



BALLYHOO

*Behavioral Health
Family Medicine Newsletter*

November 2022 Issue

WET Project
Anxiety clinic
Pathweigh
Empowered Relief
6 Building Blocks
CFHA Presentation



WET Project

Dr. Aimee Zisner AND Post-doctoral fellow, Dr. Kyle Haws

Written exposure therapy (WET) is a brief, yet effective evidence-based treatment for posttraumatic disorder (PTSD). Compared to cognitive process therapy, a well-established first-line intervention for PTSD, WET produces excellent treatment outcomes with much lower attrition despite requiring no homework and less than half the number of treatment sessions.

Although WET has immense potential to improve behavioral health equity for PTSD by addressing access barriers to quality treatment, WET has never been studied in primary care.

Post-doctoral fellow, Dr. Kyle Haws, and CU Medicine primary care psychologist, Dr. Aimee Zisner, are spearheading a pilot program to study the feasibility and effectiveness of WET in primary care. This research project is generously supported by the Department of Family Medicine's Pilot and Exploratory Program. To learn more about this program, please visit their website at <https://medschool.cuanschutz.edu/family-medicine/research-and-innovation/for-researchers-and-faculty>.

Anxiety Clinic

Exposure Therapy and Anxiety Disorders

Dr. Angelo Alago

Dr. Angelo Alago has been working to roll out a specialty service focusing on exposure therapy and anxiety disorders. Thus far, he's provided services at Lone Tree, Westminster, and AF Williams in addition to his work at Depot Hill. He has had good initial successes with helping patients with problems ranging from generalized anxiety to OCD and has been able to help some patients meet their goals of decreasing or eliminating benzo use!

Trainees have been learning exposure-based and third-wave behavior therapy strategies from precepting with Dr. Alago.

Dr. Alago's clinical availability at AF Williams should be increasing beginning in the new year, so stay tuned!

Pathweigh

With funding from NIH, PIs Leigh Perreault, MD and Jodi Summers Holtrop, PhD, are leading a project, PATHWEIGH, involving supportive tools built into EPIC to help providers in conducting effective weight management in primary care. Lauren Tolle, PhD is working with the clinical team to increase BHP involvement in weight management. To this end, she has created a toolkit of resources BHPs can use in providing evidence-based strategies to help patients with health behavior change (link to the toolkit can be found [here](#)) as well as is leading a monthly learning collaborative to support BHPs involved with PATHWEIGH. If you're interested in joining, please email pathweigh@cuanschutz.edu. This project is starting to enroll its third cohort of primary care practices in early 2023.

6BB, Empowered Relief and CFHA Presentation



Dr. Vanessa Rollins along with a Dr. Jill VanWyk were trained a year ago in Empowered Relief as part of the 6BB project. They saw potential for a behavioral health treatment for patients with chronic pain who might not otherwise engage with behavioral health.

Empowered Relief (ER) is an evidence-based, single-session pain class that rapidly equips patients with pain management skills. It's also been validated in a virtual format.

They have successfully run several virtual groups since for UFMB patients and from the other DFM practices who have been referred. Additional DFM psychologists are now receiving training in Empowered Relief and Dr. Rollins and VanWyk are turning their sights to broader practice improvement and research to allow increased availability for Empowered Relief. They are enthusiastic about Empowered Relief and the unique ways that Integrated Family Medicine contributes to the prevention, treatment, and management of pain.

One Family Medicine Psychologist said "Through the 6BB project, I have been able to offer our Lone Tree Primary Care patients with chronic pain a one-time virtual class to learn more about their pain and skills to help improve their experience of pain called Empowered Relief. We have completed 2 classes in the last 2 months with 7 patients in attendance. We plan to offer the virtual class at least every other month. Patients have reported that they found the class informative and were grateful for the opportunity to attend."

Dr. Courtney Legge and Dr. Aaron Bergman were also pleased to present at the Collaborative Family Healthcare Association's (CFHA) annual conference on integration efforts in 2022 at Lone Tree Primary Care. They reviewed the efforts to transform behavioral health within LTTPC into a more fully integrated system and the development of new roles such as a Lone Tree Behavioral Health Committee and Behavioral Health Medical Assistant Champions.

Success Story from Patients



From a telehealth only, patient who has had symptoms of anxiety and depression which have reduced since meeting with Dr. Christy Thrash based on PHQ-9 and GAD-7 scores. "Christy has helped me so much over the past six weeks. She taught me new coping skills, and she reminded me about the coping skills that I already have and forget to use. Meeting with her has really made a huge difference in my life."