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Building a resilient workforce: Identifying stress factors in newly qualified mental health practitioners and supporting through facilitated reflective practice groups

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How can mental health staff be supported to work in increasingly challenging and changing environments? Working in health care can be rewarding, however, it can also lead to burn out, compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma (Wicks 2006). Professional resilience is necessary to ensure that the workforce is able to deliver a safe and effective service in a competent and confident way. Building personal resilience in the current climate is a challenge, however, it is acknowledged that to enable the workforce to maintain their own wellbeing and resilience organizations have a responsibility to create healthy working environments (RCN 2006). A solution-focused reflective model has been developed over a number of years to support staff in a variety of health and social care settings. This paper talks to the findings of an evaluation with newly qualified mental health practitioners and identify the strategies introduced as a consequence of these findings. The solution-focused approach is supportive, collaborative and non-threatening enabling all group members to participate and identify their own goals. Emerging themes from the groups identified the need for further exploration of stressors on staff and as a consequence, a number of workshops were developed. In the wellbeing and resilience workshops, the participants were introduced to strategies in self-care; including taking regular breaks, keeping hydrated, eating for energy, stretching. Alongside participating in regular clinical supervision, continuing professional development and mindfulness.

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