Group Interactive Structured Treatment – GIST: For Social Competence After TBI

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Goals
• Review Social Competence and how it’s affected after Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
• Describe the GIST program and therapist role
• Explain DOD research multi-site RCT
• Review Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Social Competence
• To communicate our needs and thoughts
• To listen and understand others
• To communicate non-verbally
• To regulate our emotions
• To understand social boundaries and rules
• To communicate assertively and confidently

Problems with Social Competence After TBI
• Confusion, poor comprehension
• Poor initiation of conversation and topics
• Focus on self or injury
• Difficulty maintaining topic, rambling
• Talking on and on; repetitive
• Failure to pick up on social cues, emotions
• Difficulty maintaining social boundaries

Problems with Social Competence cont.
• Lack of confidence
• Difficulty taking another’s point of view
• Poor eye contact
• Difficulty regulating emotions
• Impulsive behavior
• Reduced self awareness/insight

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Cynthia Harrison-Felix, Ph.D., PI
Impaired Social Competence Leads to Problems at:

- Home – spouse, parent, neighbor
- Work – co-workers, customers
- Friends – maintaining old friends, making new
- Healthcare Professionals – Dr’s, therapists, state agencies, case managers

Leads to:
- Loneliness
- Conflicts
- Feeling “different”

GIST: Group Intervention Structured Treatment

Treatment for Social Competence

Description of Program

- Program developed by MSW and SLP and initially used in their private practice with civilians and military
- 13 week group treatment
- 1½ hour sessions with 6-8 participants
- Facilitated by 2 therapists trained in TBI

Description of Program

- 3 individual social competence goals identified by participant
  - 1 of which must be observable in the group setting using Goal Attainment Scaling
- Workbook with weekly topics and homework

GIST Key Treatment Elements

- Structured Curriculum Blended with Group Therapy Process
- Holistic Approach
- Self Awareness – Self Assessment
- Individual Goals
- Group Process
- Social Problem Solving
- Repetition, Reinforcement, & Feedback
- Generalization/Family Involvement

Session Topics

- Each week has a specific topic to be discussed, including:
  - Initial orientation session
  - The skills of a great communicator
  - Self-assessment and goal setting
  - Starting conversations
  - Keeping conversations going/using feedback
  - Being assertive and social problem solving
Session info continued

- Practice in the community
- Increasing social confidence/positive self talk
- Setting and respecting social boundaries
- Video taping and social problem solving
- Video feedback and review
- Conflict resolution
- Closure and celebration

Therapist Role

- Goal is to facilitate discussion, not ‘present’ in a didactic format
- Philosophy: Everyone is the expert
- Create group cohesion via installation of hope, universality, altruism, imparting information
- Demonstrating appropriate social skills

Therapist Role

- Provide positive reinforcement for positive social behaviors
- Encourage others to provide constructive positive feedback to others in the group
- Encourage others to share weekly experiences
- Have members share their goals and progress
- Discuss homework

Methodology

- Multi-site Randomized Controlled Trial
- There was an RCT efficacy study which showed the efficacy of GIST. The GIST developers were the therapists in that study
- Participants were recruited from the community

Methodology

- Multi-site study funded by the DoD
- Craig Rehabilitation Hospital, Englewood, Colorado – Lead Site
- Cynthia Harrison-Felix, Ph.D. – Lead PI

- Treatment for social competence in:
  - military veterans, services members (2 sites)
  - civilians with Traumatic Brain Injury (4 sites)
- Participants were recruited from the community
Methodology
• Subjects were randomized into either the experimental or control condition
• Both conditions receive 13 week intervention.
• Both interventions aim to address social competence.
• One of the goals of the study is to determine if other therapists can be trained to have similar outcomes as in the original RCT
• Assessment taken Baseline and Post-intervention

Progress
• Pilot Study and Wave 1 of RCT completed.
• Currently recruiting for Wave 2 of RCT.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Do all subjects have the same social issues?
• While the TBI population is varied there are some social skills that can be observed in many.
  – Difficulty initiating conversation, maintaining topic.
  – Talking too much or not enough
  – Decreased awareness of social boundaries (physically or verbally)
  – Difficulty controlling emotions.

What are the biggest challenges for the therapist?
• Trying to get through manual content while facilitating group cohesion
• Building trust and rapport
• Getting others to identify social skills goals

How are goals created?
• During early sessions, participants are asked to ID areas that may be a challenge and areas where they are successful
• They are asked to get feedback from family or close friend
• Formal goals are set with the therapist and put into a modified GAS format
We can't be discussing outcomes, but you can explain here that you have completed the pilot and Wave 1 and are currently recruiting for Wave 2. You could also list some of the criteria for inclusion if you'd like.

Hawley, Lenore, 2/25/2014
References

