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THE IMPACT STUDY - MOTIVATING A CHANGE IN HEALTH BEHAVIOUR

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IMPACT is a five-year project funded by the Department of Health, UK. Running in the UK and now Sweden, the IMPACT Project aims to target the poor physical health and excessive substance use seen in people with SMI. There is evidence that behavioural interventions may be associated with an improvement in physical health and substance use in this population.

IMPACT is a randomised controlled trial of a health promotion intervention which consists of a manualised modular approach to working with people with severe mental illness to empower them to improve their physical health and substance use habits. It consists of The Manual, The Reference Guide and The Better Health Handbook which make up a therapy package to support clients to become healthier.

The therapy is provided by care coordinators (mental health practitioners) over a 6-9 month period and combines Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) with Motivational Interviewing (MI) principles. The aim is to work with clients to help them identify their own problem health behaviours, e.g. smoking, diet, exercise, drug and alcohol use. Realistic goals are set and revised with the client, and individual and group sessions are used to develop personal motivation to change. Information, workbooks and diaries are provided to record progress and give helpful hints, while meaningful alternative activities are introduced to replace problem health behaviours.