

TTC - Evaluating the Mental Health Professionals programme

Executive summary

THE EVALUATION: SUMMARY

- This report evaluated the success of the mental health professionals' programme, comprising a campaign training pack and professional workshops, conducted in Northumberland, Tyne and Wear (NTW), 2gether and Cumbria NHS trusts from July 2015 to April 2016.
- The research and evaluation included audience insight and scoping, campaign design workshops and focus groups, qualitative evaluation, as well as a quantitative evaluation, consisting of multi-wave surveys among workshop participants and non-workshop participants
- Both campaign training material and professional workshops were effective at meeting the ambitions of the project, inspiring **individuals to reflect on their practice, talk about the topic with colleagues**, and resulted in **some indications of wider organisational change**, including **engagement from senior leadership teams**, and wider dissemination and adoption of Time to Change materials.

BASELINE FINDINGS

- Some mental health professionals are reluctant to admit that they hold stigmatising attitudes or engage in bad practice, instead often attributing blame to systemic factors, such as insufficient time and resources.
- There was variation between professionals' perceptions of different conditions. People with personality disorder were seen as the most likely to "make their own circumstances worse" (24% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed) - compared to those with eating disorders (13% agreement) and schizophrenia (7% agreement). Some staff felt ill-equipped to treat patients with personality disorder.
- Some - but not all - professionals felt comfortable discussing personal mental health problems at work, with 71% agreeing they would tell their line manager or a 67% telling a colleague.

CAMPAIGN TRAINING PACK

- Awareness of the 2016 campaign and general Time to Change activity was widespread, with almost **7 in 10 (67%) staff members across NW, 2gether and Cumbria having seen some activity or publicity about stigma** in mental health services
- The reach of the mental health professionals campaign specifically was also successful, with 50% of staff recalling seeing the campaign materials or something similar when prompted for recognition
- **1 in 3 had taken part in a discussion around the topic of stigma recently**, and all trusts had staff who had taken part in other activities relating to the campaign
- The campaign was also accessed by some general health professionals and social care professionals (who were not targets of the campaign), suggesting an opportunity for future roll-out

- One in two felt that the materials they had seen helped them to “better understand some of the issues faced by people with mental health problems”.
- The majority of people interviewed reported that they were likely to make a change to their personal practice, with **71% of staff agreeing strongly with the statement “I can personally make a difference to whether mental health service users feel positively about their experience”** post-campaign (a statistically significant 11% increase from surveys completed pre-campaign).
- Some had made wider impact at their organisation by speaking to others about the campaign, conducting workshops or training sessions themselves, appointing individuals to address stigma as part of their day-to-day roles and adding anti-stigma training to pre-existing programmes. Perceived ability to make changes was **highest among Trust managers, with 89% feeling able to advocate positive changes** in staff attitudes as opposed to 50% among admin/support staff - which nonetheless is also high. These are indicators that wider organisational change can be carried forward by staff as a result of the mental health professionals programme
- Feedback about the campaign training pack was largely positive, with **46% of respondents agreeing that the pack helped them better understand some issues faced by people with mental health problems, 67% of respondents saying that as a result of the campaign they were more likely to find out about the small things that can make a positive difference to the experience of people using services**, and 43% agreeing that it made them more confident about talking about discrimination amongst their colleagues
- The key strengths of the pack were its ease of use, flexibility, interactivity, the clarity of its message, and its support for people to move away from systemic issues.
- Room for improvement included the specificity (with just under half of the respondents feeling that the materials were aimed at them), visibility and scope, a slight low budget “feel”, and some desire for more challenge from the video
- Opportunity areas lie in continuing wide dissemination through passionate Trust “nodes”, bringing in service users, tailoring the campaign and being unafraid of controversy and challenge within the materials themselves.

PROFESSIONAL WORKSHOPS

- The professional workshops run by experts and professionals were also widely met with success. One key strength highlighted by respondents was the sharing of viewpoints between different professionals, as well as **involving service users who brought scenarios to life**.
- NTW and 2gether trusts were also able to deliver the pilot with light touch TTC support, enabling sustainability to be built into the projects, and ensuring **the trusts had ownership** of the program. Now Time to Change - and other organisations who may want to continue developing the work - have the opportunity to build on what has been done during this pilot
- 2gether, in particular, have **built in sustainability into the future of the programme** at the trust, with eight staff continuing to conduct workshops as part of their job role
- The evaluation highlighted increasing empathy towards people with mental illness after the workshop, with the **percentage of attendees believing that people with mental illness reporting stigma have valid concerns rising from 57% before the workshop to 66% after the workshop** - a significant increase, while those who were **willing to have a close personal relationship across a range of conditions rose from 42% to 50%** - borderline significant.
- In total **46% of respondents said they had done some things (or a lot) differently since taking part** - examples given in the S3 questionnaires given to workshop participants included taking time for reflection and mindfulness, better supporting colleagues, and challenging stigma where it arises in the Trust

- Suggested opportunity areas included strengthening the service user voice, enabling greater preparation by experts and professionals, developing stronger facilitation, more focussed and depth training on key areas of challenge and balancing needs of Time to Change and Trusts.

THE FUTURE OF ANTI-STIGMA WORK

With the widespread success of the pilot Mental Health Professionals programme, a variety of paths for development for future anti-stigma work have arisen from the evaluation. These could include:

- Continuing the rollout to other trusts, as well as general health professionals
- Embedding support to enact changes into programmes
- Embracing challenge and controversy by discussing stigma and discrimination at more nuanced and deeper level
- Tackling the gaps in specialist and in-depth knowledge (especially regarding personality disorder)
- Facilitating dialogue between service users and professionals
- Increasing the reach of the campaign to general health professionals.