

# Building Resilience in Mental Health Nurses Working on Adult Acute Inpatient Wards

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## INTRODUCTION

- Mental health nursing is a challenging career, maintaining the balance between therapeutic context and keeping people safe is demanding.
- Staff burnout is associated with poor quality of care and is correlated with the amount of violence and aggression experienced.
- Improving the resilience of nurses working in difficult environments may help reduce their stress levels and therefore burnout, leading to improved quality of care for service users.

## METHODS

- Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust commissioned senior staff to develop a resilience course for newly qualified nurses working in an inpatient environment. Two courses were delivered (2015 and 2017) with 31 nurses in total.
- Measures of resilience and wellbeing were taken before and after the course, questions from the NHS staff survey were completed at the start of the course to compare course attendees with NHS staff in general.
- A qualitative feedback form was completed at the end of the second course to ascertain the participant views on the value of the course.

## RESULTS

- At the start of the course all staff had lower resilience and lower well-being than the general population.
- The feedback about the courses was positive. Participants felt the course had been helpful and recommended it should be offered to other ward staff. Some people found the Mindfulness and exercises that involved closing their eyes whilst sat in a group challenging.
- Some suggested that organisational change to allow staff time to continue the exercises once back on the ward was necessary for long term effectiveness.

## IMPLICATIONS

- The course was welcomed and valued by ward staff.
- They reported that it felt 'like someone was listening'. However, three days off the ward is a lot of time to find and needs to be fully funded and supported.
- Given the current crisis in workforce retention this type of intervention may be of help but a larger study incorporating economic analysis will be required.



# Mental health staff nurses welcomed a building resilience course.

# Management support was key and not always available



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Key theme 1: How could the Trust help new staff to develop and maintain resilience?

Theme	Examples
Training	More robust preceptorship More training available Away days/team building Repeat Building Resilience course Provide the course to all staff
Protected time	Protected time Ensure staff have time for reflective practice
Supervision and support	Supervision Better feedback Debriefs and support after incidents Recognise jaded staff and entrenched practices Better management plans for challenging patients Structured time for group supervision
Listening to staff	Focus groups Surveys Value junior staff – they feel they are viewed as numbers Act on staff concerns – 'we will take it on board' feels like being ignored Listen to new starter concerns
Positive working environment	Allow staff to express and share feelings A more positive atmosphere Promote health Promote work/life balance Pay rise Showing credit where it is due Rotas that allow work/life balance Breaks and a place to take breaks off the ward

Key theme 2: What have you valued about the course?

Theme	Examples
Time and space	Mindfulness Time off the ward Reflective space Time to consider my own needs Time to learn new skills
Values	Insight into own values
Support (peers)	Hearing different experiences Hearing different perspectives Time with peers – sharing, supporting, I am not alone Non-judgemental atmosphere
Support (managers)	May help to stop burnout Not being pressured to share

Graph 1: Mental health staff nurses displayed lower resilience than reported population norms and did not significantly improve during the course

