ISRII 8th Scientific Meeting

Technologies for a digital world:
Improving health across the lifespan

7 - 9 April 2016 | Seattle, USA

PROGRAM BOOKLET

Organized by

ISRII   ELSEVIER

www.isrii-conference.com

Peer-to-Peer Psychotherapy Tools

Katie O'Leary, University of Washington
Morgan Dixon, University of Washington
Michael Toomim, Invisible College
Jacob O. Wobbrock, University of Washington
Wanda Pratt, University of Washington

Peers are an important source of support for people with mental illnesses, relieving social isolation and marginalization. Peer support can transcend traditional health care delivery settings, and has a greater or equivalent effect on treatment outcomes than usual care. Moreover, peer supporters gain substantial benefits from helping others, including decreased mortality risk, reduced dependence on social security, and higher self-efficacy.

Unfortunately, state-of-the-art tools for mental health reveal an almost exclusive focus on designing interventions and measuring outcomes for *recipients* of help. The benefits of *giving* help have been largely ignored in this design space. This is surprising given the ample evidence of the health benefits of helping. We are developing tools that benefit helpers through skill-development and mastery experiences in a peer-to-peer environment. In addition, we plan to assess self-efficacy and perceptions of social support to broaden the scope of outcome measures beyond a focus on reduction in illness symptoms.

We contribute two new peer-to-peer psychotherapy tools: *Cheeseburger Therapy,* a crowdsourced web-based system for peer cognitive therapy; and *Chatback,* a mobile texting app for peers to practice listening and thinking skills together. Preliminary work developing and piloting Cheeseburger Therapy with psychiatrists and community members receiving therapy, has prepared us to run a real world deployment of the tool with peers. In addition, we will design Chatback with pairs of peers experiencing mental illness. We hope to understand opportunities and challenges for developing technologies that promote mutual help for mental resilience. Our contributions are the design, development, and evaluation of technologies for peer support for mental health.