

Workforce stress and the supportive organisation: a framework for improvement through reflection, curiosity and change – framework testing

Purpose

People are the most important resource in the NHS, yet in some situations an organisation's staff can feel undervalued, powerless and invisible. This leads to burn out, increased time off work, low productivity, and reduced empathy and compassion - prompting many to leave the NHS and putting some off from joining it in the first place.

In 2017, Health Education England (HEE) commissioned the National Workforce Skills Development Unit (NWSDU or the Unit) to explore this issue further. In response, the Unit has together with a group of experts developed a framework for thinking about staff mental health and wellbeing.

The project is now in its second phase which is running from November 2018 to March 2019 to test proof of concept and accessibility.

The Unit is inviting organisations to test the framework with us over January and February 2019. There is resource available to support organisations to do this and a tailored approach will be developed to best meet the needs of organisations engaging with this work. Since proof of concept of the framework is still being tested, the framework is not widely circulated at this point and will be sent to you as part of the testing process.

The framework – creating a supportive organisation

The framework, entitled “Workforce Stress and the Supportive Organisation: A framework for improvement through reflection, curiosity and change”, recognises that each organisation has a substantial role to play in supporting the workforce to undertake what is an inherently psychologically demanding role; that is caring for and treating people. Supportive organisations reduce the reliance on individual resilience and instead create the conditions for staff to flourish and thrive. They should maintain a culture and operate in such a way that the need for personal resilience is minimised as much as possible. The focus of the framework is therefore on systemic resilience rather than individual resilience.

To support organisations in this task, the framework emphasises the importance of taking the time and making the space to carefully consider the elements of the organisational experience that can impact on staff. It provides organisations with a structured process and space to think through and understand the issues confronting their people with the aim of creating a supportive organisation.

Benefits of testing the framework

Your feedback will be key to ensuring that the framework is user-friendly and useful to support organisations in the future. In addition, testing the framework will benefit your organisation in return, allowing you to:

- Consider a different approach in tackling problems within the organisation
- Provide a new way of looking at your organisation
- Help you identify barriers that might have prevented you from tackling issues in the past
- Support you in thinking differently about the selection and implementation of interventions, ensuring they are tailored to your organisation's needs

There is resource available to support organisations involved in the testing process.

How you can get involved

For the testing, we are looking for organisations who would be keen to go through the framework and provide us with feedback. There are different ways of getting involved in the framework testing.

We would recommend testing the framework at a staff workshop. This option allows the organisation to really get involved with the framework and test its applicability within the organisation. It will consist of a half a day to one day workshop with several members of staff. The workshop will be facilitated. Attendees will be asked to consider how the framework might be used within their organisation.

Should a staff workshop not be feasible, other options which can be tailored to the organisation will be discussed.

If you are interested in getting involved, please contact the Project Manager:

Juliane Läng
JLang@tavi-port.nhs.uk
075 2528 8958

About us

The National Workforce Skills Development Unit (NWSDU), commissioned by Health Education England (HEE), has been established to meet the workforce challenges of the changing nature of mental health services and to better support the Five Year Forward View and Stepping Forward to 2020/21 the Mental Health Workforce Plan for England.