NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration

Impact Inclusion Innovation Investment

Hospital to community

Providing personalised health support for people living with severe mental illness (UCLP Primrose Study)

ARC North Thames in collaboration with ARC East Midlands and ARC Yorkshire and Humber

The challenge
People living with severe mental illness have a reduced life expectancy of 15-20 years, particularly due to cardiovascular disease linked to modifiable risk factors. The Primrose programme trains healthcare professionals to offer tailored sessions to patients to help them set specific, personalised and achievable health goals that are tailored to their individual needs and circumstances.

The approach
The Primrose model began with a randomised controlled trial in 2010, where Primrose was estimated to save the NHS £895 per patient per year in healthcare costs compared to usual care. Since then, it has expanded to include intervention development, implementation, and evaluation, supported by NIHR ARC North Thames.

The outcomes and impact
Individuals who were supported through Primrose are less likely to be admitted to inpatient care, reducing hospital care needs. Patients also report improved mental health, motivation, and physical health. Healthcare staff noted patients' improved engagement, quality of life, and reduced isolation.

Through Primrose, healthcare professionals have gained confidence and skills to work in a patient-centred and holistic way with patients living with severe mental illness. This can also inform their broader clinical practice beyond the Primrose programme. The Primrose model has been included in national guidance recommended by NHS England, as well as local strategy.

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