

LONGER TERM FEASIBILITY OF AN ONLINE ACCEPTANCE AND COMMITMENT THERAPY (ACT) INTERVENTION TO PROMOTE PALLIATIVE CARE STAFF WELLBEING

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Background

Palliative care staff often experience stress, distress and burnout^[1,2]. In autumn 2021, 23 palliative care staff completed an 8-week online Acceptance and Commitment Therapy training intervention to promote wellbeing (the RESTORE programme). This was acceptable to staff and feasible to implement^[3]. A follow-up booster intervention was delivered in autumn 2022 to support sustainability of impacts of the original intervention over time.

Aims

To examine the acceptability and feasibility of online booster (follow-up) ACT training session for hospice staff one year after the original 8-week training programme.

Methods

A booster intervention consisting of one short video and worksheet; followed by one online facilitated ACT workshop was offered to participants who completed the original intervention. Questionnaire data was sought at baseline and post-booster intervention; and semi-structured interviews were conducted.

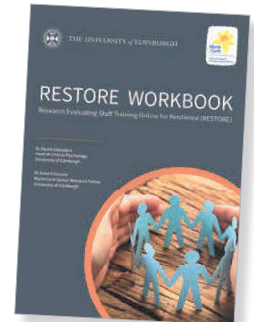
Results

Seven participants were recruited – 32% of those completing the original intervention (**Figure 1**).

Qualitative findings indicated sustained benefits of the original training to participants in the year after the original 8-week programme. However, staff experienced challenges to embedding ACT strategies into their routine practice due to lack of time, and expressed the need for regular facilitated check-ins and reminders to sustain practice.

Conclusions

Hospice staff who undertake online ACT training can identify sustained benefits at one year follow-up. However, a one-off booster session one year after the original training was limited in terms of acceptability and feasibility. To optimise longer-term impacts of ACT training, wellbeing promotion needs to be prioritised by organisations, facilitated, and embedded within palliative care teams.



What is Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)?

ACT is a mindfulness-based behavioural therapy aimed at improving wellbeing and promoting values-based living. ACT encourages people to be:

Open: make room for thoughts and feelings even when these are uncomfortable; and to step back and see them as thoughts and feelings that come and go.

Aware: connect with the present moment.

Engaged: recognise what is important to you and act in ways that are guided by your values.

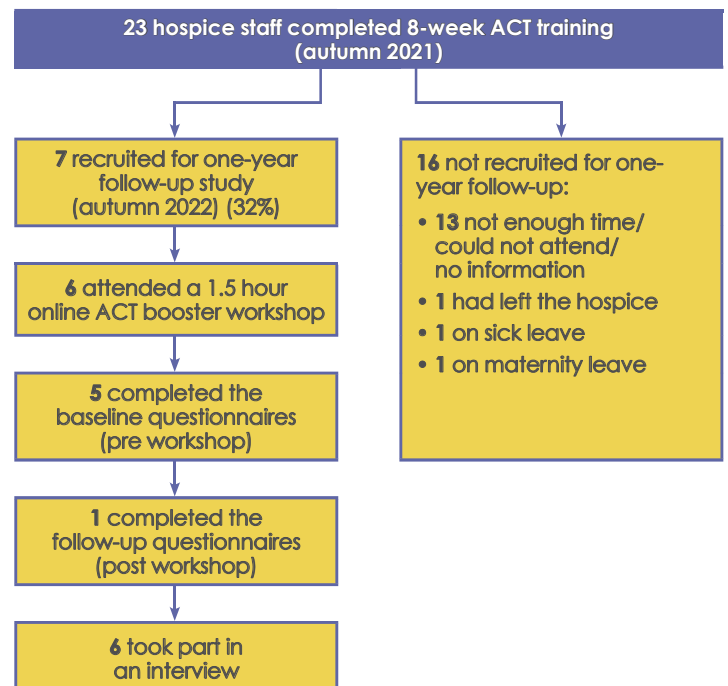


Figure 1: Recruitment for one-year follow-up study.

References: ^[1]Powell MJ, Froggatt K, Giga S. Resilience in inpatient palliative care nursing: a qualitative systematic review. *BMJ Support Palliat Care*. 2020;10(1):79-90. ^[2]Dijxhoorn AQ, Brom L, van der Linden YM, Leget C, Roijmakers NJ. Prevalence of burnout in healthcare professionals providing palliative care and the effect of interventions to reduce symptoms: A systematic literature review. *Palliative Medicine*. 2021;35(1):6-26. ^[3]Finucane AM, Hulbert-Williams NJ, Swash B, Spiller JA, Wright B, Milton L, et al. Feasibility of RESTORE: An online Acceptance and Commitment Therapy intervention to improve palliative care staff wellbeing. *Palliative Medicine*. 2023;37(2):244-56.

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