

TRIALLING AN OPTIMISED SOCIAL GROUPS INTERVENTION FOR VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE: RESULTS OF A FEASIBILITY RANDOMISED CONTROLLED TRIAL

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BACKGROUND & METHOD

There are rising concerns about the **current availability, adequacy, and focus** of standard mental health support for young people (Young Minds, 2021). Work is needed to re-focus and reduce the inaccessibility of mental health services by following recommendations to **address loneliness and social isolation** (DoH, 2015; WHO, 2025). The TOGETHER study was the first to test the **feasibility and acceptability** of an optimised (guided by stakeholders) version of a short, theoretically-driven, evidence-based psychosocial intervention known as 'Groups 4 Health' (G4H; Haslam et al., 2016) for young people in the UK.

The TOGETHER study was a feasibility randomised controlled trial comparing an adapted version of G4H + treatment as usual to treatment as usual only (TAU). *Trial identifier: ISRCTN12505807*. Feasibility was assessed via rates of **recruitment, retention to the study & intervention, data completeness and intervention adherence**, as well as thematic analysis of **qualitative interviews** with end-users. Intra- and inter-individual **reliable change analysis** (from baseline to 14 weeks post-intervention) was conducted across a range of social and mental health outcomes.

NOVEL CONTEXT & DELIVERY FORMAT

1-to-1 and/or online delivery formats for young people in the South East, UK

TARGET POPULATION

Aged 16-25 years old with mental health difficulties

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

NHS tier 3 (specialist)/ NHS tier 1 waiting list/Third sector organisations

PARTICIPANTS



INTERVENTION PROVIDERS

n = 9

n = 5 non-specialist practitioners
n = 3 NHS tier 3 professionals
n = 1 third sector practitioner

Experience range: 10+ young people (n = 2) to only older than 25 (n = 1)



YOUNG PEOPLE

n = 14

Mean Age: 20.79 yrs (SD: 2.89)

Global Assessment Score: M: 54.14 (SD: 4.37) "Moderate symptoms"

RESULTS

RELIABLE CHANGE ANALYSIS

Reliable Improvement (n)		
Outcome	G4H (n = 6)	TAU (n = 6)
Depression	4	2
Anxiety	4	2
Psychosis Symptoms	4	0
Social Connection	3	0
Perceived Social Support	2	1

FEASIBILITY PARAMETERS & QUALITATIVE THEMES

80% OR MORE DATA COMPLETENESS
✓ 85.69% data completeness (taking account of dropouts and missing items across all assessments at each time-point)

80% OR MORE RANDOMISED TO RECEIVE G4H WILL COMPLETE AT LEAST 4 SESSIONS

✗ 57.14% (n = 4) completed at least 4 sessions

80% OR MORE OF THE CORE G4H COMPONENTS WILL BE DELIVERED

✓ 96.27% core items delivered

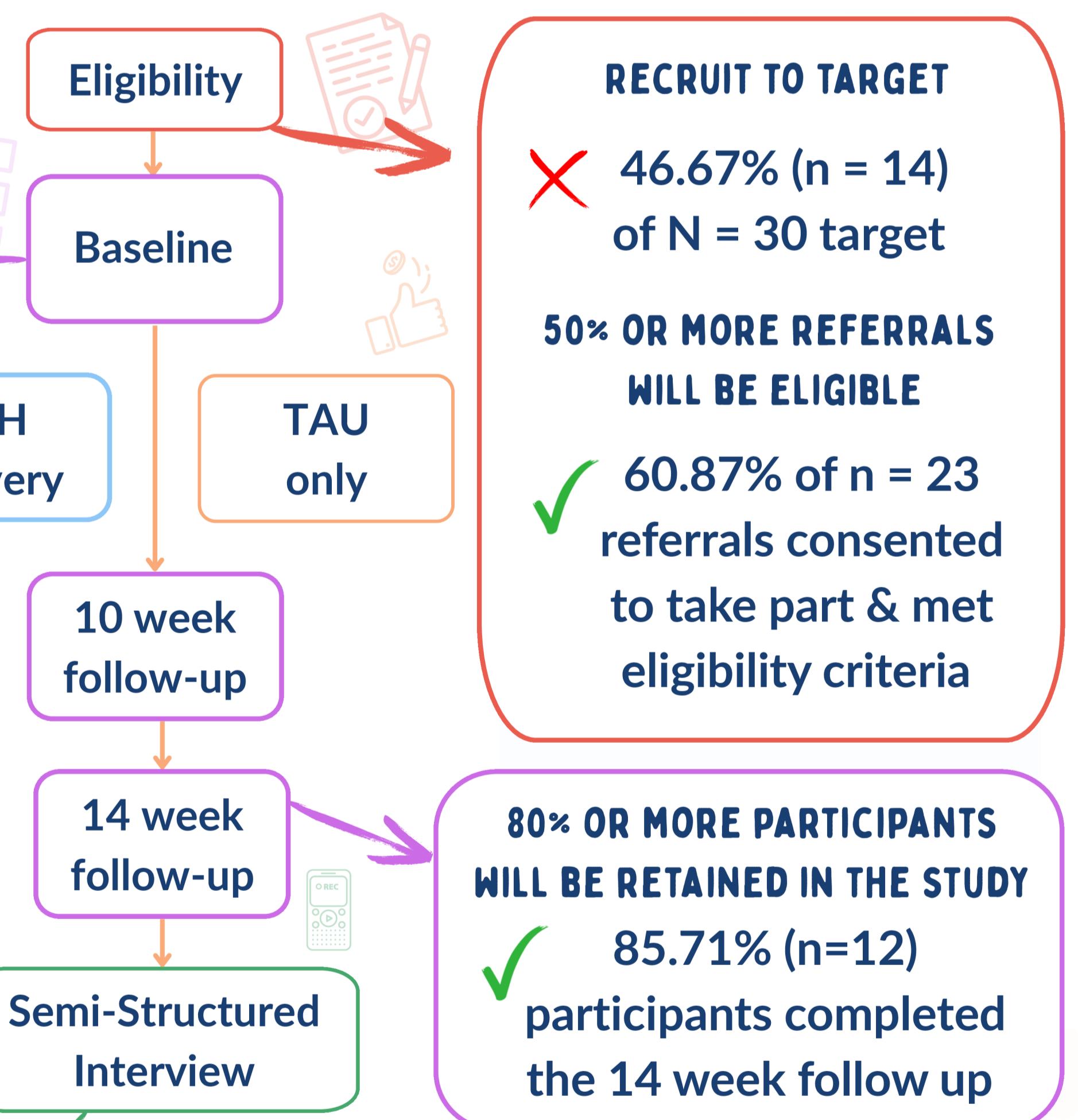
THEME 1: BRINGING NEGLECTED PRIORITIES TO THE MENTAL HEALTH LANDSCAPE

THEME 2: REIMAGINING GROUP THERAPY: 1 TO 1 ONLINE AS A VIABLE ADAPTATION

THEME 3: CONDITIONAL ACCEPTABILITY TO DELIVER GROUPS 4 HEALTH

THEME 4: DIFFERENT ADAPTATIONS FOR DIFFERENT PRESENTATIONS

THEME 5: TOGETHER STUDY: A SUPPORTIVE OPPORTUNITY FOR SELF-REFLECTION



CONCLUSIONS

The study offers novel preliminary evidence for the potential benefits of an adapted social groups intervention for **reducing symptoms of social disability and mental health** in the context of young people in the UK. Qualitative themes suggest **conditional feasibility and acceptability by end-users**. Low recruitment to the study indicates **potential issues with the acceptability and accessibility** of the intervention and/or study processes by young people from the targeted services, which should be addressed in future research to optimise implementation.

REFERENCES

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