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## **Overview**

As a trusted partner of Knowsley MBC Talking Life was asked if we could deliver Motivational Interviewing (MI) training to an extensive range of Knowsley's Children's Services staff, to also include Solution focused interventions in the programme. The council wished staff to be able to effectively relate the principles and practical skills of MI to their everyday practice and the challenges they face in the Children's Social Care workplace as it felt that this would lead to a positive change in client/practitioner engagement and relationship sustainability.

## **The Solution**

Our experienced MI trainer, Allan Johnston, discussed a programme and detailed content with the Assistant Executive Director of Children's Services, Peter Murphy, and when this had been agreed, a 2 day pilot training session was set up. A draft copy of the materials and presentation to be used were submitted to the commissioner for approval and case studies developed with local managers in order to add value to the learning proposed. Peter Murphy attended the pilot, which he scored as 'very good' (highest mark) and the programme was then rolled out for the rest of children's services.

## **Managed Service**

Talking Life managed the contract from start to finish, and appointed a dedicated contracts manager and event co-coordinator in order to oversee the smooth running of the programme and liaison with Knowsley Council's commissioning team. This involved organising suitable dates and venues, collating feedback forms together with attendance lists for the training sessions and putting all reference documents and hand-outs on the Talking Life website so they are easily accessible to delegates pre and post training. The courses were also quality checked by our Managing Director to ensure continued quality and assessment of the training. We provided evaluation forms on the day of each training and also organised a post training evaluation 6 months after the end of the training delivery.

## **Delivery**

Since 2018, we have delivered 8 x 2-day courses for Knowsley and the programme has been extended, with further courses taking place in the 2019-20 financial year. The staff attending these sessions are, CSW's, Registered managers from Children's residential homes, Children's with disabilities managers, NQSWs, Family First case managers, Head of CP/CIN, Advanced social work professional, Senior Practitioner, Youth offending teams, case managers, Team Managers – MASH, student social workers, head of CLA permanence and provision, support workers & Heads of service

During the training sessions, the following methods were used to assist learning and understanding of MI for Knowsley Borough Council:

- Small group learning (pairs or triads), which included the setting of questions to accompany two vignettes which were reflective of situations the participants would come across during their daily roles
- Didactic presentation, which allowed the participants to familiarise themselves with the basic principles of motivational interviewing, including the opening strategies and the key processes

- The use of handouts, to illustrate the key points but also to provide easy to refer to guides which staff could refer to in the early stages of implementing these techniques
- The use of small role- play exercises throughout the session, to demonstrate and affirm understanding of the key aspects of motivational interviewing and allow the facilitator, Allan Johnston, to gauge learning and revisit aspects which may not have been fully understood or communicated within the appropriate presentation and/or discussion
- The use of complex case studies to allow participants to practise their skills, through role play, within a supportive peer led learning environment. These case studies are developed in partnership with the commissioner to lend authenticity to them and also to allow those present to effectively relate the principles and new skills they have learned during the session to their everyday practice and the challenges they face.
- Training videos were used to demonstrate the use of MI within a service users' context and were used to illustrate each of the concepts discussed i.e. empathetic listening, developing discrepancy in terms of client's ambivalence, rolling with resistance and other key concepts.
- A plenary session allowed staff to discuss their fears and concerns relating to the implementation of the principles of motivational interviewing within their daily practice.

### **Outcomes & Conclusion**

The outcomes were measured and the materials designed to facilitate measurement by Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation, this included:

- Level 1 Evaluation – Reaction

Did they like it? Was the material relevant to their work? This was evidenced in the immediate post course evaluation

- Level 2 Evaluation – Learning

To assess the amount of learning that has occurred due to the training programme. Measurement at this level was quite simple because most of the activities and interaction during the programme were also measurements of learning.

- Level 3 Evaluation – Behaviour

Were the newly acquired skills, knowledge, or attitudes going to be used in the everyday environment of the learner?

- Level 4 Evaluation – Results

This was evidenced in the recommissioning of the training sessions and would suggest that the commissioners had witnessed a positive change in client/practitioner engagement and relationship sustainability.

Assistant Executive Director, Children's Services, Peter Murphy said:

*"The course was excellent & interesting throughout the 2 days. The topic was very relevant to working with families and will help us moving forward as a Service"*