Substance Misuse Skills Consortium

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Briefing Paper 4: Workforce development tools
March 2014

1. What is the purpose of these briefing papers?

This briefing paper is the fourth in a series. The first three are now available online:

1. Motivational interviewing (pdf)

2. Gay men – risky sex and drug use (pdf)

3. Mutual aid (pdf)

Each paper focuses on a single topic and provides: a short overview of the topic, produced with input from an expert; links to the best evidence-based research and findings from the Skills Hub, and the Drug and alcohol evidence matrices; and a wider resources section which contains less formal materials such as toolkits, news articles and videos.

The briefings are useful for any practitioner working in drug or alcohol treatment. Some, including this one, are also useful for service-managers.

2. What workforce development tools are we talking about?

Workforce development is a broad area of work with one common goal – making sure people, and systems, are competent in the job they do. Although the subject can at times seem a little dry, it is important not to lose sight of its ultimate goal in our sector – the recovery of people with drug and alcohol problems (some of the most vulnerable people in our society) as well as their families and communities. To achieve this goal the practitioners, service-managers, commissioners and others that make up drug and alcohol treatment systems must be confident, competent and safe in carrying out their work and, ultimately, turning around lives. The resources in this briefing will help cultivate this competence by enabling readers to effectively carry out some of the basic processes that are essential to service delivery: recruiting and supervising staff; managing organisational change; effective team working and more.

The briefing is focused on the work done in Australia by the National Centre for Education and Training in Addiction (NCETA) based at the Flinders University in Adelaide. The NCETA is an internationally recognised research centre that works for change in the alcohol and other drugs field. Its mission is to advance the capacity of health and social services organisations and individuals to respond to alcohol and drug related problems through:

- The promotion of workforce development principles, research and evaluation of effective practice
- Investigating the prevention, prevalence and effect of alcohol and other drugs on society
- Development and evaluation of intervention programmes and resources for workplaces and other organisations.

In 2002 the NCETA defined workforce development as 'a multi-faceted approach which addresses the range of factors impacting on the ability of the workforce to function with maximum effectiveness in responding to alcohol and other drug related problems. Workforce development should have a systems focus. Unlike traditional approaches this is broad and comprehensive, targeting individual, organisational, and structural factors, rather than just addressing education and training of mainstream workers'.

Whilst the resources contained in this briefing were developed some time ago they are still relevant to workforce development in the drug and alcohol sector today - some of the resources will require interpretation to make them more relevant to the UK but overall there is plenty of material to consider. These resources fit together as a workforce development tool kit and are known as TIPS (Theory Into Practice Strategies).

3. How can the Skills Hub and the Drug and Alcohol Matrices help me?

1. Matrices: [Innovation adoption as facilitated by a change-oriented workplace](#)
This Findings review examines this 2011 study by Becan, Knight and Flynn which covers the importance of climate-setting and support and opportunities offered for professional development by organisations. "Findings suggest that organisations, funding agencies, and policy initiatives which promote leadership development, facilitate a climate receptive to change, and foster innovative thinking among staff, are better positioned to promote new treatment methods among clinicians. Results were consistent with the idea that the propensity of staff to adopt new methods is strengthened by:

- o an innovative organisation with creative leadership; and
- o change-oriented staff attributes (ie, confidence, influence on others, professional development, and adaptability), and
- o that each strengthens the change-promoting impact of the other."

2. Matrices: [An evaluation of workshop training in motivational interviewing for addiction and mental health clinicians](#)
This Findings review covers a 2004 *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* article which looked at the skills of practitioners delivering motivational interviewing. It states that the "US study suggests that when it comes to choosing therapists, choosing the 'right' people who have not been trained in motivational interviewing would be better than choosing the 'wrong' people who have been trained; the former not only start at a higher level, but are more able to benefit from and retain training."

4. Which wider resources can help me?

The NCETA resources mentioned earlier – "Workforce development TIPS (**T**heory **I**nto **P**ractice **S**trategies): A resource kit for the alcohol and other drugs field". TIPS is aimed at supervisors and managers.

1. [A resource kit for alcohol and other drug practitioners](#) (pdf)
   This useful document provides an overview of the entire TIPS toolkit. It briefly covers each of the 14 chapters below and is the place to head for busy people who do not have time to look at the whole kit.

2. [An Introduction to workforce development](#) (pdf)
   Provides an overview of workforce development and breaks down the ways it can be looked at. Four levels of decreasing magnitude are identified: systems, organisations, teams and individuals.

3. [Clinical supervision](#) (pdf)
   Explains the importance of proper clinical supervision where more experienced practitioners discuss and explore the work of the less experienced colleagues they manage. Having dedicated time and space to discuss the clinical side of the work is important in providing a supportive atmosphere for practitioners.

4. [Developing effective teams](#) (pdf)
   Explains how to get the most out of teams. Suggested sizes of team, possible team dynamics, how to keep teams together and the delineating of roles and responsibilities are all discussed.

5. [Evaluating AOD projects and programs](#) (pdf)
   Provides an overview of how to use different types of evaluation to render judgement, facilitate improvement or generate knowledge. It breaks down the stages of evaluation and provides practical tips on how best to carry it out.

6. [Goal setting](#) (pdf)
   Covers the features of effective goal setting and how to build a collaborative, inclusive approach to it. Troubleshooting the process is also covered.

7. [Mentoring](#) (pdf)
   Describes how mentoring can be encouraged, both formally and informally, in the drug and alcohol field to promote improved practice and knowledge exchange.

8. [Organisational change](#) (pdf)
   Describes how organisational change can best be managed to minimise disruptions, and bring about positive outcomes. It supplies the initial questions that should be asked to determine if change is really necessary.

9. [Performance appraisal](#) (pdf)
   Walks the reader through the process of creating and implementing a successful appraisal system for drug and alcohol services. It also contains a best practice section.

10. [Professional development](#) (pdf)
    Explains the benefits of professional development and how its pursuit can be encouraged in organisations.

11. Recruitment and selection (pdf)
Describes how effective recruitment can make all the difference in attracting and employing the right people for the job.

12. Retention (pdf)
Offers strategies for retaining effective workers and lists some of the factors that lead to high turn-over.

13. Worker performance (pdf)
Provides a model for use in determining worker performance. It describes how personal capacity, motivation and work environment all shape worker performance, for good or ill.

14. Worker wellbeing (pdf)
Lists some of the factors that influence practitioner wellbeing: stress, burn out; job satisfaction, or the lack of it; and others.

15. Workplace support (pdf)
Explains which measures can be taken to maximise support in the workplace and cultivate a supportive atmosphere.

Others relevant resources include:

1. Alcohol and Drugs Competence Assessment Framework (ADCAF) – Skills for Justice
The ADCAF brings together all the relevant links and resources for the qualification and workforce development of the drug and alcohol workforce. It links to National Occupational Standards (NOS), lists of qualifications and other guidance and strategies. It has a dedicated section for substance misuse workers.

2. Implementing change in substance abuse treatment programs (pdf) – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
This American publication gives a comprehensive overview of change in drug and alcohol services: how it can be prepared for, planned, implemented, evaluated and made sustainable.

3. Clinical supervision and professional development of the substance abuse counselor (pdf) - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
This American publications uses vignettes (case studies) to illustrate the importance of proper clinical supervision and professional development. It also focuses on specific elements of implementation and how techniques such as video can be used to improve both supervision and, ultimately, practice.

4. Staff development toolkit for drug and alcohol services (pdf) – National Treatment Agency (NTA)
This 2003 NTA resource gives a practical overview of tools that can be used for workforce development in drug and alcohol services. Although now 11 years old much of the content is still relevant, with practical tips on using NOS, creating role profiles and job descriptions and the recruitment and supervision processes, as well as a section of links to wider sources of support.

There is also a second toolkit guide for residential services (pdf).