

Recovery Through Activity: An Online Occupational Therapy Intervention

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for Mental Health

Lead Organisation: Hywel Dda University Health
Board

In partnership with: Cardiff University

This unique all-Wales project is run by Hywel Dda University Health Board in collaboration with every health board across Wales.

Background

Recovery through activity (RTA) is an occupational therapy group intervention usually facilitated on a face to face basis. The intervention introduces service users to a wide variety of activities available in their local community to enhance health and wellbeing.

The pandemic has promoted creativity in discovering virtual solutions to delivering interventions, and connecting individuals with online resources that they can access safely from home. Occupational Therapy leads across Wales, developed a standardised protocol for virtual delivery of RTA with an agreed set of evaluation tools. This would enable all health boards to compare outcomes and build a robust evidence base.

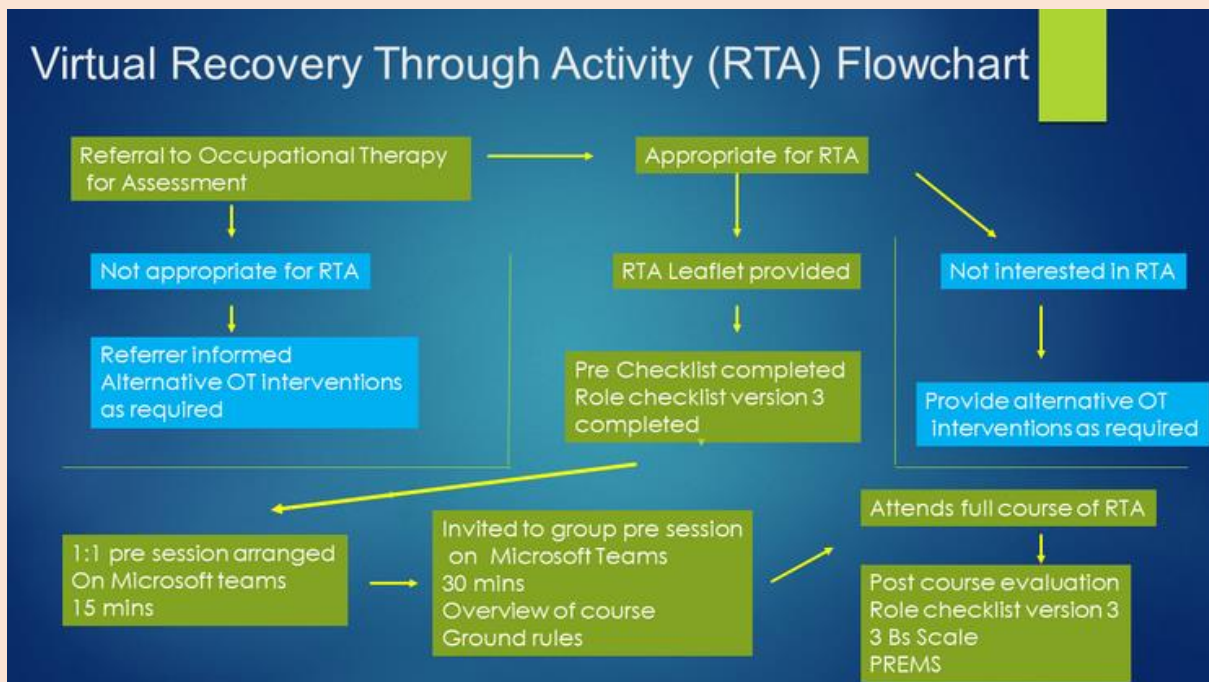


Figure 1

A flowchart titled 'Virtual Recovery Through Activity (RTA).'

- 'Referral to Occupational Therapy for Assessment' leads to 'Not appropriate for RTA'
- 'Not appropriate for RTA' leads to 'Referrer informed Alternative OT interventions as required'
- 'Referral to Occupational Therapy for Assessment' also leads to 'Appropriate for RTA'
- 'Appropriate for RTA' leads to 'RTA leaflet provided'
- 'RTA leaflet provided' leads to 'Pre Checklist completed Role checklist version 3 completed'
- 'Pre Checklist completed Role checklist version 3 completed' leads to 'One to one pre session arranged on Microsoft Teams, 15 mins'
- 'One to one pre session arranged on Microsoft Teams, 15 mins' leads to 'Invited to group pre session on Microsoft Teams. 30 mins. Overview of course. Ground rules.'
- 'Invited to group pre session on Microsoft Teams. 30 mins. Overview of course. Ground rules.' leads to 'Attends full course of RTA'
- 'Attends full course of RTA' leads to 'Post course evaluation. Role checklist version 3. 3 bs Scale. PREMS.'

- 'Appropriate for RTA' also leads to 'Not interested in RTA'
- 'Not interested in RTA' leads to 'Provide alternative OT interventions as required'

End of description.

Project Aims

- To enlighten individuals on the benefit of activities for health and wellbeing
- To provide an opportunity for individuals to explore/ try out new activities for health and wellbeing
- To enlighten individuals on the benefit of activities for health and wellbeing
- To create a virtual version of RTA that is accessible to all despite the Covid restrictions
- To provide individuals with early access to Occupational Therapy input regardless of their condition or stage within their recovery process
- To develop an evidence based Occupational Therapy group intervention which could be facilitated centrally to cover a wide geographical area.
- To raise awareness of online resources available to support individuals to carry out meaningful activities and provide opportunities for individuals to connect with others
- To have a standardised protocol with nationally agreed outcome measures for delivery of RTA across Wales with the opportunity to build an evidence base for RTA group interventions
- Improve number of referrals to Occupational therapy from other members of the multidisciplinary team by developing a website and downloadable materials.
- RTA strengthens joint working between statutory and third sector services making the best use of community resources and ensuring that people can access the right support at the right time, a key element of prudent healthcare

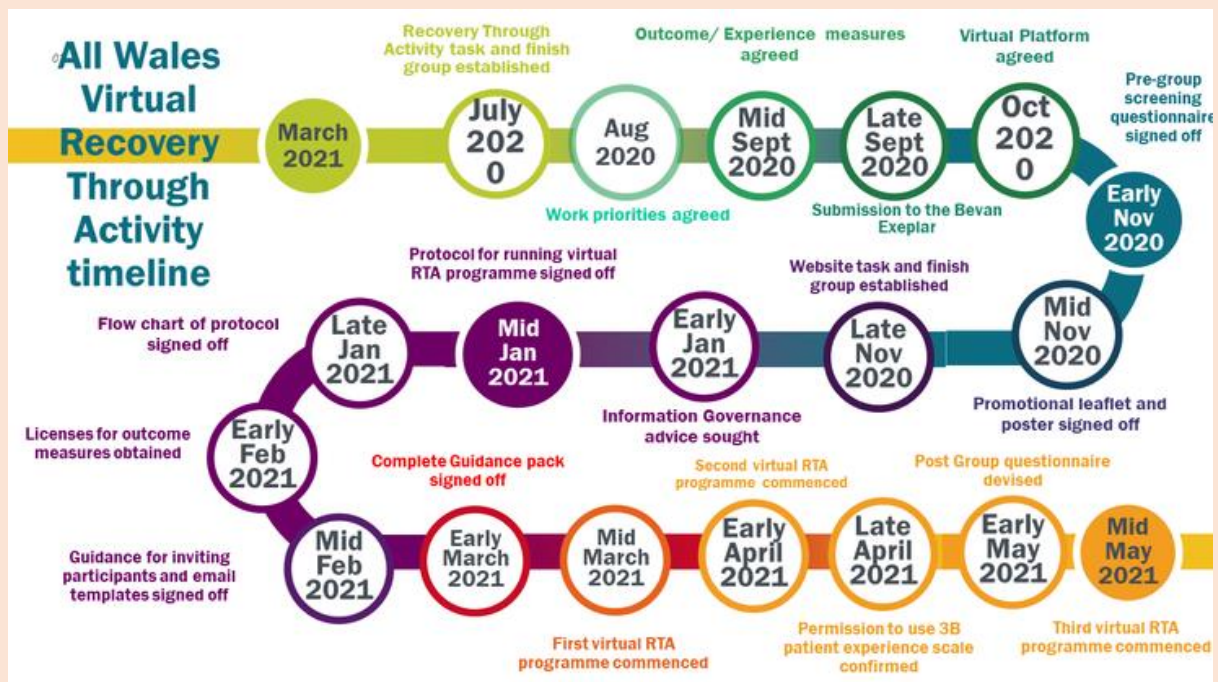


Figure 2

A timeline titled: All Wales Virtual Recovery Through Activity Timeline.

- July 2020: Recovery Through Activity task and finish group established
- August 2020: Work priorities agreed
- Mid-September 2020: Outcome/experience measures agreed
- Late-September 2020: Submission to the Bevan Exemplar
- October 2020: Virtual Platform Agreed
- Early November 2020: Pre-group screening questionnaire signed off
- Mid November 2020: Promotional leaflet and poster signed off
- Late November 2020: Website established, and finish group established
- Early January 2021: Information and governance advice sought
- Mid-January 2021: Protocol for running virtual RTA programme signed off
- Late January 2021: Flow chart of protocol signed off

- Early February 2021: Licenses for outcome measures obtained
- Mid-February 2021: Guidance for inviting participants and email templates signed off
- Early March 2021: Complete Guidance pack signed off
- Mid-March 2021: First virtual RTA programme commenced
- Early April 2021: Second virtual RTA programme commenced
- Late April 2021: Permission to use 3B patient experience confirmed
- Early May 2021: Post Group questionnaire advised
- Mid-May 2021: Third virtual RTA programme commenced

End of description.

Challenges

- Technology barriers – including Internet Connectivity, Finding suitable venues for staff to comply with covid, confidentiality, and ergonomics whilst facilitating the group, identifying an appropriate online platform that complied with confidentiality guidance and confidence of staff and participants using the technology. The latter was resolved by arranging in service training sessions with staff, and offering one to one sessions for participants.
- Complying with information governance guidelines across health boards – this was overcome by liaising with Information Governance teams in each health board.
- Sourcing funding for one of the key outcome measures – which was overcome through good communication with operational managers
- Lack of funding for developing a website

Key Outcomes

- Developing a virtual RTA course provides individuals with a choice of intervention methods i.e face to face or virtual, 1:1 or group work; and is therefore more client-centred

- Improved accessibility to those earlier on in their recovery journey who may not feel ready to attend a face to face group
- Introducing individuals to online resources that they can engage in within their own time, which has been particularly important during the pandemic
- Using an agreed protocol and outcome measures enables the health boards across wales to produce a robust data set of outcomes that are comparable
- More sustainable delivery model as can be delivered centrally across a wide geographical area
- Enabled staff to build their technology skills within a short timeframe and put these skills into practice
- Improved understanding of the value of meaningful occupation across multidisciplinary professionals and increased referral rates to occupational therapy.
- Provided opportunities for occupational therapy staff to work collaboratively on an all-Wales basis.

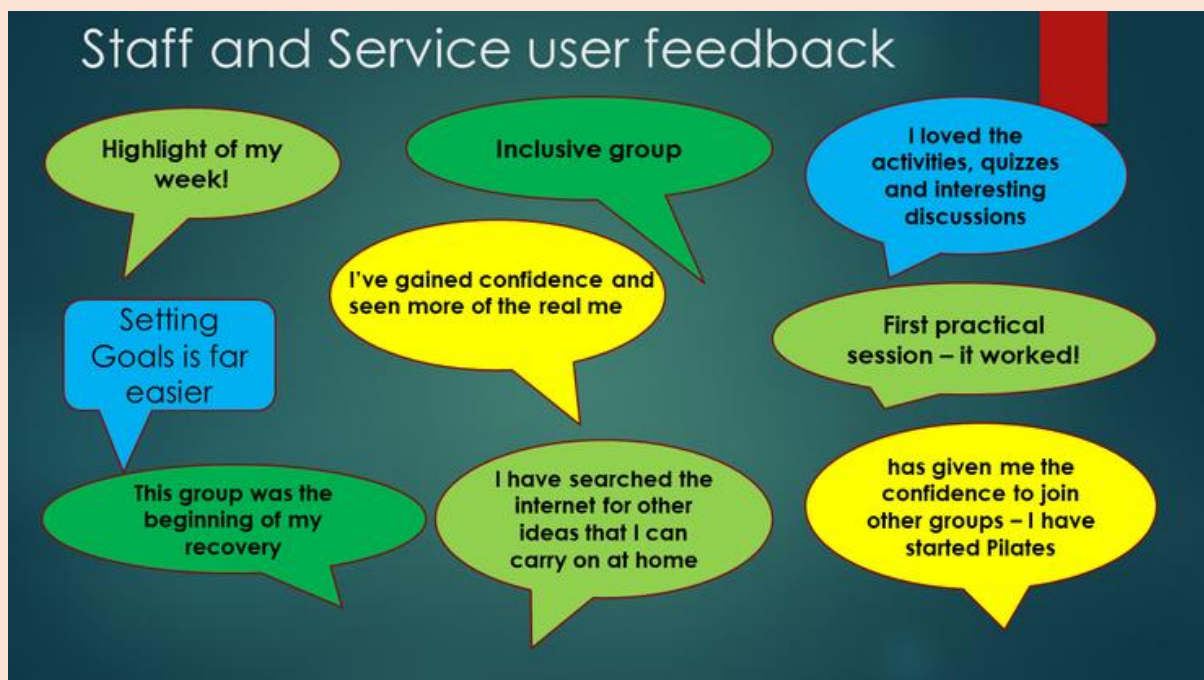


Figure 3

A series of speech bubbles titled 'Staff and Service user feedback'

- Highlight of my week!
- Inclusive group
- I loved the activities, quizzes, and interesting discussions
- Setting Goals is far easier
- I've gained confidence and seen more of the real me
- First practical session – it worked!
- This group was the beginning of my recovery
- I have searched the internet for other ideas that I can carry on at home
- Has given me the confidence to join other groups – I have started Pilates

End of description.

Next Steps

We aim to roll out the virtual RTA programme across mental health and learning disability services throughout Wales.

We will work with Cardiff University to analyse the qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate RTA and improve occupational therapy interventions, sharing the evidence from RTA interventions widely. This evidence base should enable us to influence the recruitment of additional Occupational Therapists within mental health to deliver RTA interventions.

We also hope to complete the RTA website to raise the profile of RTA across the multidisciplinary teams and improve accessibility to occupational therapy for all.

Our Exemplar Experience

This experience has put occupational therapy on the map, provided excellent training opportunities and enabled us to work collaboratively across Wales.

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