

THE AWARDS 2021

Knowledge Exchange/Transfer Initiative of the Year

Institution name	The Open University
Submission title or project name	'How to do online therapy: A coronavirus primer' – a free online course helping mental health practitioners shift their work online
Nominee/key personnel	Dr Naomi Moller and Dr Andreas Vossler from the School of Psychology and Counselling, Faculty of Arts and Social Science
URL	https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/course/view.php?id=5039
Submission	<p>In March 2020, the UK government announced restrictions on people's lives to stop the spread of Covid-19, and face-to-face therapy became impossible. Overnight, tens of thousands of mental health practitioners, most with no training or experience in online therapy, were forced to move their client work online. This threatened the continued support for people with mental health needs at a time when stress, anxiety and trauma were soaring in the UK due to the pandemic.</p> <p>In response psychology academics at The Open University worked together with the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) to develop an open-access Continuing Professional Development online course to educate and support practitioners to suddenly shift their practice online.</p> <p>The CPD has been hugely successful: launched in April, by July 2020 there were over 14,000 learners with over 7,000 course completion badges awarded. The course has also been lauded by practitioners, charities, and counselling organisations.</p>