

STUDY INTO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TECHNOLOGY IN IMPROVING CLINICAL OUTCOMES

Summary

- Reliable measurement of outcomes remains a challenge in psychological services, with only a minority of therapists (37%) using outcome assessments in practice
- Technology can alleviate this by providing consistent outcome measures, and HelloSelf's latest data shows that the majority of members realised enough improvements to move to a lower classification
- Furthermore, technology can improve outcomes over and above traditional talk therapy. Higher levels of engagement with HelloSelf's digital tools correlated with a 39% improvement compared to low engagement (30%). Members who engage with our digital features achieve better outcomes faster

Achieving positive outcomes for our members is extremely important to us. We do this by working with excellent therapists (you!) but also by using technology to maximise impact. In this study we have reviewed member data to assess the effectiveness of that technology in improving outcomes.

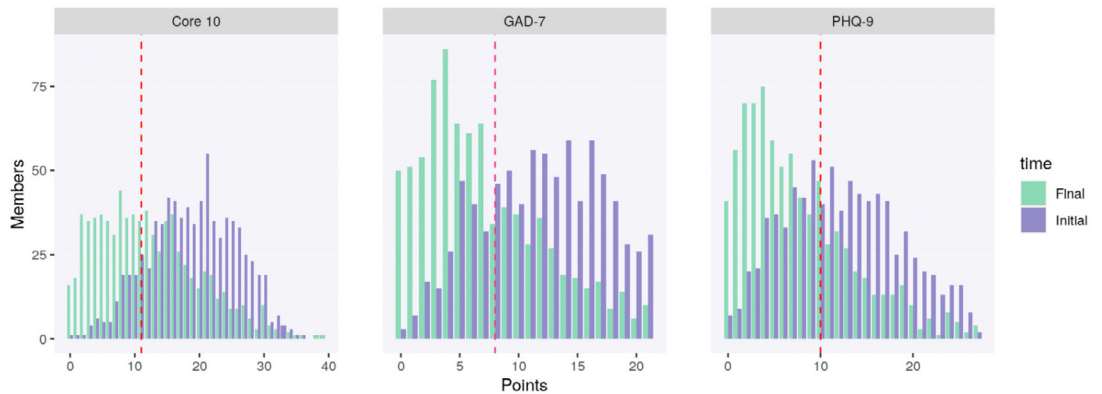
The challenge of measuring outcomes and the role of technology

It is usual practice for psychological therapists to review how their clients are doing in therapy. Achieving improved clinical outcomes continues to be the gold-standard in psychological services. However, very few therapists working within private practice use formal outcome measures with only 37% indicating that they have used some sort of outcome assessment in practice (Hatfield & Ogles, 2004). This is despite it being well known that using outcome measures are incredibly helpful for the therapeutic process and for improving treatment.

Few private psychology clinics share their clinical outcomes, and this lack of transparency has been argued a disservice to clients (Clark et al., 2018). It does not allow people to make an informed decision about where to access help and it impacts their ability to understand themselves as well as they should. We also cannot start to look at trends and contribute to the knowledge base on the therapeutic process without data.

Technology has a vital role in helping address this problem as it can offer an effective solution to the challenges with outcome measurement. Our latest data of 836 members show 90.6%, 65.3%, and 63% scored above the clinical cut-off on the CORE-10, GAD-7, and PHQ-9 respectively at assessment. Most commonly people fell within the moderate range on all three measures indicating likely cases of anxiety, depression, and general psychological distress. We found the majority realised enough improvements to symptoms and distress on these measures to move them to a lower classification on these measures. That is, for those initially above the clinical threshold on PHQ-9 (N=519), GAD-7 (N=533), and CORE-10 (N=564), 76% had improved enough to move them to a lower scoring category at the end of treatment.

Distribution of Initial and Final Outcome Points



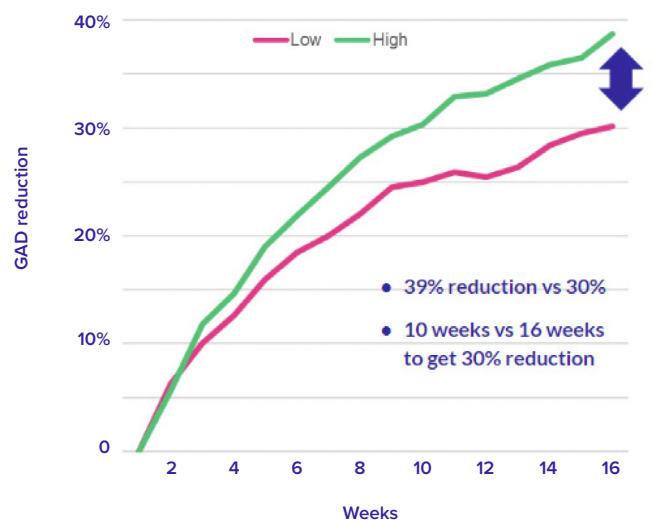
Using technology to improve outcomes

At HelloSelf we have been keen to take things further. We are augmenting a traditional talk therapy model with engagement driving digital components rooted in psychological theory. For example, recording sessions is recommended and is believed to have positive effects on later recall and reflection by clients (Shepherd, Salkovskis, & Morris, 2009; Briggie, Hilsenroth, Conway, Muran, & Jackson, 2016). Similarly, research shows writing goals down, tracking, and prompting, increases likelihood of goal attainment (Harkin et al., 2016) and translates to better wellbeing and functioning (Jansson et al., 2015). We also know messaging increases the therapeutic alliance (Lopez, 2015) and homework adherence leads to better outcomes (Lineham, 2015). We have looked at the relationship between digital engagement with the HelloSelf platform and member outcomes for those scoring above the clinical cut-off at assessment on the GAD-7. When controlling for baseline assessment scores and number of sessions, higher levels of engagement were correlated with a 39% improvement on the GAD-7 at session 15 compared to low engagement which was 30%. This suggests members who engage with our digital features achieve better outcomes faster.

We believe that measuring progress is a crucial part of the treatment process and outcome measures provide an objective and transparent way for both our therapists and members to do so. However, we recognise that measures of symptom change may not tell the whole story and in the future hope to share some more information about other tools we provide our members and therapists to help them achieve outcomes that truly matter to them in line with our mission to make Every Self Better.

I hope you agree this is an incredibly exciting time for us all at HelloSelf and we could not achieve these outcomes for our members without your expertise and delivery of excellent care.

The relationship between 'digital' engagement & outcomes



Thank you

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