

Development and Pilot Implementation of the Buddy Scheme for New Psychiatry Trainees

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Entry To Psychiatry Training

- New clinical role
- New system and responsibilities
- Transition to training

Transition Challenges

- Role Ambiguity
- Cognitive overload
- Social and clinical adaptation challenges

Structured Peer Mentorship (The Buddy Scheme)

- Tailored senior/peer trainee support
- Informal Check Ins
- Guidance on practical training needs by peers and guidebooks

Learning and Support Mechanisms

- Continued support and active feedback cycle
- Support on social integration, well-being and experiential learning

Expected Educational Outcomes

- Increased confidence
- Smooth Transition
- Reduced Isolation
- Improved engagement with training

OBJECTIVE

New psychiatry trainees face several challenges during their initiation to training including adaptation to new trust, familiarising organisation specific systems and understanding training requirements. These challenges affect trainees' overall confidence and wellbeing. The Buddy Scheme was intended to tackle these by creating a "psychiatry family" for the new trainees. "Psychiatry Family" includes a core trainee and a higher trainee, aiming to foster peer support and mentorship. The goal was to improve new trainee experience, build confidence and enhance training experience.

METHOD

In order to identify the need for the Buddy Scheme and determine common challenges faced in the beginning of the training we conducted a semi-structured focus group including 6 trainees from the previous cohort. The discussion was focused on personal experiences, challenges, perspectives and expectations. A thematic analysis was performed to identify common challenges and priorities. According to the findings we designed a guidebook and a checklist to support new trainees, created a semi structured mentorship schedule and selected mentors. The scheme is currently being piloted, with a preliminary evaluation questionnaire assessing baseline concerns and a post-pilot evaluation planned to measure its impact on trainee confidence, adaptation, and satisfaction.

RESULTS

The focus group highlighted several main areas of need, including the need for structured guidance, Access to peer/mentor support, and access to relevant resources. Participants expressed enthusiasm for a mentorship programme which can help improve their training experience both professionally and personally. Insights and comments from trainees shaped the structure of tailored resources. The resources includes a practical checklist for early requirements, a guidebook containing key trust-specific resources, guidance on royal college portfolio and compliance expectations in training.

CONCLUSIONS

Our Buddy Scheme offers practical and compassionate support to new trainees who are facing many challenges during their transition to their new role. Focus group findings highlight the need for a structured mentorship programme. While Buddy Scheme pilot is yet to be finalised, initial stages have prepared a strong ground for implementation. Future evaluations will assess schemes impact on trainee adaptation, confidence, wellbeing and training experience, providing great insights to its potential scalability.

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