Supporting and promoting CPD engagement

Hannah Silcock and Rebecca Dunn recently introduced the RCOT Career Development Framework at a trust-wide occupational therapy event, identifying ongoing learning and development needs to create an agenda for continued professional development.

Following on from the AHPs into Action Framework (NHS England 2017), there seems to be a big buzz around allied health professionals (AHPs) showing their worth within the NHS.

At Bolton NHS Foundation Trust, AHPs are being encouraged and supported to find their voice and this drive throughout the trust has shown increasing recognition of the value that AHPs bring to the workforce.

As occupational therapists within the trust, we wanted to capitalise on this and ensure that occupational therapists were feeling empowered and part of the movement. With over 80 occupational therapists working in many different clinical areas and across many different sites, the opportunities to come together as a professional group were few and far between.

As a result, we decided to set up a CPD event specifically for occupational therapists. On 5 September 2018, nearly 40 occupational therapists within the trust came together and were given the opportunity to network, discuss current issues within the profession and make pledges for the year ahead.

A year after its launch, we decided to focus this event on the Career Development Framework: guiding principles for occupational therapy (RCOT 2017). The plan was to launch the framework within the trust to enrich the current appraisal process.

At the initial session, we wanted to gain an understanding of where occupational therapists within the trust rated themselves against each of the four Pillars of Practice – Professional Practice; Facilitation of Learning; Leadership; and Evidence, Research and Development – and for them to be able to highlight their development goals.

It would also give people an opportunity to make a pledge to say how they planned to achieve these goals over the next 12 months.

As this was outside of both of our comfort zones, a few words of wisdom and encouragement prior to the event, from Dr Stephanie Tempest, RCOT project lead for the framework, were definitely well received.

We decided to use the material provided on the RCOT website and their official presentation to help us with the launch.

At the session, we introduced the Career Development Framework and the four Pillars of Practice. In small groups, the occupational therapists then discussed each pillar, before mapping their current career level (from one to nine) for each one and identifying where they would like to be in the next 12 months.

Following this exercise, we then asked each person to make a pledge on what they were going to do over the next 12 months within each pillar to either maintain their position or improve on it, as per their wishes.

These pledges have now all been collated and will help us for focused activities at future events to help people reach their goals.

On evaluating this initial event we asked people to describe the session in three words and we created a word map (see figure one).

As you can see from the word map, the event was very well received and offered some thought-provoking discussions. Everyone who attended reported that they enjoyed the event and said they would like to attend a similar event in the future.

We were also keen for the occupational therapists to get involved in future events and to help shape how
they are run. Therefore, we requested suggestions from people to see what they would like to see included in future events, to help us shape the way they are run for the benefit of all, as there are a diverse range of skills within the occupational therapists in the trust.

This would also create more collaboration and networking amongst the different teams to achieve shared individual, team and trust goals.

Following on from this, and the feedback that was received, this event has now been made into a quarterly forum for all occupational therapists in the trust. The structure of these events will be to focus on one Pillar of Practice at each event, ensuring that all pillars are covered annually.

It will act as a professional forum and CPD opportunity specifically aimed at, and run by, occupational therapists, with encouragement for all to be involved.

We feel that utilising the Career Development Framework has helped to provide structure to these events and ensure that a holistic to CPD is taken to help people develop in all areas of their practice.

We have already run our first follow up session, where we focused on the Evidence, Research and Development Pillar. We felt it important to start with this pillar, as this is where people had marked themselves the lowest, but also had had a lot of interest to develop within.

At this follow up event, we focused on how simple this pillar can be and the support that is available internally to assist people in developing in this pillar.

It included talks from the library about the assistance they can offer with regards to evidence based practice and literature searches, the Organisational and Development Department around development opportunities available, as well as talks from occupational therapists in the trust who have completed, or are currently involved in, research and the process that is involved.

These talks helped to show how research can be everybody’s business. This has since created a lot of discussion and drive, and again, people have made pledges on how they will take this information forward in to their roles over the next 12 months. The next step is the Facilitation of Learning Pillar in March.

References


Hannah Silcock, occupational therapist in Hand Therapy at Bolton Foundation Trust, email: Hannah.silcock@boltonft.nhs.uk or Twitter: @Scrumpess, and Rebecca Dunn, occupational therapist in the Community Neuro Team at Bolton Foundation Trust, email: Rebecca.dunn@boltonft.nhs.uk or Twitter: @beccaclairedunn or @boltonnhs #boltonAHPs

Dr Stephanie Tempest, RCOT professional development manager says: ‘I have really valued working with and supporting Hannah and Rebecca to implement the Career Development Framework to support the learning and development of their occupational therapy team.

‘Inspired by the event we designed, we’ve also devised a session plan for others who would like to do the same within their own teams. It can be found on the RCOT website alongside the other tools and templates to support using the Career Development Framework in practice. Visit: www.rcot.co.uk/careerdevelopmentframework.'