

**Name of Project: London PLUS Project**

**Lead partner: Homeless Link**

**Borough: Pan-London**

**Case Study: The Health and Wellbeing Cohort.**

### **Background**

In 2021 London PLUS set up a Health and Wellbeing Cohort training programme. The aim of this was to embed a greater level of staff wellbeing within organisations by upskilling a group of managers to better manage the health and wellbeing of themselves and their teams.

The group attended 3 training courses; Stress, vicarious trauma and managing wellbeing, Reflective Practice for managers and Implementing and managing change. They then attended 2 facilitated Reflective Practice Sessions in 3 smaller sized groups.

The Cohort was designed for 20 people and all applicants had to arrange consent from their line managers. This was to ensure that the sessions were prioritised and members would not be called onto other tasks at short notice. We aimed to create a cohort that spanned the range of homelessness providers. In the end the cohort included 9 large voluntary sector providers, 6 small to medium voluntary sector providers, 4 Local Authorities and 1 Local Authority ALMO.

All attendees were team leader or manager level apart from one frontline worker who was the lead on Wellbeing within their team. This was to ensure that those who attended were able to embed the learning within their organisations and spread the reach of the programme beyond the cohort themselves.

### **Senior Manager, Local Authority ALMO**

I enrolled on this training as I had increasing concerns about the wellbeing of my staff due to the impact of the pandemic. I was really keen to explore whether there was more I could do to support a return to a new normal, and to return the service to our pre-pandemic level of resilience. Oddly, if I had known in advance how much of the sessions required self-reflection and were about my own wellbeing, I suspect I wouldn't have joined as would have considered it to be a bit self-indulgent at a time when parts of my service were on their knees! But what I have taken away is a

**Name of Project: London PLUS Project**

**Lead partner: Homeless Link**

**Borough: Pan-London**

much better understanding of why my own wellbeing is the priority and the disservice to others if I don't see this. Learning about the theoretical side of wellbeing and the impact on customers when we don't prioritise this was really useful, I have used my new found knowledge about compassion fatigue in a number of ways, both in understanding why complaints about lack of staff empathy may have increased, but also to explain to staff and other managers the reasons for this, and how we can address it.

The training brought together a diverse group of professionals but there was so much commonality in the issues we are dealing with in our services and I know we all benefitted from having a safe space to discuss this and share experiences and solutions. There was laughter and tears and it felt really good being with a group of colleagues where there was no judgement and we were able to share really personal issues. This reflected the quality of the facilitation of the sessions, 'K' is genuinely one of the best trainers I have ever met. I have taken so much away from the sessions, and started making changes to how I manage my own wellbeing and that of others. I would recommend the sessions to anyone managing frontline services.

Team Manager, Medium voluntary sector provider

Thanks so much for organising this course. I found the sessions and content very informative and supportive.

I think 'K's' style is particularly powerful, although it seemed slow at first, it in fact allowed (much-needed) space for meaningful reflection and conversation amongst managers in the sector. I think the space was particularly effective for me as a group of professionals coming together and reflecting together, often sharing similar experiences. I wondered if there were any plans for this space to continue.

Personally, I think I would find a bi-monthly multi-professional managers reflective, led by K, insightful and helpful. It would also help to build links and relationships between organisations as well as provide a safe and supportive space for managers outside their organisations to reflect. Just an idea!

**Name of Project: London PLUS Project**

**Lead partner: Homeless Link**

**Borough: Pan-London**

Wellbeing Lead, Large voluntary sector provider

I found the programme to be a really valuable experience. It came at a really useful time for me, where I was stressed with work and struggling to manage an increased workload. The collaborative way in which the training was led by K made for an extremely open environment, in which, I felt, people could be safe sharing their own challenges. This led to a group dynamic that was simultaneously supportive and challenging, and really helped me to shift my position on prioritising my own wellbeing in a challenging sector.

Throughout the various courses, there were excellent and useful pieces of information which I can put into practice in my day-to-day work. They were complimentary with each other and made for an overall excellent experience. Thank you!

### **Individual Case Study**

Team Leader, Local Authority

Before Attending:

I work in a busy frontline service and so often it is about crisis management and reducing risk. Sometimes the skills and rewards from reflective practice have been reduced to “we’ll definitely do that next time”.

By attending the Cohort training, I hoped to learn effective and reflective supervision skills and how I could protect my own mental health and wellbeing while supporting my staff and colleagues when there is a constant stream of competing demands.

I think training and reflective practice sessions will benefit colleagues and the organisation by having a clear set of open-ended questions, which will be the framework for “good” supervision where there is space for the team and colleagues to share, learn and grow in confidence. This will be especially helpful in taking ownership/decision making; and I am sure it will also help to reduce absences due to stress!

**Name of Project: London PLUS Project**

**Lead partner: Homeless Link**

**Borough: Pan-London**

***Reflective Practice for Managers:*** Setting the scene about what is reflective practice and the importance of space, time, and actions, really helped to frame the session. The discussions were also really helpful as there was a rich mix of services present so colleagues brought a range of ideas and experiences.

***Implementing and Managing Change:*** It was really powerful hearing that there is no right or wrong way to respond to change and understanding that change is about leadership, growth and practice.

It was also useful having the opportunity to understand the different stages of change and why having a built-in mechanism of review, into the process is important.

The programme was excellent and from the first session, I was able to change my approach to 121s with my team. I also shared some key learning with the wider management team. I found K's facilitation brilliant, just the right balance of time for group members to share their thoughts and ideas, as well as challenge each other. It would have been great if the group were able to meet in between the sessions, just to share and build relationships so that we keep the momentum going.

As a result of this programme, I have accessed support regarding my mental health. The group created a safe space for me to share how I was feeling and the importance of not trying to manage the challenges alone.

I found all of it very beneficial as each component contributed in a unique way to my understanding and development. Each session was complimented with a facilitated discussion which engaged everyone and enabled everyone to express themselves. It also gave an insight into the facilitation skills that could be used, thanks to K. I cannot single one session out as it all seemed to knit very well as a whole programme.