**Making the Most of Leadership Development Training**

Developing leadership in NHS healthcare organisations is recognised as important for improving services and patient care, encouraging innovation, and building workforce resilience. To achieve this, leadership development training is a common approach, yet how readily does leadership training translate back into the workplace? Research by CLAHRC WM has been exploring the optimal conditions for training transfer in healthcare leadership to occur. Based in qualitative empirical data from a case study of an in-house hospital leadership development programme, we highlight four critical areas.

First, having the space and pace to practice leadership is important. Workplace and service pressures, lack of protected training time, and ‘time-out’ for reflection can hinder use of training in the workplace. Trainees need adequate time and space to put their training into practice.

Second, there must be realistic workplace opportunities to practice newly acquired leadership skills. While practical exercises on training days may help cement learning in the classroom, to become embedded in practice requires achievable day-to-day opportunities being present at trainees’ places of work.

Third, given that NHS staff work in a pressured environment and time is critical, leadership trainees tend to be selective in their learning. If training concepts are easy to use, related to trainees’ actual work experiences and with clearly visible benefits, then trainees are more motivated to retain and use their training. Perceived relevance is vital.

Finally, leadership training should be widely supported. It’s all too easy for employees to return from a training course with enthusiasm but encounter resistance back at work. For training to be sustainable over time, management and peer support, accountability and openness alongside a shared language and strategic goals across are important. Under such conditions, the benefits of leadership training are also likely to become diffuse and have wider organisational-level impact.

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