

Training and development: Supporting staff to deliver services

The Personality Disorder service team in NHS Dumfries & Galloway provide support services for people with a diagnosis of personality disorder within the health board area. Investment in training and development has supported staff to deliver pathway services aligned to Structured Clinical Management (SCM).

Situation

The personality disorder service team recognised a need for training to support the development of staff skills and confidence. The team knew that staff were already skilled and experienced in working with people with a diagnosis of personality disorder.

The goal of the service's approach to training and development was to equip staff to deliver structured interventions aligned to SCM. Taking this approach was important to support staff transitioning from more traditional roles and experiences to group therapy facilitators in the personality disorder pathway. The training approach needed to support staff with:

- how to do structured work preparing people for psychoeducation
- how to do that effectively to support completion of a crisis management plan, and
- how to engage people who might be struggling to attend appointments and struggling to engage in the pathway process.

Approach

SCM was identified as an appropriate approach to meet staff and service training needs. No formal training needs analysis was conducted within the service team; training needs emerged mainly from communication with staff and feedback. Staff members, particularly nurses, requested support through local training opportunities to better understand the required skills to deliver SCM. The training approach was initially guided by SCM developers who trained a broad group of service staff including nurses, psychiatrists, and team leads.

Since 2020, training has evolved into a more tailored, adaptable model guided by evolving staff needs. Limited formal support is available from the health board practice education facilitators (PEFs). Key staff members including a Clinical Psychologist and Consultant Psychiatrist have delivered many of the training sessions. They have also facilitated an environment of continuous

learning and development for staff that continues beyond initial SCM training. This includes informal mentoring and peer learning.

Results

As a result of introducing SCM as a training approach, the Personality Disorder service team have achieved positive outcomes in staff development. Feedback from staff indicates that the team's approach to training and development is achieving positive outcomes. Staff who have completed the training feel more equipped to deliver structured group sessions.

Ongoing supervision and informal mentoring from key staff members have created an environment of support where all staff members are encouraged to complete the training. Experienced nurses have informally mentored newer nurses, fostering a culture of shared learning and embedding peer learning within the team. Feedback has also highlighted staff now feel a sense of pride and ownership over the training approach.

Overall, introducing SCM has enabled the team to successfully develop the knowledge and skills of staff to deliver group sessions as part of the Personality Disorder pathway.

“Supervision is absolutely massively important, as I said we were all new to it at the time... it made the groups feel more safe for everybody.” – service staff member.

“For my own practice, the ladies who do the supervision with us are very knowledgeable and so helpful. They will give us ideas or signpost us to things that we wouldn't have necessarily thought of so that is developing my knowledge as we are going along” – service staff member.

“[Supervision meetings are] are an opportunity to talk through any difficult situations we are having at the time... and it just gives us a chance to talk through them and... brainstorm ideas on how we are going to resolve them” – service staff member.

Key learning

The training approach has played an important role in bridging the gap between existing expertise and equipping staff with the skills needed to deliver SCM. The team identified enabling factors to their success:

- Strong relationships and communication within the health board facilitated implementation.
- Management buy-in and consistent messaging helped establish the training as core business.
- Staff's sense of ownership and pride in the approach grew over time as they experienced the positive outcomes of implementing the model.
- Informal peer support and mentoring were crucial for sustaining the model.

“[My peer mentor] is really experienced in her practice so that's been beneficial for me... she would run and lead the group and I was able to see how it went and also she was able to give me

feedback after that group and let me ask questions as to how she was delivering it” – service staff member.

“Team support is vital... you need to debrief sometimes afterwards and having the support of colleagues that aren’t SCM facilitators is really useful, like your team leader and management” – service staff member.

Throughout the process of developing and delivering the training approach, the team identified barriers and challenges to implementation:

- General resource constraints included limited time, staffing, and funding.
- Formal evaluation and data collection are recognised as potentially helpful to develop the approach but not always feasible due to time and resource limitations.
- Staff engagement was initially challenging as this was a different approach to service delivery and required persistent effort and visible leadership support to improve.

“I found [peer supervision] really beneficial... but... we are all really busy and trying to fit something in fortnightly and getting everyone from all the different areas to meet at the same time just wasn’t feasible after a while so it has tapered...” – service staff member.

Top tips

- Buy-in at all levels including senior leadership, team leaders, and frontline staff is essential.
- Visible support and investment in staff such as offering off-site training with refreshments help foster a welcoming environment for engagement with training.
- Flexibility and responsiveness to staff needs improves training, relevance and uptake.

Next steps

The NHS Dumfries & Galloway Personality Disorder service team will continue to provide training for staff to develop their skills and confidence to deliver SCM within their pathway. They aim to develop and hold annual SCM training day sessions to build on progress and offer further opportunities for staff learning and development.