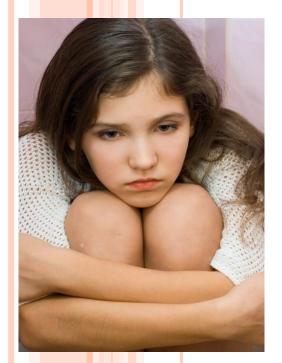
Prevention of depression and anxiety in adolescents

A RCT testing the efficacy and mechanisms of Internet-based self-help problem solving therapy



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Depression and anxiety are common

5% incidence

20% lifetime prevalence

Kessler et al., 2001



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...and related to various maladaptive outcomes

e.g.:

- low peer contact and peer rejection
- low perceived quality of social support
- social problem solving deficits
- negative self-image
- poor parent-child relationships
- substance abuse
- behavioral problems
- learning disabilities



e.g., Ge et al., 1994; Steinhausen et al., 2007; Herman-Statuet al.

Prevention and early intervention

Problems with regular healthcare services

- → the Internet
- Low threshold acceptability
- Used frequently by young people
- Reduces objections like lack
 of willingness to talk to a
 stranger and fear of stigma

Cuijpers, 1997





"On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog."

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Self-help

Cost-efficient and effective way to appropriately treat large groups of individuals

As effective as face-to-face treatments



Even people who write self-help books can get writer's block.

- No extensively trained therapists needed
- Waiting lists may be reduced
- Traveling time is saved
 - Patients can work at their own pace

Christensen & Griffiths, 2002



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Problem-Solving Therapy

Effective in a variety of problem areas in adults

- No complex skills or understanding of intrapersonal processes needed
- Focus on improving coping skills for problems and stressful events

Cuijpers et al., 2007



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The present study

Objectives

- To examine the efficacy of web-based guided self-help PST with adolescents reporting depressive and anxiety symptoms
- 2. To test potential mediating and moderating variables in order to gain insight into how the intervention works and for whom it works best



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Study design

- RCT; N = 210
- Intervention versus wait-list
- Email support





Procedure

- Recruitment
- Signing in on website: brochure and IC
- Brochure and IC to parents
- Email with link to baseline questionnaire
- Diagnostic interview by telephone
- Randomization
- Assessments: before and during the intervention, at treatment termination, and 4, 8, and 12 months after the start of the intervention



In- and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria

- Sufficient knowledge of the Dutch language
- Access to Internet
- Having an email address

Exclusion criteria

- Absence of parental permission
- Already receiving treatment
- Severe depressive symptoms (CES-D > 40)
- Severe anxiety symptoms (HADS-A > 14)
- Prominent suicide ideation (BDI item > 1)



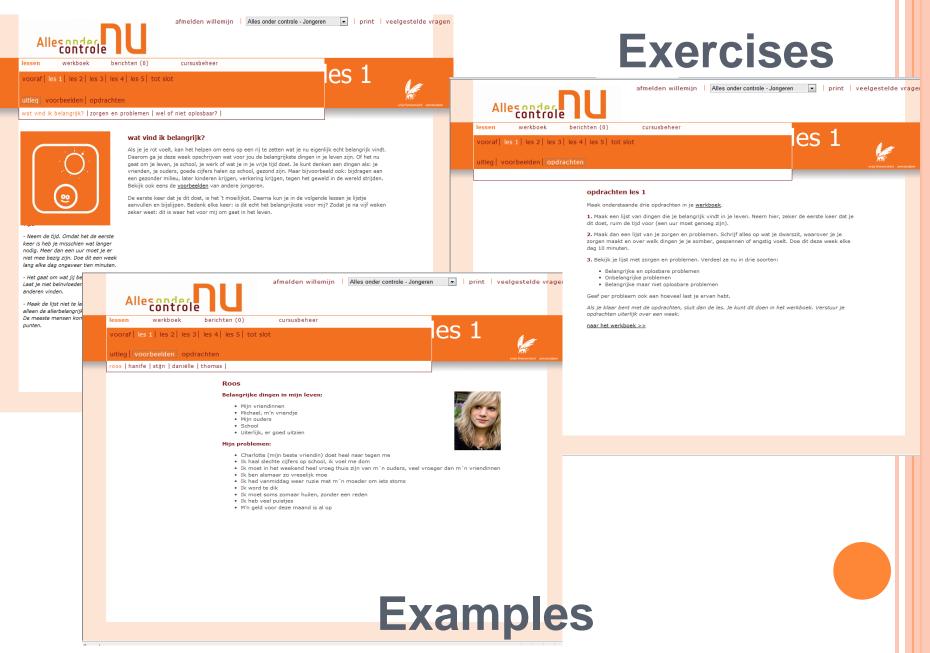
The intervention

5 lessons

 (1) List of what is most important / problems
 (2) Important problems: problem-solving procedure
 (3) Unimportant problems: eliminating negative thoughts / enhancing positive thoughts
 (4) Unsolvable problems: processing
 (5) A plan for the future



Contents





Een hoofd vol problemen

Als je je rot of angstig voelt, is het moeilijk om nog aan iets anders te denken. Je hoofd zit vol met negatieve gedachten. Wat helpt, is ruimte in je hoofd te maken. In deze les zet je op een rij wat je echt belangrijk vindt in je leven. En waarover je je zorgen maakt. Je ontdekt dat er belangrijke en minder belangrijke problemen zijn. Zo komt er langzaam weer ruimte in je hoofd voor positieve dingen.

Wat vind ik belangrijk?

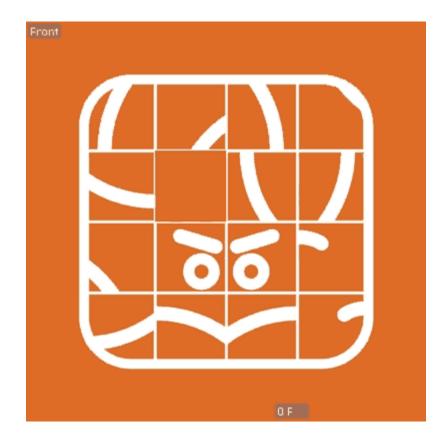
Als je je rot voelt, kan het helpen om eens op een rij te zetten wat je nu eigenlijk echt belangrijk vindt. Daarom ga je deze week opschrijven wat voor jou de belangrijkste dingen in je leven zijn. Of het nu gaat om je leven, je school, je werk of wat je in je vrije tijd doet. Je kunt denken aan dingen als: je vrienden, je ouders, goede cijfers halen op school, gezond zijn. Maar bijvoorbeeld ook: bijdragen aan een gezonder milieu, later kinderen krijgen, verkering krijgen, tegen het geweld in de wereld strijden. Bekijk ook eens de voorbeelden van andere jongeren.

De eerste keer dat je dit doet, is het 't moeilijkst. Daarna kun je in de volgende lessen je lijstje aanvullen en bijslijpen. Bedenk elke keer: is dit echt het belangrijkste voor mij? Zodat je na vijf

す 😜 Internet

🔍 100% 👘

Animation from the website



Outcome measures

Primary

- Depression (CES-D)
- Anxiety (HADS-A)

Secundary

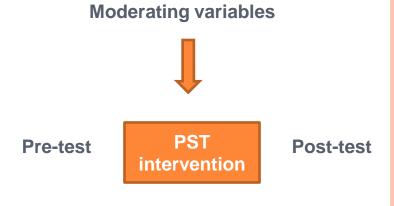
- Quality of life (PedsQL)
- Social anxiety (SAS-A)
- Direct and indirect costs (TiC-P)



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Measurement of predictors

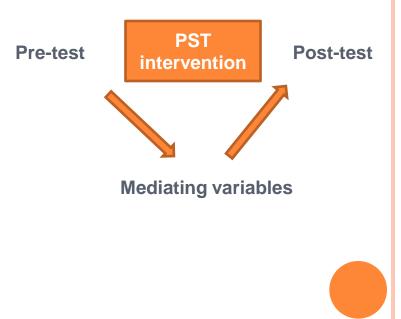
- Demographics
- Substance use
- Social support (SSS-A)
- Working alliance (WAI-SF)
- Physical exercise (Godin-Sheppard)
- Experience of life events (LEQ)
- Expectations
- Motivation
- Externalizing behavior (YSR)
- Satisfaction





Measures of mediating variables

- Problem solving skills
- Worrying, rumination
- Mastery
- Self-esteem





Discussion

Recruitment difficulties

- Awareness target group
- Parental permission
- Diagnostic interview

amsterdam

Recruitment methods

- Banners and advertisements on the Internet
- Advertisements in magazines
- Referral by school-doctors
- Brochures and posters in schools
- Information to parents
 - (in mental health care institutions)



Discussion

Strenghts

- Practice-based project
- Web-based intervention
- Insight into subgroup differences and mechanisms of change
- Implementation of an effective Internet intervention
- Comparison with clinical samples

Limitation

- Refusals to participate: selection bias



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Conclusion



Many adolescents report symptoms of depression and anxiety but do not seek treatment in regular healthcare

This study aims to contribute to the evidencebased preventive treatment of emotional problems in adolescents by investigating problem solving self-help therapy via Internet



Thank you

More information?

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