

MODEM

modelling outcome and cost impacts
of interventions for dementia

START: Strategies for Relatives

STrAtegies for RelaTives (START) aims to reduce depression and anxiety in family carers. Carers receive an eight week programme of individual psychological therapy sessions.

Key points:

- the START programme helps reduce depression and anxiety in family carers of a person with dementia
- the programme offers value for money (is cost effective)
- further research is looking at if START helps reduce depression and anxiety for five years after taking part in the programme and if it helps people with dementia stay at home longer.

What is START?

The eight week START programme is given by trained and supervised psychology graduates. Carers can choose where they have their therapy sessions, in the research most of them chose to have them at home.

The sessions include information on:

- what dementia is and how it affects people
- carer stress, how to recognise it and techniques for managing it
- how to manage difficult behavior
- how to access support that is available for people with dementia and family carers
- how to use the skills learnt and planning for the future.

Carers are given a plan, a manual and a relaxation CD for each session. They keep them so they can use them again.

Why is START important for family carers?

Many people with dementia live at home and are cared for by a member of their family and it is important to find the best ways to support them. Caring for people can be challenging and stressful and about 40% of those caring for a family member with dementia have symptoms of depression or anxiety.

Family carers found that an understanding of the condition made it easier for them to cope with some of the challenges. Carers valued the personal contact with the therapist and the opportunity to share their concerns with a health professional.

Does START work?

The START programme helps reduce depression and anxiety in family carers of a person with dementia. START has been assessed to find out if it works (we call this evaluated) in a randomised controlled trial (RCT). The research found that taking part in START reduced depression and anxiety in family carers and improved their quality of life in both the short term (at 8 months) and in the longer term (2 years after the study started).

Is START cost-effective?

The research found that START offers value for money (is cost-effective) in the short and the longer term. The START programme reduced anxiety and depression in people caring for a family member with dementia, and improved their quality of life at no extra cost to the health and social care system.

The cost of START for the NHS

In the study the START sessions were run by trained post-graduate psychologists, often in the family home. The average cost for the START intervention was £253 per carer (2015/16 prices).

Further information about START

England

START is currently available through the NHS in some areas of the country. Contact your Community Mental Health Team, Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) clinic or memory clinic to find out if it is available in your area. You can find out where your

local IAPT clinic is on the NHS Choices website. The START website at University College London (UCL) has further information for people interested in delivering the programme including details of their train the trainer course and copies of the manuals.

Further research

Gill Livingston and the START team at University College London are interviewing carers who took part in the study for a further five years to find out if START continues to help depression and anxiety in family carers. They will also look at if the programme helps people with dementia stay at home longer.

Organisations

Click to find out more about organisations that have information or offer support to people with dementia and their families - [http://
toolkit.modem-dementia.org.uk/further-support-and-information/](http://toolkit.modem-dementia.org.uk/further-support-and-information/).

This is the short summary. You can view/download the full version of the summary with more detailed information and references on the MODEM Dementia Evidence Toolkit website: <http://toolkit.modem-dementia.org.uk/intervention/start-intervention-strategies-for-relatives/>.

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