

Depression in teenagers prompts pioneering digital mental health therapy approach

SilverCloud Health and Dorset Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) highlight online approach to teenage depression to mark World Mental Health Day

Teenagers starting their GCSE and A level studies are being treated for depression through a new digital mental health therapy programme for young people that reflects the increasing education pressures they are facing during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

SilverCloud Health, the leading digital mental health platform, is extending its existing digital therapy programmes for young people to also incorporate an online module for tackling depression, based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

The new module is being introduced to teenagers aged 14 and upwards by CAMHS services across the UK including Dorset Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), part of Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust. It will soon be widely-available to health trusts and schools across the UK. Nationally, an estimated 1.3 million children and young people experience mental health problems.

It is being announced to mark World Mental Health Day on 10 October, which is organised by the World Health Organisation annually to raise awareness and counter stigma towards mental health. This year's theme is "Mental Health for All".

Development of the depression module for young people by SilverCloud Health, which earlier this year developed a programme for anxiety for teenagers aged 14 and above, reflects the significant increase in depression in youngsters as a result of uncertainty and disruption over schooling and from the continuing COVID-19 pandemic.

Chloe Ponsford, Operational Service Manager, CAMHS Gateway Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, said: "SilverCloud enables us to provide young people with an online programme they can access at their own pace, at a time which suits them. In these current times, it gives young people the flexibility they need, enabling them to improve their mental health at home, in an engaging and informative way."

The new module includes interactive activities and online tools to encourage young people to identify ways that they can motivate themselves to engage in pleasurable activities and activities that provide a sense of achievement, to support recovery. It also includes personal stories relevant and identifiable to young people.

There is strong evidence to support the use of digital therapy for teenagers after recent research amongst 200 young people who had benefited from a SilverCloud programme for anxiety. Over 90% of young people found the digital therapy relevant and 84% said that it was helpful to them.

One teenager who recently had the online support for anxiety through the Northpoint Wellbeing charity said: "At the end of the programme I feel much more confident at challenging the obsessions and compulsions and although I'm not completely better, feel like I'm getting myself back on track, so thanks for that."

For health professionals, availability of digital mental health therapy for less severe cases means they have more capacity for more complex and serious conditions that may require face to face therapy. Digital approaches are also viewed as effective for early intervention before mental health deteriorates.

Dr Lloyd Humphreys, Head of Europe at SilverCloud Health, said: ““There is currently huge uncertainty and worry at the moment globally, and it is having a significant impact on the mental health of every age group, background, and culture. Working with colleagues at Dorset CAMHS, we are very pleased to be pioneering new thinking and approaches to tackling this issue. In the week of World Mental Health Day with this year’s theme of ‘Mental Health for All’ it is appropriate to focus on the particular mental health needs of this particularly vulnerable group.”

Ends

Notes for editors

About SilverCloud Health

[SilverCloud Health](#) is the world’s leading digital mental health company, enabling healthcare organisations to deliver clinically validated digital health/therapeutic care that improves outcomes, increases access and scale while reducing costs. The company’s multi-award-winning digital mental health platform is a result of over 16 years of clinical research with leading academic institutions. Today, SilverCloud is being used by over 250 organisations globally to meet their populations’ mental health needs. Global experts have deeply validated the platform through full randomised control trials and real-world data from over 450,000 SilverCloud users.

The platform continues to lead the industry with its effectiveness, engagement, and range of clinical programmes that encompass the spectrum of mental health needs.

About Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust

Dorset HealthCare provides community health services covering physical and mental health across Dorset, Bournemouth, Poole and Southampton. Community health services include district nurses, health visitors, school nursing, end of life care, brain injury, sexual health promotion, safeguarding children, diabetes education, audiology, speech and language therapy, orthopaedic care and Dorset’s 12 community hospitals.

CAMHS Gateway is a newly introduced assessment and brief intervention team in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. The service went live on 14 September and aims to improve access to CAMHS Services in Dorset, with the initial pilot in the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area, with expansion across the rest of Dorset taking place in 2021.