

Addressing Depression and Social Loneliness in Older Adults: Findings from the BASIL+ Randomised Control Trial

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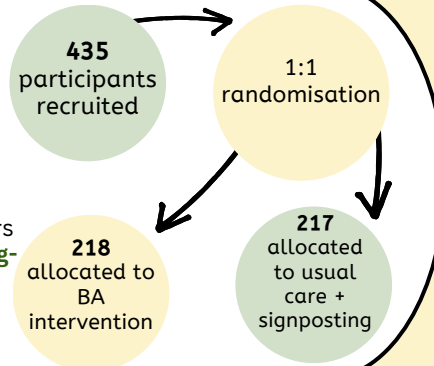


BACKGROUND

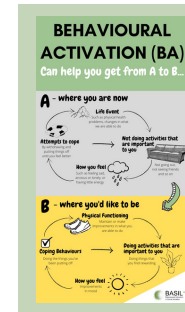
Older adults (>65 years) were more likely to be **socially isolated** during the **COVID-19 pandemic**, with increased risk of depression and loneliness. We explored whether a **remote Behavioural Activation (BA)** intervention could **mitigate depression and loneliness** in this group.

METHODS

- The BASIL+ trial was a parallel-group **randomised controlled trial** and participants were recruited from **12 sites across 26 general practices in England and Wales**.
- Participants were older adults (65 years or over) with **two or more physical long-term conditions** and symptoms of **low mood or depression** (as indicated by the PHQ9).



BASIL+ BA INTERVENTION



Participants received **up to 8 remote (telephone) sessions** with a trained **BASIL Support Worker**.

The BASIL support worker guided participants through the sessions using the **co-produced BASIL+ booklet**.

RESULTS

The BASIL+ BA intervention improved wellbeing in older adults in the short-term (3 months):

- Showed larger (and significant) reductions in depression** at 1 and 3 months compared to usual care + signposting
- Significantly decreased emotional loneliness** (not social loneliness) at 3 months compared to usual care + signposting.
- Improved quality of life** relating to mental wellbeing at 3 months.

CONCLUSION

- The BASIL+ BA intervention is an effective and potentially scalable intervention** that can reduce symptoms of depression and emotional loneliness in at-risk groups in the short term.
- The findings of this trial **contribute to the range of strategies to improve the mental health of older adults with multiple long-term conditions**.
- These results can be helpful to **policy makers beyond the pandemic in reducing the global burden of depression and addressing the health impacts of loneliness**, particularly in at-risk groups.

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