

Team Strengths - Exercise

Each team is complemented by a group of individuals with different strengths, needs, expertise and experience. In order to fully develop the skills and creativity of the team, it is important to nurture its development by supporting professional and personal development of its members.

Working from a Whole Life perspective may mean individual team members being faced with new and perhaps unfamiliar practices. In order for individual team members to feel supported and safe to explore new territory, the support provided by the team is paramount.

Although individual clinical supervision is extremely valuable for professional development, drawing on the collective experience and creativity of a cohesive team offers the opportunity to safely explore the issues inherent in creative practice. The following reflective questions may be valuable in developing teams that are able to meet the changing needs of its client group dynamically.

Team make up

- Who do you consider to be members of your team? (Does this include family members, chaplain, cultural workers, voluntary sector or service user representatives?)
- What expertise could you gain from these different perspectives and how could you really include their perspectives to strengthen your work?
- If team members have reservations about inclusive team working, what are they? As a team how could these real concerns be addressed

without dismissing this as an option?

- Solutions...

Team strengths

As a team, set a two hour period aside to explore the area of team strengths. This exercise has the benefit of being able to identify areas of expertise within a team and can improve team functioning, job satisfaction and team responsibility for clients with complex situations and support needs. The aim is to raise awareness of team strengths and highlight the skills and expertise within your team. This exercise will also help identify any skills the team needs to develop.

Activity 1

Ask the team to reflect for a moment on every member of the team and the things you do well.

Activity 2 (Ten minutes)

Ask each team member to spend ten minutes writing what they feel they can individually bring to the team in terms of expertise, experience and interest. They need to write their name clearly on the top of this piece of paper. It is important to wait for each member of the team to complete this task before moving on to the next activity.

Activity 3 (Twenty minutes)

- Pass each piece of paper on to the person on your left.
- Each individual needs to add

to this list by giving two or three examples from their own perspective on what they appreciate about that team member, what skills etc, they have noticed and how best they could support the team.

It is important to be specific about what you write, focusing on the persons strengths. For example 'Fantastic mentor for students', 'Knowledge of local faith communities', 'works well with victims of abuse', 'takes care of the team'.

This exercise raises awareness of individual team members' strengths. When the team meets for case reviews or referrals, it will help inform the team about who could best meet the needs of the client.

You will end up with a list of attributes each individual brings.

Activity 4 (Twenty minutes)

Ensure that after activity 3, the piece of paper with your name on it is passed back to you. Take a moment to digest what has been written about you.

- Spend no more than two minutes each feeding back what has been highlighted in this exercise individually.

Activity 5 (Twenty+ minutes)

- Discuss as a team how these attributes can best be drawn on in team working.

