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REFLECTIONS OF A PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING PRACTITIONER WITHIN AN NHS OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

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Background

The prevalence of mental ill health in employees is high(1) and the importance of accessing support is evident. The role of the Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner (PWP) was established in 2008 as part of the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) service. PWPs deliver Cognitive Behavioural Therapy-based low-intensity psychological interventions to individuals experiencing mild to moderate anxiety and low mood(2). They are primarily employed within IAPT services; however, the role has more recently been adopted by other organisations. A PWP was employed within an Occupational Health Service (OHS) in a North-East-based NHS Trust in March 2022.

Aims

To explore the reflections of a PWP within the first year of working within an NHS-based OHS.

Methods

This article documents the experiences of the primary author – a Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner. Between March 2022 and February 2023, the clinician completed a combined total of 430 low-intensity assessments and brief intervention appointments with staff who reported psychological distress. Quantitative data has been collated and future recommendations for PWPs working within similar organisational contexts are included.

Results

Four predominant reflections were identified: variability within the client group, scope of work, differences between organisations, and opportunities for skills development.

Discussion

This article details some key reflections of a clinician working to embed and establish the role of a Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner within an Occupational Health Setting. It is concluded that PWPs are well-placed to deliver high quality service provision due to the adaptability of their training and clinical practice.

References:

1. Health and Safety Executive (2022). Work-related ill health and occupational disease in Great Britain. Online article. Retrieved February 17, 2023, from <https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/>
2. NHS England (2018, June). "The National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health". Low-intensity workforce. The Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Manual (74).