Establishing a Human Factors and Civility Service- the successes and challenges

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At South Tees NHS Hospitals, we acknowledged the lack of awareness of Human Factors and behavioural psychology within the organisation and the negative impacting this was having on staff performance.

In 2020, a small faculty came together to deliver facilitated education in these areas within a wider organisational development movement to change the safety culture.

Where did we begin?

Raising awareness began at executive board level. The organisations senior leadership team were brought together for a session focussing on human performance, organisational climate and evidence-based behaviour change theory. This powerful session created a buy in from key stakeholders. After this, an away day was commissioned for 100 senior leaders to come together to discuss and learn about Human Factors, civility, and compassionate leadership. Without senior level buy in, it was unlikely that staff would be released to attend non-mandatory training and to change the culture required multiple levels of intervention with a continuous programme of engagement.

The faculty then developed a suite of generic self-bookable training sessions that introduced the fundamentals of Human Factors and civility principles.

Challenges

- Releasing staff to attend non-mandatory training was difficult as safe staffing remains the priority. Developing new resources that would not necessitate the departure of staff from clinical areas e.g. tea-time trolley training, e-learning may counteract this.
- Initially, most training was also delivered during the global pandemic which meant limiting numbers in rooms (social distancing) and fluctuating attendance due to sickness or shielding.

Successes

Impact in this area is notoriously difficult to measure however there are some outcomes we can align with this novel method of teaching.

- Since training began, CQC results and rating has improved from 'requires improvement' to 'good' in all domains
- Human factors and civility training emphasised as 'outstanding' practise in CQC report- one of only two areas highlighted like this in the report.
- Incident reporting levels have risen to align with national levels whilst rating of harm in many cases has decreased.
- General evaluation has shown the training is received very well and that health professions reconsider their behaviour following the interventions.

We have built the training package into the framework of regular education within the trust and are expanding with e-learning packages next year. Evaluation through a 30/60/90 day follow up methodology will demonstrate more clearly how work-based practices have changed and the impact of this unique training long-term.

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