Reviewer's report

Title: A pragmatic pilot randomized trial to investigate the effectiveness of BehaviouRal ActiVation group therapy in reducing dEpressive symptoms and improving quality of life in patients with depression: The BRAVE pilot trial protocol

Version: Date: 17 May 2015

Reviewer: Freda Walters

Reviewer's report:

A well written proposal on intervention that is much needed in this population. I agree that a feasibility study is a responsible starting point since there is limited evidence on the effectiveness of this intervention in a group setting. The idea to implement this in a group setting would be especially helpful in environments with limited resources.

Minor Revisions:

- I am unable to see the tables or figures in the submitted document. These would add great value to the protocol and should kindly be added.

Discretionary Revisions:

- A brief description of the data collection tools used would be helpful. The mood scale is named but I am not clear in the QoL questionnaire used or if this be addressed in the qualitative component in the study. Some additional information on why these were decided on will strengthen the protocol, e.g. reliability and validity. Information on the structure of these tools would also be helpful (e.g. Likert scales) to understand the data analysis better.

- Short background on the Out of the Blues program would help the reader to understand where it was developed, by who and what the content was based on. An outline of the program is given but the background would help to position this intervention in the field of available interventions.

- It is stated that previous studies focused on mild to moderate depression where this study focuses on moderate to severe/major depressive disorders. This might effect the results obtained if compared with previous studies. Just consider this during interpretation.

- 18 weeks should be sufficient for a feasibility study but be mindful that more time might be required to determine effectiveness. Consideration can be given to a longer follow up time in a full scale study if the pilot indicates that this is feasible.

- I agree that consideration should be given to how data will be analysed if
participants miss sessions since they will not have the benefit of the full intervention.

- The statistical analysis included is accurate and I agree that due to the nature of this study and sample size these should only be seen as exploratory.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests