

## A 'STRENGTHS APPROACH' ~ BEST PRACTICE IN SERVICE USER-CENTRED WAYS OF WORKING

### Practice Development & Training Opportunities

---

'**Recovery**' is undoubtedly a positive creation emerging from, and wholly described in, service user experiences. Yet, in recent years it has become widely applied to care and support services, so much so that it is in danger of losing its true power through becoming too 'professionalised'.

We should not allow the confusion and frustration that sometimes accompanies the discussion of 'recovery' at a service user/practitioner level to undermine such an important guiding principle for how true service user-centred services can function and develop. If we are to change good service user-initiated ideas into positive changes in the way people go about their work we need more than just the concepts. We need:

- A shared understanding of the ideas at all levels of organisations
- Positive action by practitioners, teams and services
- Ownership of changes in practice by practitioners and teams.

A '**Strengths Approach**' is simply the best way of making the concept of 'recovery' a reality. The *Practice Based Evidence* practice development consultancy works with service users, carers, practitioners, teams and organisations in the statutory and voluntary sectors to enable a 'Strengths Approach' to become embedded into genuine service user-centred ways of working.

The **practice development & training** options offered include:

- Clear and focused conference-style presentations, including recognition of the wider evidence base underpinning strengths thinking and working
- Team/service-based workshops (half-day or 1-day), to include:
  - Wider context and rationale for strengths working
  - Identifying strengths
  - Strengths planning and action
  - Action plans for changes to team & individual practice
- Team-based practice development (2-20 days), to include:
  - Interviewing to identify current practice and potential for change
  - Observation and supervised in-vivo changes
  - Development of team-owned protocols for good practice
  - Evaluations of team practice and positive changes
- Linking a 'Strengths Approach' to specifically underpin **positive risk-taking** in team decision-making
- An extensive and uniquely strengths-focused publications CV

## Programme Examples

The specific value-base of the *Practice Based Evidence* consultancy ensures that a 'Strengths Approach' underpins every project engaged, however large or small. For more specific and detailed examples my thanks go to all the staff involved in the following two services/organisations for their desire to make strengths thinking and working the central philosophy of how they go about providing their services.

**Granta Housing Society (voluntary sector housing support)** [Project outline from 2007-9]

- 0.5 day presentation to Senior Managers/Service Commissioners
- x2 0.5 day presentation and discussions with Project Managers (supported housing & floating support)
- x2 days workshops with staff from the identified pilot projects
- x5 days practice development support with each of the three pilot projects (mental health & learning disability included)
- Re-drafting tools and practice guidance
- Supervising a core group of initial pilot project staff to roll-out the ideas to all other Granta projects
- Evaluating changes in practice

**Central Manchester Assertive Outreach Service (statutory/voluntary sector partnership)** [Project outline from 2007-8]

- x2 2-day workshops for all staff recruited into the expanded Assertive Outreach service (expanding from 1 to 3 teams with a threefold increase in service-wide caseload)
- x4 days practice development support with each of three Assertive Outreach Teams, to include:
  - Practice-based reviews of morning handover meetings & chaired structured team discussions
  - Identifying & working with strengths
  - Positive risk-taking in practice
  - Team structures to support changes in practice during a very pressured time of change for the whole service

---

For further discussion of team/service practice development needs or to contract a programme of support contact Steve Morgan at:

07733 105264

[stevemorgan57@hotmail.com](mailto:stevemorgan57@hotmail.com)

[steve@practicebasedevidence.com](mailto:steve@practicebasedevidence.com)