

Dundee Healthy Living Initiative

Background

One of eight national Equally Well Test Sites was established in the Stobswell area of Dundee in 2008. The focus was on addressing factors affecting mental health and wellbeing within the local area. The aim was to support positive change across the community through a process of engagement with both community members and local services, awareness raising and capacity building.

Starting off solely in Stobswell, the Equally Well Test Site was then rolled out in 2013 across the electoral wards in Dundee which contained Community Regeneration Areas, defined as the 15% most deprived data zones in Scotland by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). It was then mainstreamed by NHS Tayside in 2014.

Individual experience of accessing and using services within the community was a key factor in whether or not people participated. Therefore important relationships were formed and have been maintained with local services, presenting routes for engagement with the community. They also provide a means of reaching staff working locally and influencing delivery of services with mental health and wellbeing in mind.

'Mind Yer Heid'

One main area of activity has been the introduction of 'Mind Yer Heid' training. The training has been created as part of the overall approach to addressing factors affecting mental health and wellbeing. It draws on a range of available resources including Health Behaviour Change and Scotland's Mental Health First Aid. It was developed to raise awareness and build capacity across a broad range of community members and staff working in local services.

One outcome of training is an increased understanding of how people feel and what the various contributing factors are. This supports participants to develop an awareness of their own mental health and that of people around them. It also aims to positively influence how services are delivered and received, increasing participation as a result.

Sustainability was a concern from the outset. As a result a 'Mind Yer Heid' training for trainers course was developed and delivered to some local partners. This has increased capacity within the area for delivery of training of 'Mind Yer Heid'.

'Mind Yer Heid Plus'

'Mind Yer Heid plus' was subsequently developed in 2013. This builds on the basic 'Mind Yer Heid' training and examines more closely the relationship between mental health and wellbeing and inequality. It helps participants identify ways in which their services and approach can promote or undermine wellbeing. Participants use role play and case studies to explore how individuals and services can assist vulnerable people using available resources to offer help and support.

Partnership with the local authority led to the 'My Wellbeing' section of Dundee City Council's website being developed. The aim was to increase knowledge of and access to local services. This supports individuals in finding and accessing support themselves. It also acts as a directory for staff within those services to signpost clients according to their needs. .

Implementation Challenges

Addressing low uptake

When 'Mind Yer Heid' was initially made available to the local community as an open access training course, uptake was poor. The solution was to make use of networks established locally to deliver the training through existing groups, for example by including sessions at a regular meeting of a youth group or social club.

Development of trainers

Demand for training has increased as delivery became more established. This means that not all opportunities can be taken. Developing trainers, in particular for 'Mind Yer Heid Plus' where no training for trainer courses have taken place, takes time. The nature of sessions means the required skill set is broad. Trainers have to be able to respond to a number of possible issues. Examples of this are: disclosure of personal experiences, a need to provide examples of the evidence base around mental health, or an understanding and ability to explain the local data used in the course.

Political developments

Changes to the political landscape have impacted the local community. Issues such as changes to the welfare system can affect mental health and wellbeing, and increase the complexity of individual and community needs. Ensuring there is an awareness and understanding of these developing circumstances and that support is available to meet these needs is an ongoing process.

Implementation facilitators

Establishing relationships

Good working relationships with the community and local services have been essential. Scheduling 'Mind Yer Heid' training at pre-arranged meetings of community groups provided a valuable opportunity to engage with community members. Access to partners' networks for advertising training, and sourcing venues for courses delivery are some of the many practical benefits.

Delivery

Equally Well Test Sites had a regular and reliable funding stream, as well as a clear mandate from The Scottish Government. They were encouraged to innovate and learn from both things that did not work well and things that did. This meant there was time to develop ideas and relationships, and money to support planning, delivery and learning from the whole process.

The fact that many of those delivering services in the area were engaged with the Healthy Working Lives agenda added to the positive delivery of the programme. The 2009 publication of 'Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland', The Scottish Government's policy and action plan for promoting good mental wellbeing across Scotland was also a factor. This ensured not only that mental health was on the political agenda, but that the term 'wellbeing' was commonly used and understood amongst various partners, providing a basis for establishing relationships.

Evaluation

Feedback on 'Mind Yer Heid' and 'Mind Yer Heid Plus' is positive. It suggests that participants have an increased understanding of the issues involved, and the importance of addressing the factors associated with mental health and wellbeing. Participants have indicated that they now have the knowledge, skills and confidence to discuss mental health and to offer support to their service users, staff and volunteers. Improvements in these two key areas are supported by findings from 2 external evaluations and 1 research study.

Learning

- Delivery of training can be challenging. There are a number of issues or scenarios that might arise, and it is difficult to prepare for this. It is important that trainers have the full range of subject knowledge and a broad skill set including facilitation skills and an ability to respond to disclosure of personal circumstances.
- The context for planning and delivering a programme of work like this has important implications. The 'right' context is a huge enabler.
- If resources and capacity are scarce, it is important to prioritise and take a systematic approach to devising and delivering a programme. Good relationships with partners can be established and maintained when everyone

understands the priorities and is clear on the parameters associated with different areas of work.

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