

Application for APT's Excellence in Risk Assessment and Management Award 2014.

Future Focus

Some of our very complex service users have significant sexual offence histories, which are complicated by significant mental health problems and deficits in cognitive functioning. These Service Users have really struggled to benefit from traditional treatment approaches, and have not been able to put their learning into practice and apply new skills within their day to day lives in secure forensic settings. For those specifically with cognitive impairments, being able to internalise new learning was seen to be even more of a challenge, but our Service Users wanted to “get on with doing it, not talk about it anymore”. The “Future Focus” group was developed by the Service Users who had already completed the intensive Sexual Behaviour Management Programme and the Psychology department, in order to assist them to generalise their learning into their real lives, and begin to jointly manage their risks, with the assistance of clinical staff; importantly not being reliant upon insight, thus providing them with a compliance care pathway.

The programme has been developed jointly by Service Users and Psychology staff, and consists of each patient who has been through treatment using their post-programme report (including comprehensive SVR-20) to help to identify the areas they wish to work on and the skills they need to practice. The group then consists of group based sessions to recap on areas the Service Users have identified, and practice sessions in which Service Users use their skills, and review how successful they have been. The Service Users wanted to call the group “Future Focus” to reflect their own views of what they needed next in their care pathway; the chance to “have a go” at jointly managing risks, in a safe and supportive way that wasn't “just talking about it, but doing it”.

“Future Focus” is a rolling programme, as Service Users felt it was important that they could join and leave the group at different stages, depending on their treatment needs, motivation and changes to their mental state presentation, and not have to wait. The group developed to be responsive to the needs of each individual, and therefore no two groups will be the same. The focus is on Service Users practicing the skills they have developed and talked about during their offence focused interventions; but in ‘real life’ situations—these situations can be within the hospital and / or in the community, depending on the risk the patient poses and their level of autonomy. The Service Users aim to work collaboratively with professionals to jointly manage their risk, and work towards their goals for the future. The Service Users have been very creative in identifying the areas within their daily lives where they could practice their skills, and to use these as “therapy practice” environments!

In relation to the practice element of the programme, the Service Users identify the skills they need to practice, plan what skills they will use in specified situations and identify places where they can practice these skills. They are then supported to practice, and apply these skills, and then they reflect on how successful they were, and what they may need to do next. From a risk management perspective, rather than “guessing” whether skills will transfer into community settings such as Tesco's and the town centre; we plan and prepare, and go with the patients so that we can assist and hone the shared management plans.

This service user led clinical programme allows Service Users to feel empowered to identify their own needs, and work with the facilitators to create opportunities for practice. It takes the “guess work” out of assessing on-going treatment needs, and allows the Service Users to see what they can

do, and ask for more practice and assistance if it is felt helpful. We are all very proud of the work the Service Users have done.

The programme is built on having an in-depth knowledge of the patients formulations, and risk profiles, and understanding the factors that relate to increase and decrease risk. The Service User's have spent a lot of time assisting staff in developing this understanding, so that we can provide joint management of risk with them, and thus increasing the attainment of positive life goals, and using goal ladders to motivate and reinforce progress.

The principles of positive psychology, underpinned by the RAID training for staff, and the Sexual Behaviour Management Programme, have enabled patients to work in the group using therapist-guided graded exposure techniques to increasingly complex situations, in a safe and confident manner.

We hope you will consider Future Focus as an entry in the risk management awards. We are very proud of it, and the work it is achieving. The staff involved have shown dedication, enthusiasm and resilience to maintain the effectiveness of this programme with very challenging and complex patients. They don't even moan when they have to go on the bus every week in the rain! (Well, maybe a little!)