

Supplementary material

Therapist engagement strategies. All items included reflect therapist microskills. The specific skills included were derived from relevant literature (Seidler et al., 2018; 2019; Beel et al., 2018; Mahalik et al., 2012), and discussed among the author group prior to inclusion in the current study. Participants responded to the extent to which the various therapist engagement strategies were “useful in helping them settle into therapy” according to a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (not at all useful) to 5 (extremely useful), with an additional option for participants to report that the specific strategy “didn’t happen”. In consultation with the author group, it was decided that for the purposes of this study, whether or not particular engagement skills happened at all was a more pertinent measure to the study of dropout. This was decided given men’s engagement in therapy occurs dynamically across the first 1-3 sessions of therapy (Seidler et al., 2018). Therefore, participants who dropped out may not have had the chance to evaluate the extent to which therapist strategies were ‘useful’ but could likely more accurately report which skills happened. As such, the responses to these questions were dichotomised and included as measure of the extent to which men felt various engagement strategies happened during their experience of therapy. The number of these skills that clients reported occurred during their experience of therapy was summed and used as an index of the extent to which they were engaged and oriented appropriately to therapy.

Included items:

1. The therapist explained their role from the outset
2. The therapist asked about my expectations of therapy
3. The therapist explained the structure of therapy and how long it would take
4. The therapist helped me put together goals for what I wanted to get out of therapy
5. The therapist talked about me seeking help in positive terms

6. The therapist created a casual, comfortable and collaborative environment (i.e., I felt that we worked together)
7. The therapist highlighted my strengths and we used these in therapy
8. The therapist used language I could understand (no jargon)
9. The therapist empowered me (e.g. to lead therapy and work towards my goals)
10. The therapist checked whether I felt like therapy was working for me
11. The therapist really tried to understand me
12. The therapist used humour or metaphors in therapy
13. The therapist offered me practical skills and takeaways to work on between sessions