

## Staying in School: A Systematic Review of Interventions for Individuals with Mental Illness

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### Objectives of Presentation:

- **Recognize** the impact of chronic mental illness on educational pursuits
- **Discuss** occupational therapy related interventions to support individuals with chronic mental illness in an academic setting
- **Describe** implications of educational attainment on social participation and work for individuals with chronic mental illness

**PICO:** What is the evidence for interventions that support the outcome of successful participation in educational settings for individuals with a mental health diagnosis?

### Methods:

- Databases searched: PubMed, PsycINFO, CINAHL, Scopus
- Search Terms
  - P: Adolescent, Student, Mental disorder, Mental diagnos\*
  - I: Occupational Therapy, Program, Treatment, Support, Service, Support\*, Servic\*
  - O: Academic Functioning, Diploma, Retention
- Critiquing Articles
  - **Level I-IV:** Evaluation of Quality of an Intervention Study Appendix E & F <sup>15</sup>
  - **Level V:** Level 5 Evidence Critique <sup>9</sup>
  - **Qualitative:** Critical Review Form - Qualitative Studies (Version 2.0) <sup>16</sup>
- Number of Articles Found
  - Initial search yielded: 1488 articles
  - Final number of articles in systematic review: 9 quantitative and 1 qualitative

### Results:

**Themes:** Outcomes resulting from single interventions with individuals with a mental health diagnosis

#### 1. Skill Development

- Moderate evidence to support interventions which target academic skills as part of completing school <sup>3, 6, 7, 11, 14, 17</sup>
  - Mentoring, supported education programs, and the use of memory strategies yielded statistically significant improvements in academic skills
  - A positive trend (improved academic skills) seen after use of a Cognitive Remediation computer program.
- Limited evidence to support interventions addressing social skills as part of successful educational pursuits <sup>3, 7, 11, 12, 17, 21</sup>
  - Mentoring and supported education yielded statistically significant improvements in social skills
  - Supported education also yielded clinically significant improvements in social skill development
  - A mentoring approach resulted in a positive trend towards enhanced social skills

#### 2. School Attendance

- Limited evidence to support interventions designed to increase rates of enrollment in educational programs <sup>7, 11, 12, 21</sup>
  - Mentoring and supported education demonstrated a positive trend for increasing enrollment, average over 50% <sup>3, 7, 8, 14, 17, 21</sup>
- Limited evidence to support interventions to increase retention rates of students in an academic program <sup>3, 7, 8, 14, 17, 21</sup>
  - Mentoring and cognitive remediation yielded statistically significant improvements in retention rates
  - Use of either Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), psychoeducation, or supported education yielded a positive trend towards increased retention rates

#### 3. Improved Symptoms

- Moderate evidence to support interventions for decreased symptoms in support of academic participation <sup>3, 5, 8, 14, 17, 21</sup>
  - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), cognitive remediation, mentoring, and supported education each yielded statistically significant results for improving symptoms
  - CBT and supported education yielded clinically significant results as a means of improving symptoms
  - Use of DBT demonstrated a positive trend towards improving symptoms

#### 4. Feelings of Competence as a Student

- Insufficient evidence to support the use of interventions to enhance feelings of competence as a students <sup>11, 12, 14</sup>
  - Cognitive remediation, mentoring, and supported education each reported statistically significant improvements in participants' reported feelings of competence
  - A mentoring approach, with additional usage of a binder of specific skill sets, resulted in a trend towards enhanced feelings of competence as a student

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