

Invest to Change project: Impact and Recommendations

Impact

A post course training evaluation has been disseminated to Practitioners to measure impact of the training on individual practice and the organisation. Early responses to this indicate that there are 4 main areas of impact:

- Knowledge and awareness
- Assessment of need
- Strategies
- Outcomes for young people

Knowledge and awareness

Initial feedback from evaluation indicates that the training has enhanced staff knowledge and awareness of young people's issues, difficulties and diverse learning styles, including the possible causes and what might be done to address these. Staff especially valued the sessions on Dyssemia led by Ged Lombard, many commenting that they had previously been unaware of this condition.

Other delegates observed that the training had helped them to become more sensitive and empathetic to young people's needs and support requirements, including a better understanding of how LDD can impact on a young person's life.

Assessment of need

Delegates identified that the training would support them to make more effective assessments of need, including increasing the scope of initial assessments to include emotional and behavioural issues. The dyssemia rating scale was highlighted as a useful tool.

Strategies

Many delegates commented that the training provided effective strategies to use with this client group. Examples already embedded into practice are changing the handouts used with dyslexic students, using personal art logos and other creative techniques.

Impact on young people

Delegates identified that using the strategies suggested by the training could improve attainment and motivate students to achieve. One delegate commented that the training had had:

“Excellent benefits as I am now able to support learners in much more depth and recognise specific learning difficulties”

A Connexions Personal Adviser commented that the training had equipped them to negotiate appropriate training and support for young people in Post 16 Learning.

Key messages

Delegates were overwhelmingly positive about the strategies described on the various courses, but some doubts were expressed about whether the resources required to implement these would be made available in the workplace; from the Independent Travel Training there were concerns about

“the amount of time required to give this training – unsure that this course could be accommodated within college”

However, there was evidence that delegates were willing to try to put the training into action:

“I could really relate to this and I really want to know more, I tried something similar to engage my learners, but no where near what you have shown that you do”

“I will run an in house training session with my colleagues”

“Provide small workshops for students to agree behavioural codes”

Delegates attending the training were clear about their responsibilities to cascade the strategies and ideas on to managers and colleagues in their teams, with many intending to discuss the topics in team meetings. Discussions with managers should include identifying what steps need to be taken to embed the training into practice and what resources should be allocated to this.

Concerns were expressed about the lack of psychological support and other experts to refer young people to in the Merseyside area, as and when required:

“... no where offers therapy...we need this project in Liverpool.”

“The proposed methods are best implemented by trained professionals – ideally Ged and his team to provide the service”.

Delegates expressed an interest in follow up sessions with Ged Lombard and the Tips team in order to develop the skills and confidence to implement the strategies advocated. A portion of any further funding granted should provide a more specific train the trainers course in order to develop the capacity of ‘champions’ in each sector to build and disseminate practice.

Evaluation of all the training events has identified a number of outstanding training needs, which any subsequent Invest to Change Project will address in the 2009/10 Training and Development Plan.

Delegates were very positive about all events and indicated their willingness to attend further training, particularly specific workshops:

“I would like to take it a step further and learn more about how to become an assessor/diagnostician”

“Much more in depth training – I have all the basics but need depth”

Delegates greatly appreciated the chance to gain an accredited qualification in Dyslexia recognition and awareness. However, demand for the dyslexia

training exceeded the two courses provided by the project. Further places will be made available, if additional funding is granted.

A key message from the Employer event was that appropriate support provided to a young person with LDD need not be expensive and could benefit all members of staff: young people should not be overlooked because they have a disability:

“many young people are overlooked by employers because they have a learning difficulty or disability and my message to them is everyone deserves a chance because who knows what passion and skills they have to offer... I have been lucky to be given this chance and I really am living the dream”.

The passion, dedication and loyalty shown by young people with LDD can make a huge contribution to the work place:

“Don’t judge a book by its cover! People who have disabilities and learning difficulties have lots to offer. The most important thing is the passion from within this person. This in my eyes overcomes any disability or learning difficulty, an employer has also got to be passionate for this person to succeed”.

Invest to Change should continue to encourage employers to recruit young people with LDD and to provide appropriate support in the workplace. Any further employer event next year should celebrate best practice and recognise the achievements of individual employers and young people in this area.

The steering group provided a strong partnership approach and invaluable support throughout the project, both through the monthly meetings and the attendance of some members at the training sessions. Stakeholders should continue to be represented on the steering group.

Should further funding be made available then the 2009/10 project should be launched by a celebration event, which would review the successes of the 08 / 09 Project and to raise awareness of 2009/10 proposals. Training should continue to be multi agency in nature to support cross sector collaboration.

Recommendations

- 1. Discussion should now take place between staff who attended the training and their managers within specific agencies to agree next steps in implementing the training**
- 2. Commission a ‘train the trainers’ course to develop the capacity of ‘champions’ in each sector to build and disseminate practice**
- 3. Any further Invest to Change funding will address outstanding training needs identified via evaluation surveys**
- 4. Further training places to be made available on the Dyslexia Recognition and Awareness course**

- 5. The Steering group should continue to represent key stakeholders**
- 6. Any further Invest to Change Project should be launched by a celebration event to recognise achievements and identify best practice.**