

# A novel psychotherapeutic approach to schizophrenia based on psychological well-being

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A randomized controlled trial published in the current issue of *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* introduces a new psychotherapeutic approach to schizophrenia, based on psychological well-being. Negative symptoms are frequent in patients with schizophrenia and are associated with marked impairments in social functioning. The efficacy of drug-based treatments and psychological interventions on primary negative symptoms remains limited.

The Positive Emotions Program for Schizophrenia is designed to improve pleasure and motivation in [schizophrenia](#) patients by targeting [emotion regulation](#) and [cognitive skills](#) relevant to apathy

and anhedonia.

Eighty participants diagnosed with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder were randomized to receive either treatment as usual or 8 one-hour sessions of the Positive Emotions Program for Schizophrenia plus treatment as usual.

The post-test results and 6-month follow-up assessments according to an intention-to-treat analysis showed that the apathy and anhedonia composite scores indicated statistically greater clinical improvements in participants who received the Positive Emotions Program for Schizophrenia than in participants who did not. In the post-test, anhedonia significantly improved favoring participants to the Positive Emotions Program for Schizophrenia condition. These results were sustained at the 6-month follow-up.

The study shows that a short, easy-to-use, group-based intervention such as the Positive Emotions Program for Schizophrenia may be effective in reducing anhedonia in patients with schizophrenia. Considering the relatively brief and group-based nature of the intervention, the Positive Emotions Program for Schizophrenia could be a cost-effective intervention to implement for patients with negative symptoms of schizophrenia as an adjunctive treatment to social skills training or other psychosocial interventions.

**More information:** Jérôme Favrod et al. Improving Pleasure and Motivation in Schizophrenia: A Randomized Controlled Clinical Trial, *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* (2019). [DOI: 10.1159/000496479](https://doi.org/10.1159/000496479)

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