

COMPASSIONATE MIND TRAINING FOR VETERANS (CMT-v)

“Compassion gives us the courage and wisdom to descend into our suffering.”

(2010) Prof. Paul Gilbert OBE

BACKGROUND

A study to evaluate the effectiveness of a bespoke manualised compassion focussed intervention for veterans. The aims:

- Advance understanding of the science of compassion
- Allow individuals to better understand their own evolutionary psychology and difficulties;
- Reduce shame and self-criticism;
- Assist stabilisation, toleration of difficult emotions and diminish avoidance;
- Foster understanding of the link to military service and aid effective, integrated transition;
- Improve wellbeing and allow individuals to flourish;
- Enhance relationships with self and others;

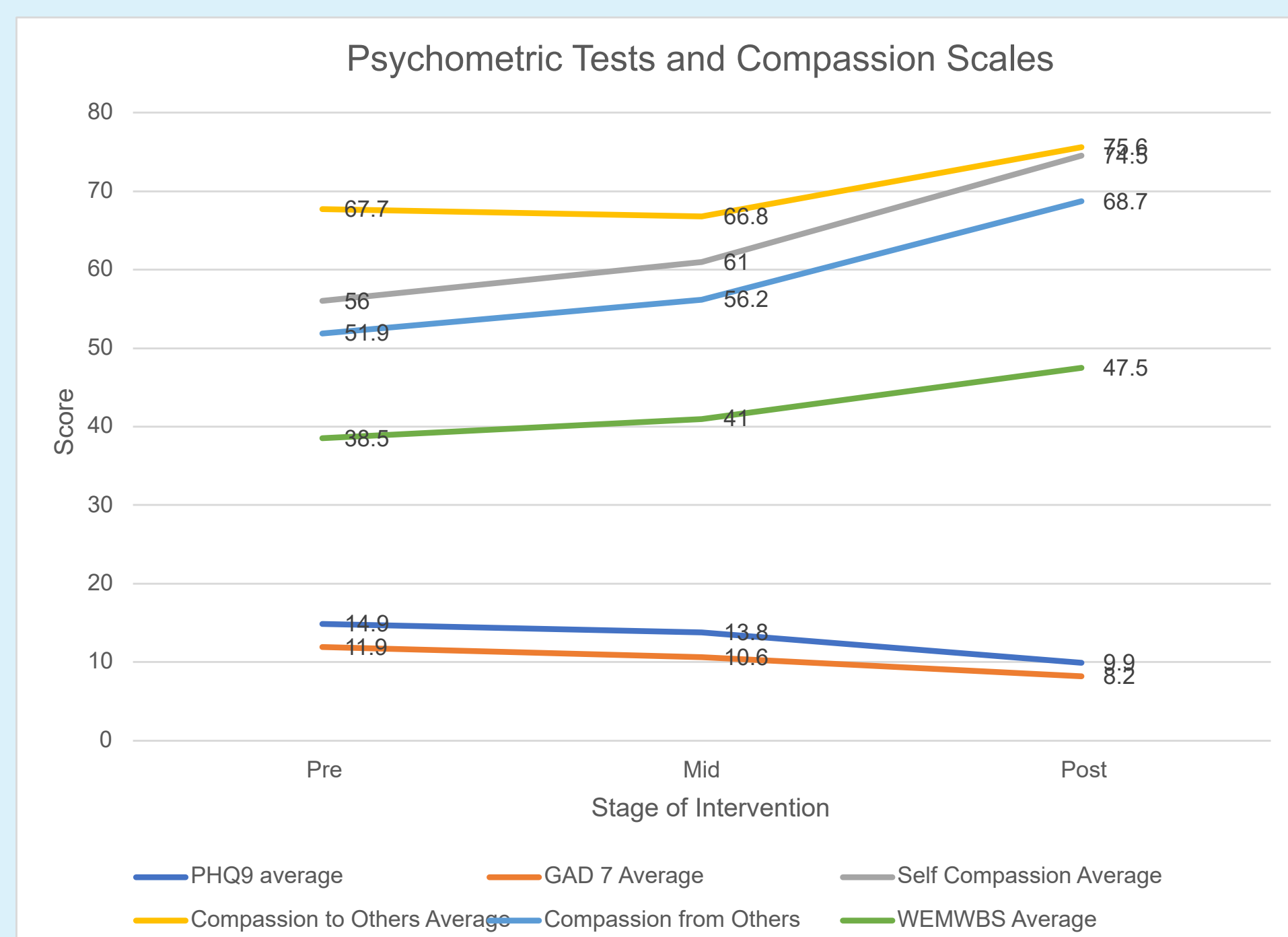
Based on the Compassionate Resilience Group developed by Dr Deborah Lee.

METHOD

- Quantitative data – standard Psychometric tests and Compassion scales at the start, midpoint, and end of treatment (10–12 sessions);
- Thematic analysis of qualitative feedback from participants and clinicians.

RESULTS

- Improvement across the range of psychometrics for every participant:
 - Symptoms of anxiety GAD7 decrease from moderate to mild;
 - Symptoms and levels of depression PHQ 9 average decrease from moderately severe to mild/moderate;
 - ‘Wellness’ WEMWBS was enhanced.
- Compassion scales reflected an increase in the ability to experience compassion for others (+17.9), from others (+16.8), and to self (+18.5).



DISCUSSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

Key themes from qualitative feedback indicated the overall impact of CMT-v was that the intervention created awareness and understanding, facilitated learning, and subsequently enabled positive change for participants and, in some instances, their families. Higher levels of compassion facilitated enhanced social relationships and promoted wellbeing.

The process itself, and the healthy mechanisms shared to assist self-soothing, allowed participants to compassionately understand, better manage, and process their distress:

**“The understanding is half the battle”,
“I am learning to engage with my
compassionate image” and “the
sessions have helped me to understand
that my suffering is not my fault.”**

Positive change was evidenced in participant feedback:

**“...make a difference to
both my emotional and
physical wellbeing.”**

**“These sessions have changed
my way of thinking ...put me in a
different frame of mind.”**

**“...helped identify behavioural
and emotional hotspots.....show
compassion to myself.”**

**“...something we will be
instilling in our family
and the way we think.”**

The educational component was identified as a key part of the intervention by both clinicians and participants, however the data suggests the compassionate relationship was powerful in creating awareness and depth of change.

**“...results were so apparent it was really lovely to
see and know you are making a difference to some
beneficiaries who had struggled for years.”**

References

Originally developed as a phased based approach to treatment, analysis of the data shows CMT-v was effective and valued as a stand-alone intervention.

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