlled trial

Claire Henderson, Elaine Brohan, Sarah Clement, Paul Williams, Francesca Lassman, Oliver Schauman, Lisa Dockery, Simone Farrelly, Joanna Murray, Caroline Murphy, Mike Slade and Graham Thornicroft

Reduction in decisional conflict was significantly greater in the intervention group than among controls. More of the intervention group than controls were in full-time employment at follow-up.

(Henderson et al., 2013)

Qualitative interview study

Effectiveness of the CORAL decision aid is based on reducing several dimensions of decisional conflict

clarifying the pros and cons of different choices;

increasing knowledge;

structuring the decision making process;

and clarifying peoples' needs and values.

(Lassman et al., 2015)

Project

- Redesigning the CORAL decision aid for the Dutch context
- To adapt the original Dutch translation of the CORAL decision aid to address the needs of various stakeholders in the Netherlands
- To inform professionals on assisting (potential) users of the decision aid
- Project team: Dorien Verhoeven (Samen Sterk zonder Stigma), Evelien Brouwers (Tranzo, Tilburg University), Jaap van Weeghel (Kenniscentrum Phrenos), Catherine van Zelst (Kenniscentrum Phrenos)

Focus groups

- People with lived experience / Experts by experience
 - Employers
 - HR professionals
 - Reintegration professionals
-
- Experiences in daily life (professionals)

Target population decision aid

- People with experiences of common or severe mental illness in past or present
- ‘Mental health problems’



time to change
let's end mental health discrimination

(www.time-to-change.org.uk)

Changes in the decision aid

- Content
- Structure
 - Keep it short
 - Digital summary online

Tips

- Talking about disclosure
- What do you do, what do you want, what can you do?
- Practice
- When you disclose
- Support of others
- Own choice and the decision process

Kick-off meeting, intervisie en handleiding

- Presentatie over stigma, discriminatie en openbaring
- Persoonlijke ervaring van een stigma-ambassadeur
- Inleiding intervisie voor professionals
- Oefening om bewustzijn te creëren van eigen stigma en vooroordeel (gebaseerd op eigen ervaringen met mensen met mentale gezondheidsproblemen)

- Veilig milieu
- Wording (door de gebruiker van de beslissingshulp)
- Bereidheid
- Herstel

Dimensions of disclosure

- Voluntary or involuntary
- Full or partial
- Selectiveness
- Timing of the point at which disclosure is made

(Brohan et al., 2012)

Implementation (professionals)

- Do not present it as a problem
- Pro disclosure or not? Be aware of your own beliefs/attitudes
- Perception of various mental health complaints

Implementation (users)

- Disclose when it is relevant for work
- Disclose when it is relevant for contact with employers, coworkers, etc.
- Personal decision
- Not only a rational decision
- Timing

Ongoing processes of disclosure and recovery

Discrimination in the workplace, reported by people with major depressive disorder: a cross-sectional study in 35 countries

E P M Brouwers,¹ J Mathijssen,¹ T Van Bortel,² L Knifton,³ K Wahlbeck,⁴
C Van Audenhove,⁵ N Kadri,⁶ Ch Chang,⁷ B R Goud,⁸ D Ballester,⁹ LF Tófoli,¹⁰
R Bello,¹¹ M F Jorge-Monteiro,¹² H Zäske,¹³ I Milačić,¹⁴ A Uçok,¹⁵ C Bonetto,¹⁶
A Lasalvia,¹⁶ G Thornicroft,² J Van Weeghel,¹ the ASPEN/INDIGO Study Group*

Across different countries and cultures, people with major depressive disorder (MDD) very frequently reported discrimination in the work setting. Effective interventions are needed to enhance work participation in people with MDD, focusing simultaneously on decreasing stigma in the work environment and on decreasing self-discrimination by empowering workers with MDD.

(Brouwers et al., 2016)

Many thanks to...

- Participants of the focus groups and everyone else who provided feedback on the decision aid.
- Dorien Verhoeven & Samen Sterk zonder Stigma
- Evelien Brouwers
- Jaap van Weeghel

Thank you for your attention!

czelst@kcphrenos.nl