

An Appreciative Inquiry Leadership Programme Supporting Policy to Practice

ELIZABETH CASSON TRUST 



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Introduction

Connecting People, Connecting Support (Alzheimer Scotland 2017) is the first policy of its kind outlining what allied health professionals (AHPs) can do to help people live well with dementia. The four ambitions in Connecting People, Connecting Support (CPCS) are being implemented locally, led by the Alzheimer Scotland AHP Dementia Forum, a group of over 40 occupational therapists and AHP's. Each member of this forum are required to be change agents and influencers across stakeholder groups. A 2 year leadership development programme based on the principles of Appreciative Inquiry has been co-designed with the forum, Fiona MacNeill Associates and Alzheimer Scotland with funding from Elizabeth Casson Trust leadership grant. This poster shares the progress from January 2019 – June 2019.

An Appreciative Inquiry Leadership Programme

“At its heart, appreciative inquiry is about the search for the best in people, their organisations, and the strengths-filled, opportunity-rich world around them”.

Appreciative Inquiry is a way of looking at organisational change that focuses on doing more of what is already working. So instead of starting with 'what's the problem' and looking for fixes, it starts with 'what's already working' and how can we build on that? (Scottish Social Services Council 2016).

The programme was designed, based on the results of asking the forum members: 'What kind of support do you need in terms of leading and influencing the implementation of CPCS'. This led to a clear mandate for less workshops, more 1-1 time (Thinking Space) in a variety of forms and an online learning resource. The Thinking Space Conversations are framed by the following questions: What's working? What's stuck? What's surprising? What ideas do you have? Outlined below are a selection of quotes on the impact of the 1-1 Thinking Space

“ The one to one mentoring I received from Fiona has been invaluable. Fiona encouraged me to think beyond just delivering an effective engagement session, helping me to consider how to maintain momentum, interest and buy in for the work going forward ”

Samantha Flower, Occupational Therapy Mental Health Advisor, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde

“ I felt that I couldn't do more than I was doing, however working with Fiona has helped me gain perspective in a safe place, enabling me to look at more creative approaches to engage others. I have found identifying my skills as a leader a crucial step and I welcome the opportunity to further develop this. ”

Ruth Gardner, Occupational Therapist, NHS Forth Valley

“ The 1:1 phone calls with Fiona have been really helpful, particularly in helping me focus on where we want to be and confidence in using appreciative inquiry and quality improvement tools. I knew the discussion would challenge me and also inspire me, and I have always left the call with a new confidence and a plan of how to go forward. ”

Iona Parkinson, Head Occupational Therapist, NHS Grampian

“ Working with Fiona is a breath of fresh air, helping us think, direct & lead. The reflective leadership sessions have provided us a space to reflect and support us to take permission for ourselves to change what we were doing, helping us to stop just being busy but an opportunity to reflect, wonder and chose a new decision ”

*Wendy Chambers AHP
practice education lead,
NHS Dumfries &
Galloway*

We are now all completing individual web based “StrengthsFinder” (Rath & Conchie 2008) to discover our own strengths as leaders, that we can use for building on the strengths of our local teams and the people around us. The individual Thinking Space sessions will be used to explore this on a 1-1 basis

We have created an online Learning Space that offers practical resources in appreciative inquiry and design thinking and includes videos, input from FMA and space for people to post their own stories and ideas. The Learning Space has been well received by the forum with 100% of those who tested the site agreeing that:

- It was easy to navigate the site
- I believe that I could use the site to support my personal development

Conclusion

Leadership is one of the 4 pillars of practice for occupational therapy (RCOT 2017). To integrate policy to practice, we need to have professional confidence, the ability to influence others, be effective communicators and persuade others of the value of the occupational therapy contribution to dementia. Being able to do this will place us at the forefront of dementia care. This innovative leadership project, funded by the Elizabeth Casson Trust supports us in the ambition that “we can all be leaders”. (Hunter 2013).

Please get in touch with Elaine ehunter@alzscot.org or Fiona fiona@fmapeople.com for more information

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References

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