

## BETTER TOGETHER- TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY CARE USING EXPERIENCE-BASED CO-DESIGN

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### BACKGROUND

Community Healthcare West and Saolta are committed to meaningful engagement with service users, carers and staff. By working in partnership using the experience-based co-design approach, we can better understand experiences of care. This assists us in improving the quality of our health and social care services within the ECC programme.

### AIM

Critically evaluate the implementation of the EBCD approach used to aid service users, carers, and staff in co-designing and implementing a community service improvement. This provides an overview of the feasibility of the EBCD methodology as a service improvement intervention within healthcare settings and subsequently lays a foundation for future work in Irish healthcare settings.

### OBJECTIVES

- Overview of the improvement priorities raised by participants and outcomes arising from using the EBCD approach.
  - Assess the facilitators and barriers to utilising the EBCD approach and the group dynamics throughout the EBCD process.
  - Explore participants' experiences and reflections regarding engaging with the EBCD process.
- Assessing these points provides an overview of the feasibility of the EBCD methodology as a service improvement intervention.

### METHODOLOGY

- Participants were recruited using purposive sampling.
- The Galway group consists of four service users who live with chronic conditions and four staff working in the ECC programme.
- The Ballinasloe group consists of two service users, three carers and four staff who work in the ICPOP service and Frailty at the Front Door (FFD) service.
- Five co-design working group sessions took place once a month in a hotel venue.
- Both the co-design working group transcripts and the participant phone interview transcripts were analysed using *Thematic Analysis*.



Galway group with service users and staff

### OUTCOMES

- The project produced two service improvements that include the Better Together poster, leaflet and feedback form.
- The second is the Community Specialist Team Assessment Report for the older person.
- Both tools will can make care more person centred, enable better use of resources, and support self-management and empowerment. The tools can be adapted for other care settings and save time on reinventing resources whilst providing quality care at a local level.

### STRENGTHS AND VALUES OF USING THE EBCD APPROACH

Capturing experiences of persons using and delivering services is a key part of how improvement is grounded in what matters to people.

- *A space where service users are listened to and understood.*
- *Sharing and evoking of experiences in a safe comfortable space.*
- *Capturing various perspectives.*
- *Sharing of resources, services and knowledge with mutual learning.*
- *Creation of a community and formation of friendships based on trust and respect.*
- *Staff and service users formed unique relationships.*
- *A positive and enjoyable experience for those involved.*
- *A final product that works for service users, carers and staff.*

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Training and Education:** It is recommended that training sessions be provided for staff members interested in facilitating patient/service user engagement.
- **Sample Selection:** EBCD projects should consider recruitment involving a diverse and gender balanced sample.
- **Patient/Service User Engagement Culture Change:** To embed meaningful service user engagement in our organisation, an underlying philosophy of care that listens to, values and respects service users' perspectives and care needs is required. Service users and families should be engaged early and not token representatives. Potential barriers to facilitate patient/service user engagement from management and staff perspectives should be addressed including power sharing, time from clinical work and value placed on engagement.
- **Management and Organisational Support:** In preparing for service user engagement, teams need to do an honest self-assessment of their engagement practices and respond to the support needs of staff who want to learn how to engage and include service users' perspectives in a meaningful way in health and social care services.
- **Increase Professional Training on Service User Engagement:** It is recommended that education on facilitating service user engagement is introduced into health and social care curriculums.
- **Opportunities for Evaluation:** This project evaluation report has provided an overview of the strengths of this EBCD project as well as the areas which can be improved for future work. Such evaluations are important for all projects carried out within the health service. It is recommended that more links to researchers and colleges are made available to those carrying out projects within the health services, to make such evaluations more common and accessible.