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"Whatever. I'm going to die anyway." Psycho-social developmental considerations when working with obese teenagers

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Providing Teenagers with developmentally appropriate explanations of their chronic conditions and treatment recommendations is a component of any medical or psychological intervention. This is challenging as there has been limited research into how Teenagers and young people understand and conceptualise health, illness and treatment (Erikson, 2005). As the period of growth during adolescence and then into early adulthood is a period of fairly rapid, always uneven development and change, it is unlikely that any Psychological tool or technique is going to be effective for all youngsters across this time span. Developing interventions for Obese or Diabetic Teenagers necessarily involves an understanding of young people's changing causal reasoning, their language competencies and self-understanding over this period of development. In addition a thorough appreciation of their environmental context, family, school, peer relationships and so forth, is relevant. This paper provides a brief introduction to the pitfalls and opportunities presented by working with this client group for medical and allied professionals and argues for a more individualised and attitudinal approach to this client group.

Biography

John completed his MA in Social Work Studies at the age of 30 at Exeter University. Practising for 12 years as a Cognitive and Behavioural Psychotherapist and Motivational Interviewer John joined the Improving Access in Psychological Therapies (IAPT) teaching team at Plymouth University in 2007. Leaving in 2012 to take up a more familiar Clinical Leadership Role in 2012 in an IAPT service John joined the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) as a Lecturer in Social Work in 2017. John has managed and led Primary and Secondary Care Mental Health Services in the UK as well as becoming Director for his own Independent Consulting and Treatment Company. He consults to a wide variety of Health Insurance and Psycholegal Firms in the UK currently. He has published in Motivational Interviewing and managed through a number of CBT research projects in a clinical setting. He retains an interest in psychological aspects of chronic condition management.

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