

HEALTH AND WELLBEING AT WORK – It's ok to ask for HELP

Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust

Background

Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust (BSUH) employs around 7,000 staff and provides district general hospital services to a local population of 460,000.

Through its health, employee, learning and psychotherapy services (HELP) the trust implemented a new approach to counselling and psychotherapy services for staff.

“I am so grateful. An outlet to voice my problems and receive advice and understanding has really helped me to cope during a very challenging time.”
Consultant,
Emergency Department.

“EMDR trauma therapy gave me my life back and the job I love - I don't know what I would have done if I hadn't accessed HELP”
Nursing Sister, Sexual Health.

What they did

The HELP service aligned to the NHS Litigation Authority and CQUIN initiatives to support and provide specialist proactive advice on mental health, wellbeing issues, recruitment, retention and sickness absence. HELP offers a variety of services and operates within a seven-day response rate for triage of individual clients. This includes:

- individual counselling and psychotherapy
- specialist eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR) trauma therapy
- group debriefs following traumatic incidents
- stress management workshops
- emotional intelligence training for senior members of staff
- advice resource for managers and trust seniors on health and wellbeing issues
- major incident planning, support and debriefing
- information on depression, anxiety, trauma and stress impact
- mediation
- outreach days to wards and units.

BSUH has successfully embedded HELP into its staff wellbeing offer and is described as a trusted support for staff in difficult times.

Key outcomes

Until 2009 BSUH used an employment assistance programme (EAP), however only 60 staff used this service at a significant cost to the trust.

Since BSUH implemented HELP, the service supports around 500 members of staff every year with individual psychotherapy and counselling.

- 18 workshops and 28 incident debriefs have taken place each year.
- 44 staff members have benefited from specialist EMDR trauma therapy.
- By offering the services internally the trust is reaching more people for the same cost.
- 98 per cent of staff said the sessions helped them to stay in work, or return to work sooner from sick leave.

HELP also runs a placement programme for honorary psychotherapists from Brighton, Sussex and London universities.

Students rated their placement as excellent following the training.