



columns

telephone-assisted therapy and a well-designed CBT treatment pack.

- <http://www.phobics-society.org.uk> is the website of the National Phobics Society which provides direct service user support and information.

The provision of online self-help materials is an exciting advance and these materials are likely to develop into more advanced and popular formats in the

future. The evidence base is emerging that they can be a successful, cost-effective medium for delivering treatment. However, use of the internet and television programmes are likely to have a more widespread positive effect on our cultural attitudes to anxiety, and the mental health profession will need to adapt as service users become increasingly vocal and empowered.

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## miscellany

### Online surveys of College membership

The pace of change in mental healthcare is increasing and the College must remain an influential voice in

determining the direction of that change. If it is to properly represent the views of psychiatrists, the College needs an open channel of communication with its members. For this reason, the College will shortly launch an initiative to use online surveys to improve dialogue on key policy and practice issues.

College members will be invited to join an online panel of psychiatrists who will be asked to share their opinions and

perspectives on a range of issues, through the use of brief surveys. In particular, it is hoped that the initiative will reach those members who do not participate actively in other mainstream College activities, and that this will give the College a better understanding of the values, beliefs, experiences and practices of the psychiatrists that it represents. The survey results will be used to inform and develop College policy and as information that underpins its lobbying and related activities.

The number of surveys will be limited and the College is exploring the use of incentives to encourage and reward participation. Adopting an online

approach will provide members with a convenient and flexible means of communicating directly with the College. Further, aggregate survey results will also be shared on the College website, allowing members to gauge the values and practices of the wider membership.

We hope that the membership will support this initiative and will share the view that this online dialogue will give the College a more informed and authoritative public voice.

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