
CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Asset-based leadership of practice: learning from an inter-professional development programme

23rd International Conference on Integrated Care, Antwerp, Flanders, 22-24 May 2023

Sharanya Mahesh¹, Robin Miller¹

1: University Of Birmingham, United Kingdom

Background: The Strengths-Based Leadership Programme has been designed to support practice leaders in health and social care. Its purpose is to enable participants to better understand their leadership behaviours and grow in confidence in their ability to improve outcomes for individuals, families, and communities through asset-based principles. On its seventh cohort, participants to date include those from social work, nursing, occupational therapy, and other professions who are employed in the public sector, community organisations or independent providers.

Who is it for? Professionals, practice leads / managers, training & development leads, programme implementation leads.

Who did you involve and engage with? The programme was developed with a stakeholder group of people with lived experience and practitioners and drew on the insights and experience of a diverse wide network of professional and improvement leads in the UK and internationally.

What did you do? The programme provides an interactive and dynamic CPD learning experience over six months. Participants explore their own practice in relation to leadership of self, teams & systems, and change. Activities include - access to diverse on-line materials such as talking heads, animations and theory summaries, inter-professional learning groups, undertaking of practical improvement projects, and regular reflections on their leadership strengths and opportunities to further develop. Participants are supported in their learning by an organisational sponsor with whom they meet at key stages of the programme.

What results did you get? The programme is being evaluated by an independent researcher through interviews, focus groups, and documentary analysis of participant reflections. The evaluation will be completed by December 2022, but emerging findings suggest that participants are finding the opportunity to learn and reflect on their leadership with those from different backgrounds and localities. Having access to a variety of material sources and evidence-based data, equipped participants with the ability to reflect on their current work based on these theoretical frameworks. Participants highlighted their improved understanding of the values and skills required to operationalise asset-based system leadership in their practice. Notably, participants shared that the course enabled them to recognise the values of trust and autonomy within teams and taught them skills of handling challenging situations in a positive way. At the strategic level, participants shared that they have either already initiated or planning to launch new pieces of work around coproduction and other activities that are more strengths-based in principle.

They reported having gained confidence due to their increased knowledge and evidence base and being able to articulate their ideas more coherently.

What is the learning for the international audience? Reflective development opportunities can enable practice leaders to develop skills and confidence to embed asset-based approaches within their teams and systems and co-produce initiatives with people and communities.

What are the next steps? The programme content is being refreshed in line with feedback from participants and in addition to being offered on an open-cohort basis will be run with local partnerships as part of transformation programmes.