

Case Study: Health Literacy Awareness Training for Library and Knowledge Services Staff in the North of England

Health Education England in collaboration with the Community Health and Learning Foundation, developed bespoke health literacy awareness training materials aimed at health library and knowledge services (LKS) staff. Selected LKS staff in the North (and across England) went through an awareness and train the trainer programme to cascade this training to LKS colleagues across the region. In total, 66 people attended the full day's awareness training and in total 111 people attended either full training or shorter awareness workshops.



Key Outcomes

- Wide reach of the training
- Multi-disciplinary aspect: Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust requested train the trainer to be delivered to a multi-disciplinary group of staff and this is now being cascaded through the organisation
- LKS staff who took part in the training are planning to cascade to staff in their own organisations
- The LKS trainers have worked successfully in partnership, have developed new skills and confidence and have shared their learning
- Public libraries and Higher Education (HE) librarians have also participated in the training which has opened discussions on partnership working to address health literacy issues
- Extremely positive evaluations of all the training events with a wide range of ideas on how to use the training back in participants' organisations:



The event was well pitched, very informative”



Great delivery - good mix of practical, theory and anecdotal content”



I have started introducing health literacy notions and concepts in all the training I do, particularly one-to-ones”



I am looking forward to progressing and delivering this training to colleagues.”

Background

A partnership approach has been adopted between Health Education England, the Community Health and Learning Foundation and several NHS Trusts nationally.

Health Education England has worked in partnership with Public Health England, NHS England and the Community Health and Learning Foundation to develop a range of tools to help individuals and communities to access, understand, appraise and use information and services to make decisions about their own healthcare. As part of this wider programme, a set of bespoke training materials were developed specifically for LKS staff by HEE and the Community Health and Learning Foundation. Once the initial awareness training was delivered, ten LKS staff in the North with a particular interest in health literacy went on to attend train the trainer and then to cascade to LKS and other staff across the North.

Key Aims

- To raise awareness of the issues around health literacy among LKS staff (aiming to reach two LKS staff per service nationally)
- To build capacity among LKS staff to deliver cascade training both to LKS colleagues and within organisations

Key Stages of Set-up

[The Knowledge for Healthcare Programme](#) prioritised health literacy awareness training from 2018 – 2019



The training materials were co-designed with Community Health and Learning Foundation and initial awareness training began in November 2018



The train the trainer session took place in February 2019 and cascade training followed between March and July 2019

How it Works

The training session is very practical and covers the following:

Part one: The health literacy picture

What we mean by health literacy and current levels (according to recent evidence)

The impact of low health literacy on:
The healthcare system – what are the costs?
Personal impacts – stories of low health literacy

Part two: How can we help?

Raising individual levels of health literacy – covering a range of tools to help

Making information more accessible – covering techniques such as “teach back” and “chunk and check”

Resources

- Material development costs (including venues) were paid by Health Education England
- Ongoing support was provided by the Community Health and Learning Foundation
- Staff time for training and subsequent cascade from each participating Trust

Key Challenges

- Community Health and Learning Foundation closed in July 2019. This made communication and ongoing evaluation of the project difficult
- Working across a large geographical area made it difficult to find times to meet face to face so most of the preparation was done at a distance
- Staff time to devote to preparing for the training which (as a full day course) is quite onerous

Key Learning

The main lesson (from feedback from trainers) is that the sessions could have been condensed to spend less time on some of the impacts on the system. Most clinical staff cannot be released for a full day of training. Shorter awareness sessions have been developed to meet this need.

Sustainability

It is anticipated that LKS staff will use training materials as well as knowledge and skills gained to cascade awareness sessions in their organisations.

An LKS audit tool was also developed by Ruth Carlyle (national Knowledge for Healthcare lead for Patients and Public, see Appendix 1) to help LKS staff to review their own services with a view to making them more health literacy friendly.

Next Steps

- To complete the roll out of health literacy training to LKS staff
- To deliver awareness sessions in NHS Trusts as part of induction, lunch and learn etc.
- To work as part of a national Community of Practice to share resources and maintain skills

Supporting Material

- Health Education England Health Literacy Toolkit. Retrieved from: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/population-health/training-educational-resources>

Relevant Websites

- Health Literacy Place www.healthliteracyplace.org.uk

Appendix

Appendix 1 - LKS Audit Tool



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