

Dementia Friendly Hospices – Embedding a sustainable model to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of Hospice staff across Yorkshire and the Humber

Summary of project:

Hospice UK (2015) is calling for hospices to make greater commitment to engage with people with dementia. Through a collaborative approach experts in the field of dementia care and palliative care have developed a dementia care peer facilitator training programme. This training is designed specifically to be relevant to hospice settings. In an initial pilot project, foundation and intermediate level person-centred dementia training was delivered over five days to ten facilitators from six different hospices in the Yorkshire and Humber region. Topics covered included: person-centred dementia care, enhanced communication and end of life care. All attendees successfully completed the training and have engaged with facilitating rolling programmes of dementia care training to hospice staff within their own organisations. The trainers completed follow up visits to each hospice to offer support to the facilitators and evaluate their progress. The facilitators completed evaluations immediately and at three and twelve months post training. They also completed pre and post training self-evaluation questionnaires identifying improvement in their confidence and competence in supporting people living with dementia.

The programme was positively evaluated by the facilitators who in turn reported positive evaluations by hospice staff attending their training sessions. It was reported that the training supported a greater understanding of person-centred dementia care and, with the facilitators delivering the training to staff with diverse roles in their organisations, a collaborative approach to implementing dementia care into hospice practice was developing.

A significant commitment is required from the facilitators who show enthusiasm to engage further with networking opportunities. Support from managers is identified as paramount allowing time for the facilitators to prepare and deliver the training and to release staff for training. The continued implementation of this training will help to enable people with dementia receive specialist support should they need to access hospice services.