

SLAM Case Study: Team Leader Training

Team Leader Training was developed to implement the national guidance/evidence base that team leader and immediate manager support is a key factor in protecting staff from adverse mental health events in the peri/post COVID period. The training uses the REACT model approach, adapted for a mental health trust audience, incorporating greater focus on existing mental health expertise, senior leadership MDT support, and workplace stressors particular to inpatient and community settings.

The training is two 1 hour virtual sessions focused on team leaders' own wellbeing and support needs, team approaches to wellbeing, and supporting individual staff members at risk of mental health difficulties.

What's worked well?

The adaptations to the training have ensured that the training is suitable for the audience. The inclusion of focus on leaders' own wellbeing and the presence of a panel of senior staff have ensured that a collective model of staff support has been developed and normalised. Attendance has been high.

What has been the learning?

The volume of material has felt difficult to manage in the time. Co-ordinating MDT leadership to free up availability for the sessions has been labour-intensive. Staff have fed back positively on the ideas and content but have expressed difficulty in implementing and maintaining strategies within the team's busy workload.

Further information on Team Leader Training:

Background

The evidence base for supporting healthcare staff with stressors related to both pandemic factors and everyday work indicates that a key factor is the support they receive from their peers, team leaders and immediate managers. Most staff will make a good adjustment to stressors, however, a small number may experience difficulties such as anxiety, depression or post-trauma responses. There is evidence for the benefits of training team managers to increase peer support within the team, and to be confident in recognising when their staff are struggling with wellbeing/mental ill health, in raising this with them and in signposting them to appropriate support. Many Mental Health Trust managers are experts in raising mental health issues with patients, but many Trust managers are not clinicians, and a number of factors may impede all managers' confidence in raising these issues with staff.

Format

The training consists of 2 separate sessions of 1 hour and is suitable for team leaders and anyone with a senior/ supervisory role (e.g. NIC; matron; admin manager). It aims to increase team leader 1) awareness of signs staff are struggling with mental health/ wellbeing, 2) confidence in raising with their staff 3) knowledge of where and how to signpost staff members, 4) knowledge of how to build collective peer support/cohesion in the team.

The training is delivered in the form of a 30 min webinar from the Staff Support facilitator, and a 30 min facilitated discussion between the team leader attendees and a panel of senior staff from the directorate, such as professional senior leads, HoN, and matrons. This format allows the service to think collectively about staff wellbeing and ensures that team leaders are able to say what support they need from their senior leadership to support their teams and to safeguard their own mental wellbeing.

Content

Session 1: Background, supporting yourselves and supporting the team as a whole.

- Understanding stress, burnout and trauma.
- The importance of team leaders looking after themselves and getting support from their own leaders.
- Supporting the whole team: using existing meetings to talk about wellbeing (reflective practice, etc)
- Starting and ending shifts (inpatient) or days/weeks (community) well.
- Breaks and recharge.
- Buddying.
- Other approaches to supporting team wellbeing.

Discussion: which of these approaches will you use with your team? How do you manage your own stress? What support do you need from your seniors to look after yourself and to put your plan for supporting your team into practice?

Session 2: Supporting individuals, signposting, and accessing further support.

- Introduction to active monitoring.
- What can get in the way of us asking our staff if they're OK...and them telling us if they're not?
- The **REACT** approach – talking to staff when we are concerned about them.
- Signs someone might need mental health support.
- Signposting - The SLAM wellbeing toolkit.
- Signposting – support within SLAM.
- Signposting – mental health support.

Discussion: What support do you need from your seniors to have these conversations with your team? How will you raise awareness of what resources are available inside and outside SLAM?