Acceptance-Based Behavioral Therapy for Generalized Anxiety Disorder (ABBT for GAD)

TARGET AUDIENCE

This program is for adults who have a primary diagnosis of generalized anxiety disorder.

SUMMARY

Acceptance-Based Behavioral Therapy for Generalized Anxiety Disorder (ABBT for GAD), a community-based mental health program, is designed to help clients reduce GAD symptomatology to non-clinical levels and enhance their quality of life by promoting awareness of the present moment, acceptance of internal states, and involvement in significant activities.

EVIDENCE

One internal randomized controlled trial (RCT) with a wait-list condition has been conducted. From pretest to posttest, participants in the treatment group, compared to those in the wait-list group, experienced improvements in GAD symptoms, perceived control over anxiety, depressive symptoms, psychological flexibility, mindfulness, emotional regulation, and uncertainty tolerance. At posttest, over three-fourths (76.92%) of the treatment group no longer met criteria for GAD compared to one-sixth (16.67%) of the wait-list group. Follow-up analyses involving all the participants who received treatment, including those from the wait-list condition, indicated gains made during treatment were maintained over a 9-month period.

COMPONENTS

ABBT for GAD is comprised of two treatment phases:

- Phase 1 (Sessions 1 to 7) - Clients learn about how anxiety, emotions, and experiential avoidance contribute to impairment; learn about the advantages of accepting internal experiences and making value-consistent decisions; and learn about mindfulness. Clients begin developing mindfulness-based skills, identifying what they find meaningful about different aspects of their life (e.g., relationships, work, community involvement) through writing assignments, and making commitments to use mindfulness strategies in the areas of their lives they value.

- Phase 2 (Sessions 8 to 16) - Clients focus on using the skills they have learned to help them perform actions they value each week. If setbacks occur, therapists and clients review content from earlier sessions.

A typical session format involves starting with a mindfulness skill practice, reviewing the prior session's assignment, introducing the current session's content, and concluding with a new assignment. The final three sessions also include reviewing the client's progress, identifying the most helpful strategies, and developing a maintenance plan.

PREVIOUS USE

Since its development in 2002, ABBT for GAD has been used with more than 5,000 individuals in 30 U.S. states and territories and in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Iran, Israel, New Zealand, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

www.militaryfamilies.psu.edu
Clearinghouse@psu.edu
1-877-382-9185

August 2017

This material is the result of a partnership funded by the Department of Defense between the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy and the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture through a grant/cooperative agreement with Penn State University.
Acceptance-Based Behavioral Therapy for Generalized Anxiety Disorder (ABBT for GAD)

**TRAINING**
Facilitators, who are generally mental health providers, are required to read "Mindfulness- and Acceptance-Based Behavioral Therapies in Practice." Please visit mindfulwaythroughanxiety.com/books/ for more information on this book. In addition, an optional on-site training workshop is available, and the cost varies depending on organizational needs, workshop length, and proximity to the developers. Implementation assistance is available by phone, email, or site visit and costs $150 an hour plus travel expenses for site visits. For more information about training, please email abbtt-training@gmail.com.

**CONSIDERATIONS**
Considerations for implementing ABBT for GAD include recruiting providers with suitable educational and professional experience, ensuring providers read the required training text, gaining client buy-in, and finding a suitable time and location to conduct sessions.

The Clearinghouse can help address these considerations. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu.

**IMPLEMENTATION**
If you are interested in implementing ABBT for GAD, the Clearinghouse is interested in helping you! Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu.

ABBT for GAD consists of 16 sessions. Sessions one through four are delivered weekly for 90 minutes each; sessions five through 13 are delivered weekly for 60 minutes each; sessions 14 through 16 are delivered every other week for 60 minutes each.

**EVALUATION PLAN**
To move ABBT for GAD to the Effective category on the Clearinghouse Continuum of Evidence, at least one external evaluation must be conducted that demonstrates sustained, positive outcomes. This study must be conducted independently of the program developer.

The Clearinghouse can help you develop an evaluation plan to ensure the program components are meeting your goals. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu.

**CONTACT**
Contact the Clearinghouse with any questions regarding this program.
Phone: 1-877-382-9185 Email: Clearinghouse@psu.edu
You may also contact Susan M. Orsillo, Ph.D., by phone 1-617-305-1924 or email sorsillo@suffolk.edu or contact Lizabeth Roemer, Ph.D., by phone 1-617-287-6538 or email lizabeth.roemer@umb.edu or visit mindfulwaythroughanxiety.com or roemerlab-umb.com.

**SOURCE**
Roemer and Orsillo (2007); Hayes-Skelton, Roemer, and Orsillo (2013); and nrepp.samhsa.gov/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=366

www.militaryfamilies.psu.edu