

Competence based coaching develops effective front line managers

How Whittington Hospital NHS Trust and Skills for Health pioneered competence based leadership programme for front line managers.



The challenge

How do you help managers to listen? Or understand how to reduce conflict before matters escalate?

Whittington Hospital Trust found the solution by developing a specialist coaching skills programme, using a competence based approach.

The Trust had already successfully used Skills for Health competences to support staff development, when it created new Therapies roles. Following this success, the Trust was keen to use and apply a coaching skills approach to support its managers in the workplace.

The intention was to provide a wider range of skills and strategies for new managers to draw upon when fulfilling their roles at work and so reduce high levels of dependence on middle and senior managers.

Benefits and impact:

- Front line managers more effective in dealing with challenging issues, reducing dependence on middle and senior managers
- Front line managers more proactive in service improvement and implementing change
- Supports Continuing Professional Development
- Programme effective for people with little or no previous management experience
- 17 participants completed the five month programme and are now more effective in their practice
- Fairer and more open appraisals
- Improved morale and confidence among front line managers.

“Coaching Skills for Managers’ has made a difference already to managers, supervisors and their teams.”

“Giving participants these practical skills equips them for the challenges of being in a management role.”

“The skills and competences developed are practical, and act as a boost to individuals in their working lives.”

Carrie Graham

OD Lead Transformation Programme Team
Whittington Hospital NHS Trust

What we did

The Trust worked with Skills for Health to formulate training and development to support first and second line managers. Having identified a gap in skills around performance management, they devised a competence based leadership programme 'Coaching Skills for Managers'. It aimed to increase participants' confidence and ability to deal effectively with challenging staff issues.

How they did it

The Trust used the Management Standards Centre competences, used by Skills for Health, as a guide to plug skills gaps. The resulting programme focused on specific management activities such as motivating and supporting staff, monitoring progress and quality of work, and conflict resolution.

The training was delivered in-house over a five month long programme of five study days, supported by individual coaching sessions, personal assignments, assessment using the Skills for Health self-assessment tool, and an email buddy system. Two cohorts totalling 17 people completed the programme and it has been judged especially useful for those who are new to their management role.

Enhanced leadership and coaching skills

Feedback from participating managers was positive, with many reporting increased confidence and greater ability to communicate and manage staff. Colleagues have also seen an improvement in appraisals, with more sensitive handling of work issues.

Evaluation of the first two programmes reflected an overall very positive response to the training, which has given people much needed opportunities to develop knowledge and skills that they have used to improve their practice as managers and team leaders.

The programme has stimulated interest in coaching skills across the Trust and resulted in a successful bid to the Strategic Health Authority for a further programme, across two Trusts, to roll out coaching skills in partnership to 60 managers and staff side representatives.

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to develop effective front line managers
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