

Workforce Development

Open Art

Creativity is at the core of our workforce learning and development work. We develop bespoke programmes that aim to engender creativity in the workforce and to enhance the effectiveness and quality of services for the ultimate benefit of the people they serve.

We believe the arts and creativity have real power to tap into a person's internal motivations and catalyse useful change. The characteristics of creative people are as useful in a workforce as they are in a community. Empathy, open-mindedness, resilience, sensitivity and generosity of thought, along with the ability to reach out, communicate broadly and work creatively, are all requirements for those working directly with individuals or communities. Imagination, mental flexibility, inventiveness and determination along with the ability to make new connections are all useful to those planning and delivering services.

THE EXTRA MILE

The Extra Mile is a learning development programme that aims to develop the creativity and community engagement skills of frontline public and voluntary sector practitioners in order to better equip them to engage with individuals and communities.

More specifically professionals who need to:

- Reach a broader range of people than they can currently reach
- Find out from individuals and communities what their needs and interests are
- Get information about services out to individuals and communities
- Develop meaningful services based on meaningful interaction with local people

Each Extra Mile programme spans approximately 12-15 weeks and combines up front theoretical learning, the practical application of that learning through the delivery of a locality based engagement process, with mentor and artist support, and the opportunity to draw out key learning through programmed reflective practice sessions.

The programme aims to:

- Foster more dynamic ways of working, including use of creative thinking and evaluative/reflective practice
- Widen understanding of what community engagement is and broaden the mechanisms by which participants might achieve it
- Provide participants with practical experience of delivering engaging projects

- Provide opportunities to deliver real partnership working at the frontline

The programme will involve:

The initial 4 day learning sessions bring all participants together and cover aspects related to community engagement such as: understanding motivations for involvement, developing ideas, inspirational and innovative practice, understanding the importance of commonality and shared experience, identifying latent skills and interests, and flexibility and responsiveness

Then in small groups, participants with the support of Open Art and associated artists, devise, develop and deliver a small locally based community engagement project. This gives participants an opportunity to put into practice what they have learnt on the initial 4 days training and experiment and play with creative ideas in a safe and supported environment.

This part of the programme includes mentoring and guidance from an artist, who can help them with suggested approaches and ideas. The emphasis is on the team of participants leading and delivering, not the artist.

Finally all participants come together, after delivering their project, for a reflective practice session that focus's on participant's experiences. The aim is to draw out essential learning that can be applied to each participant's own area of work.

Impacts

- Led to sustainable activity as a result of changes within individual participants and working practices
- Realisation that there is a difference between arts and creativity and that they can be creative people
- Forged genuine partnership working within and outside of the programme and learned the benefits of shared endeavour
- Nurtures receptivity amongst individuals and the receiving community
- Personal development and increased confidence amongst participants
- Identification of participants strengths
- Realization of self imposed limitations

Key Learning

- In order to engage individuals and communities you have to learn about them first
- Engage people through means that interest them first and this will encourage people to be more receptive
- Freedom of not having a fixed agenda enabled more creative thinking
- How effective collaborative and partnership working can be
- How to recognize the limitations we place on ourselves when we become entrenched in particular ways of working

- How to draw on different kinds of inspiration for ideas
- To test ideas out, evaluate, reflect and try again
- Planning time is essential to the success of a project

Previous participants of Extra Mile have commented:

'I feel I have been given the ability to work without constraints relating to outcomes, areas of work, funding and justifications. This has enabled me to think "out of the box", and has also given me a new view of the way that I let these constraints limit me in my work.'

'Think big, engage people through means that interest them first and then they are more receptive.'

This has helped me to question what I do and how I do it. I hope that I will challenge my working practices and find new ways of engaging with communities. I have learnt that in a sense I may have put up my own barrier to creativity, by going along with the usual way of doing things. I hope that I won't continue to do that in the future.

'Getting to know communities is the first step to engagement. I need to look at ideas from different angles, I don't reflect enough in depth. Quality is better than quantity.'

LIFETIME MATTERS

Lifetime Matters is a creative model of working, designed to encourage a more person centred approach to individual care of clients within health and care settings. The model uses a Lifetime Matters book and box (which is completed by the client and staff member, alongside family members where appropriate) and an accompanying learning programme.

The Lifetime Matters book and box aims to generate and collect information, that has meaning and resonance for the individual, concerning their life experiences, their beliefs, their skills and interests, now and in the past, so that they can receive the most appropriate care, even when as a result of illness or confusion, they are no longer able to communicate what they want and need.

The model works on the premise that understanding a person's life history and their current needs and interests leads to more tailored, more responsive and more suitable care.

The overall programme aims to:

- Equip managers and care staff with the appropriate tools to understand and implement the model of working
- Encourage and develop meaningful relationships between care staff and residents
- Enable older people including those with communication difficulties, play a more central part in determining their own care
- Enable front line care staff to make an informed judgment about a residents needs and interests in order to provide the best care in the absence of a clear statement of need from the resident
- Support and build on current practices to support this process.
- Encourage greater social activity within the care setting
- Support care staff in their personal development and expression.

The learning programme

The learning programme involves upfront training sessions for Managers, and care staff, followed by a period where staff members develop activities around the book and box with clients. These activities are designed to enhance the staff's understanding of individuals and their particular needs.

This is followed up by a series of reflective practice sessions, which allow staff to share experiences and define good practice, find appropriate solutions to outstanding problems, remind them of a common goal, and encourage joint working

The success of the Life Time Matters work lies in the individual's ability to see beyond the obvious and bring their own individual and unique qualities to the project and so the whole process aims to increase the skill and knowledge base of individual members of staff.

Key guiding principles of the model

- Works first and foremost through the interaction that the process provides, i.e. the building of relationships through quality time
- It is a tool for understanding and responding to the whole person, not just their physical needs
- It should be integrated into care routines. It is a shift in thinking not an add on
- It is an ongoing process, the aim is not to finish the book
- It is based on present just as much as
- It is experimental, trying new things is encouraged
- It advocates that creating enjoyment is a valuable and essential part of care, not a luxury, this means for both residents and staff
- The work is person centred in its delivery as well as its implementation.

Impacts on staff/ working practices

- Greater understanding and knowledge of an individual, resulting in better, more appropriate care and improved relationships between staff and residents
- Deeper understanding of 'difficult' behaviours
- Greater numbers of care staff working with a creative model
- The creation of more 'quality time' between staff and residents.
- Achieves a service that is more focused on person centred care
- Develops the workforce with both specific and transferable skills
- Develops a mechanism which would aid the transitional care process
- Provides a mechanism for involving families in relatives care

Impacts on clients

- Become more involved in general activity.
- Value the time care staff spend with them,
- Enjoy reminiscing about past achievements and adventures,
- Raises self-esteem and stature.
- Achieves higher levels of social contact
- Provides a focus for family visits and a way to 'reclaim' the relationship.
- Experience one to one care, not a blanket approach.

Previous participants of Lifetime Matters have commented:

"It is a joy to be able to find more detail that helps them enjoy their lives to the full and helps staff to understand the client more."

"It has helped a family find more detail about their father before it was too late for it to be passed on and to remember things they had forgotten."

“The more you know about that person and their life it helps in the everyday care you can give them.”

“It’s sad to say this, I’ve been here 2 ½ years, and I feel like I’ve got to know her more in that 30 minutes than all the while I’ve been here.”

“Doing the book has given her behavior an explanation, now we understand it better.”

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