



Reflections; Care Home Manager's Leadership Learning Groups

A programme to equip Care Home manager's/deputies with leadership skills to help develop their teams and support patient care.

The context

During the pandemic, care homes experienced significant challenges related to shortages of equipment, visiting restrictions and high covid infection rates. Care Homes were an exceptionally stressful and difficult environment for staff to work within. Colleagues within our six east of England Integrated Care systems also highlighted the acute need to support wider system partners, specifically those working in social care.

We therefore worked with our commissioned provider, *CBS Learning, to collaboratively develop a leadership skills programme specifically for Care Home Managers/Deputies. The programme was accessed via application and each participant was nominated by a sponsor to ensure organisational commitment and support to the participant. To-date a total of 52 participants within eight cohorts from October 2021-April 2023 have completed the programme. The programme consisted of five modules per cohort, with virtual delivery for two hours per session.

Learning Objectives:

- To develop understanding of how effective leadership in care looks and the behaviours involved.
- To develop an increased level of confidence to make changes and improve delivery of care.

- To have a set of tools to use to get the best from their staff.
- To develop improved listening and questioning skills to increase the ability to

- communicate, engage and influence others.
- To develop an effective way to support teams to embrace change.
 - To develop a greater awareness of an individual's personal approach to leadership.
 - To become part of a trusted support network of peers.

Alongside the learning content, the Myers Briggs Type indicator (MBTI) was undertaken by each participant to develop a greater understanding of their own learning styles and psychological preferences in how they perceive the world and make decisions.

Improvement Projects and Impact:

Each participant developed an improvement project as part of their learning to be implemented in their care home. Some improvement project examples:

- **Diversity awareness:** a calendar covering a diverse range of multi-cultural events was designed that could be visible and celebrated in different ways within the care home. This would help with cultural differences and embrace those differences across all ages.
- **Constipation care:** to develop staff knowledge and understanding for bowel management. Staff lack of confidence was leading to the reliance upon laxatives. The project increased staff knowledge and confidence, resulting in a deeper understanding of the broader context for bowel management and improved patient care.
- **Reduction in medication errors:** the creation of a medicines administration video, including the accurate recording. Medication errors have reduced, staff are more confident, and all protocols are carried out in a timely manner. This now forms part of the Care Home's formal Induction programme.
- **Call Systems:** call bells were not being answered in a timely manner, this meant staff felt overwhelmed and morale was low in the team. All staff were involved in reviewing the issues and identifying solutions and improved ways of responding to residents needs. Staff felt involved in each step of the process and a project plan meant that everything was kept on track. As a result of improving staff visibility to residents and timeliness of responding to care needs there was a 41% reduction in use of the call systems.
- **Increased engagement with activities in the home:** A high number of new, less experienced staff was resulting in difficulties in engaging residents in activities. Staff worked collaboratively to design a different activity for each shift, using resources such as YouTube to seek ideas. Residents are more engaged with and enjoying activities regularly.



88%

strongly agreed that this programme had made a positive impact on their skills as a manager



80%

fully completed all elements of the programme, which is excellent considering the service pressures and impact on the workforce during this time.

Participants shared the following testimonies:



“I really enjoyed spending time in every session speaking about our problems and finding potential solutions for those problems together as a group”

“I learnt a lot about myself as a leader and how to improve those aspects of me”

“Both my deputy and assistant managers have gained further knowledge and are able to put that into practice. It has created better partnership working between the management team and had a positive outcome on the rest of the team and in such a short period of time, thank you”

“This programme will help me grow as a care home manager”

“It was outstanding. I enjoyed meeting other managers from the same background, and learnt that all care homes have the same issues, yet we all manage differently”

“I feel that completing this course will definitely help me to take the staff through the transition when it happens and I will certainly be pulling out the work I've done to help support me with the change, thank you”

If you are interested in this training, and further development opportunities please visit our website: <https://eoe.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk/> . Please contact us to find out more: eoe@leadershipacademy.nhs.uk

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