Psychological impact of major surgery

Dr Melissa Sanchez
Clinical Psychologist
Service Lead
Harefield Hospital
Royal Brompton & Harefield NHS Foundation Trust
Why is psychology important in physiotherapy?

- Compliance with rehabilitation
- Risk factor for adverse clinical outcomes
- Risk factor for mortality
- Impact on length of stay (LOS)
- Impact on long term wellbeing
Stages of rehab

- Patients pass thru different stages in rehab processes:
  1. Contemplation
  2. Preparation
  3. Action
  4. Maintenance

- Eliciting change talk in rehab sessions:
  1. Desire to change
  2. Ability to change
  3. Reasons to change
  4. Need to change
  5. Commitment to change
Presenting psychological issues

- Depression and anxiety (Hx/ current)
- Adherence difficulties (medications, exercise)
- Adjustment difficulties (acute vs chronic)
- Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Pain symptomatology
Adjustment difficulties

- Acute: moving forward from initial shock

- Body images issues, eg. scars, trachi

- Lifestyle issues: loss of independence, change in functional capacity

- Change in roles of partner/parent (eg. dressings)
Post surgery rehab environment

- Sensory overload, eg. alarms, bins
- Cognitive impairment, eg. stroke, surgery effect, drugs
- Sleep deprivation, eg. 24/7 unit
- Awareness of other patients on unit, eg. progress, trauma
- Psychiatric symptoms, eg. hallucinations
What can physios do?

- Consider any relevant mental health Hx
- Consider family dynamics and available support
- Consider environment (e.g., isolated in cubicle)
- Assess patient’s understanding of diagnosis, treatment options, prognosis, rehab plan
Communication skills

- Active listening skills - reflective listening
  - Pay attention to detail

- Open questions vs closed questions
  - How do you feel? Vs Do you feel sad?

- Paraphrasing
  - Can I just check what you’ve said is...

- Summarising
  - So we agree the plan for now is...
Communication: OARS

- **Open questions** - elicit richer information
- **Affirm** - challenges that lay ahead, identify skills/ strengths you perceive patient has, but you see their point of view
- **Reflect** - on patient’s struggles or ambivalence
- **Summary** - check your plan out with patient for accuracy and agreement of goals
SMART Goals

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time-bound
CUSTOMISING INDIVIDUAL PATIENT REHAB PLANS

STAIRS
SELF-CARE
WEIGHTS
OFF BIPAP
STANDING
BIKE
WALKING
STAIRS

DEGREES OF INDEPENDENCE
Home
Ward
Thank you for inviting me to speak with you today.

Any questions?