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The impact of illness: A story of two people

Same symptoms, same symptom severity...yet different outcomes. **Why?**



Same symptoms, same severity

Good quality of life



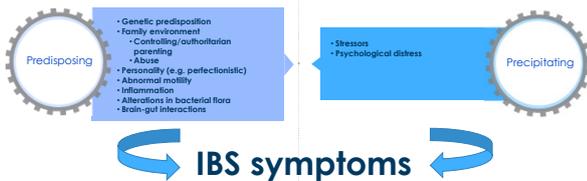
Same symptoms, same severity

Poor quality of life

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The impact of illness: A story of two people

Predisposing and precipitating factors:



Wongpasan, S., et al. The journey between brain and gut: A systematic review of psychological mechanisms of treatment effect in irritable bowel syndrome. *Br J Health Psychol*. 2017; 22(4): p. 701-734.

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Introduction to the IBS resilience program: A transdiagnostic approach

This program is based upon a TRANSDIAGNOSTIC approach:

Provides a range of psychological strategies which have been shown to be efficacious at addressing distress and/or IBS-related processes

It's based on your involvement - YOU ARE THE EXPERT - YOU know what you think, feel, and experience

Psychological strategies identified in the resilience program are designed for you to try and out and test - find what works for YOU!

This program is a good starting point, but it's not the end of the journey....

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Introduction to the IBS resilience program: A transdiagnostic approach

This program has 5 modules based on a combination of:

Stress management aims to reduce stress by utilising a range of strategies such as relaxed breathing

Cognitive behaviour therapy aims to change unhelpful thinking patterns (e.g. my IBS is getting worse) and behaviours (e.g. avoiding going out) that facilitate IBS symptoms, increase distress and reduce quality of life

Acceptance and commitment therapy aims to change the negative cycle of distress associated with illness. Like CBT, its strategies are focused on changing the way in which you relate or react to areas of your life that cause distress

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Introduction to the IBS resilience program: A Transdiagnostic approach

Module outline

Module 1: Stress management & moving towards your vision for the Future
- Stress management and setting goals based on your values

- Targets: Hypervigilance/Visceral sensitivity, perceived lack of control regarding IBS, stress and psychological distress, and identifying with illness

Module 2: How you think impacts on how you feel - Mindfulness and acceptance, and cognitive defusion

- Targets: Catastrophizing and ruminating about symptoms, perceived lack of control regarding IBS, hypervigilance/visceral sensitivity, and stress and psychological distress

Module 3: How you think impacts on how you feel - Cognitive flexibility

- Targets: Catastrophizing and ruminating about symptoms, perceived lack of control regarding IBS, hypervigilance/visceral sensitivity, and stress and psychological distress

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**Introduction to the IBS resilience program:
A Transdiagnostic approach**

Module outline

Module 4: How you act can impact on how you think and feel - Exposure work

- Targets: Avoidance, safety behaviours

Module 5: Review and overcoming setbacks

- Targets: Building gains, overcoming setbacks, other resources

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Building resilience and optimal well-being

Module 1: Stress management - What is stress and how to reduce it through slow relaxed breathing

Module 2: Mindfulness and acceptance - Learning to be more observant of experiences, rather than being caught up in them

Module 3: Cognitive defusion - Identifying when you get all caught up and learning to not add fuel to the fire

Module 4: Exposure work - Identifying and overcoming avoidance

Module 5: Review and overcoming setbacks - Identifying and overcoming challenges and setbacks

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The practice of the strategies in each module may take around 20 and 40 minutes each day

Evidence indicates that outcomes are directly related to practice

To be effective, the skills must be practiced regularly

The more you put in, the more you will get out of the program

Time requirements for the program

Each online module is designed to be completed in around 45 minutes.... however

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Identifying barriers to change

- When you feel distressed or overwhelmed with gastrointestinal symptoms, activities and goals can feel overwhelming or even not worth the effort
- One can also feel overwhelmed by unhelpful negative thoughts, making it difficult to focus on a goal
- Getting active is one of the most helpful ways of overcoming distress. Unfortunately, when individuals feel distressed, they can also experience a lack of energy (and therefore wanting to sleep or do nothing) making exercise difficult



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My golden rule:

It's NOT what you DON'T do, but what you DO do!

If you do feel overwhelmed with negative thoughts and/or a lack of energy, keeping busy and active is important – but HOW do you do this?

- ① Start with small goals, such as walking outside for 5 minutes, walk around the block or at a park. If you only feel like sitting, then don't do it at home, go out to a park or to a shopping centre
- ② And at all times, focus on the positive, not the negative - It's NOT what you DON'T do, but what you DO do!
- ③ Remember all journeys start with one step, focus on what you CAN and DO do, not what others are doing or have done

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My golden rule
It's NOT what you DON'T do, but
what you DO do



Success

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