

NICO: Narrative Intervention for Long Haul COVID-19

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Background

People living with Long COVID-19 have high symptom burden and trouble with activities of daily living.

The NICO pilot study aimed to establish acceptability and feasibility of an asynchronous narrative intervention for people living with Long COVID.

Methods

Participants self-reported living with Long COVID. Measures were administered at baseline and 3 months. Satisfaction interviews were also conducted at 3 months.

Results

Seventeen participants enrolled, and 11 completed the intervention for a dropout rate of 35.2% which is lower than the average of intervention studies at 60%, this suggests acceptability of the NICO intervention.

Study participants reported

“It gave me a chance to reflect back (on my experiences). It was good for me.”

Some participants liked the asynchronous design and stated that they were able “to work on it whenever.” This flexibility made it easy to fit the intervention into their daily life. One participant also reported that she looked back at past emails for a “pep talk” whenever she needed it.

Instrument Average Baseline and 3-month Scores

Instrument	Baseline	3 months
Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7 item scale (GAD-7) assessment	9.6 (mild to moderate anxiety)	4/1 (minimal anxiety)
Personal Health Questionnaire (PHQ9)	9.3 (high end of mild depressive symptoms)	5.5 (low end of mild depressive symptoms)
Program Satisfaction Interview		All participants reported satisfaction with the program and the program was helpful (n=11)

Participant Demographics

Measurement	Results			
COVID vaccine	No vaccine (3) 17.6%	Received > or equal to 1 (14) 82.4%	Received second vaccine (5) 35.7%	Received a third vaccine (3) 17.6%
Gender	Men (n=10) 58.8%	Women (6) 35.5%	Transfemale/transwoman/male-to-female (n=1) 5.9%	
Race/Ethnicity	Black or African American (n=12) 70.6%	Caucasian or white (n=4) 23.5%	American Indian/Alaskan Native (n=1) 5.9%	Hispanic/Latino/a/x (n=0)
Education	High school diploma or equivalent (n=1) 11.8%	Some college, no degree (n=1) 17.6%	Associate's Degree (n=4) 23.5%	Bachelor's degree (n=4) 23.5%; Master's degree (n=4) 23.5%
Relationship status	Married (n=9) 52.9%	Single (n=7) 41.2%	Widowed (n=1) 5.9%	
Sexual orientation	Heterosexual/straight (n=15) 88.2%	Gay/lesbian (n=2) 11.8%		
Employment status	Employed full-time (n=12) 70.6%	Employed part-time (n=2) 11.8%	Not employed, not seeking employment (n=1) 5.9%	Retired (n=2) 11.8%
Age	33.6 years mean, range (24-54 years), Mode both: 26, 35 Median: 33			

Conclusion

The NICO intervention is feasible and acceptable. Further research should explore the impact on health outcomes and application to other chronic illnesses.

The Dean's Intramural Research Award, College of Nursing, University of Colorado supported this study.