

Practice Supervisor Development Programme

YEAR 3 Report – Executive Summary

March 2021

PSDP consortium

The successful delivery and excellent feedback of the 52 cohorts delivered between 2018 and 2020 resulted in the commissioning of a further 27 cohorts. Comprising of nine generic cohorts, six 'bespoke' cohorts for LAs most likely to benefit from additional places in line with their improvement challenges and 12 courses supervising the supervisor (StS) cohorts for managers of previous participants, aimed at Team Manager and Head of Service level

Delivery Context

Delivery was in the context of:-

- > The uniquely challenging global Coronavirus pandemic, requiring the social work sector to adapt their practice and the PSDP consortium to respond to this accordingly with adapting the programme to a blended, virtual delivery.
- > Differing working environments such as whilst home-schooling children, caring for vulnerable relatives, grieving for lost loved ones, shielding from the virus, living alone or where the whole family have been 'living at work' and sharing physical space.
- > The increased global focus on anti-racism and diversity following the killing of George Floyd in the United States

Objectives and Approach

It was important to incorporate learning from previous delivery and design, to an approach in line with the differing contexts and enable a positive and meaningful, relational experience for participants and facilitators. This was done by:-

- > Extending to 6 teaching days thus incorporating small group development sessions into the teaching days to maximise attendance of these.
- > Extending the criteria for the generic and bespoke cohorts to Practice Supervisors who have been in post for up to 5 years.
- > Providing up to 3 x individual development sessions to StS Participants to compensate for reduced number of teaching days and enable maximum benefit.
- > Adapting the content for virtual online delivery platforms and providing some technical support
- > Moving away from regional delivery to allow more flexibility
- > Providing physical learning and self-care resources alongside digital resources, to aid virtual learning
- > Ensuring the context of anti-racism and remote working was explicitly discussed and participants were supported in these discussions.

Design and Development

Informed by a range of experience and expertise as well as consultation, a number of points were considered:-

- > **Design** - Developing pedagogy, teaching and learning strategy aimed at keeping the core principles of relational leadership at the heart of virtual delivery.
- > **Delivery** - establishing a video conferencing platform and programme materials which would uphold the integrity of the PSDP and enable the central values and ethos of the programme to be delivered.
- > **Participant perspective** - considering the context and circumstances being experienced and what would be required for them to reflect and feel valued and that their time away from practice at this crucial time was meaningful, enriching, stimulating, energising and restorative.
- > **Facilitator perspective** - the context and circumstances being experienced and what would be required for them to confidently deliver a familiar programme under unfamiliar circumstances and methods in order to model good, reflective, curious and emotionally intelligent supervision practice.
- > **Consortium perspective** - the context and circumstances being experienced by all partners and what would be required to operationalise a virtual delivery pragmatically within a tight timeframe, whilst maintaining our reputation.
- > **Logistics** - ensuring good communications, providing extensive technical support, having a flexible and inclusive approach to overcome arising issues and add

Achievements and Learning

A summary of key achievements, challenges, learning and impact

Key achievements

- > Excellent participant feedback, comparable to previous years despite pandemic challenges.
- > Delivering full programme within tight timeframe and within budget in midst of Covid-19 pandemic and related restrictions.
- > Excellent updated programme structure, content and materials to suit creative virtual pedagogy.
- > Adopting an ethos of 'rhythm of teaching and learning' and 'culture of containment' for a successful relational programme
- > Successfully transitioning from in-person to virtual and blended learning for participants, facilitators and consortium. With some participants saying it was the best virtual delivery they have ever experienced.
- > Innovative, inclusive and pro-active use of technology addressing possibilities and identifying seamless workflows. Enhanced by levels of support to participants and facilitators
- > Provision of range of programme materials and study aids that met a variety of learning preferences and outcomes.
- > Design, development and delivery of impactful course for middle leaders (Supervising the Supervisor) within challenging timeframe and working environment.
- > Excellent collegiate and collaborative working across all Consortium teams with strong governance and operational management with supportive Commissioners.
- > High quality facilitators passionate about the programme, and the primary practice task of the sector.
- > Robust consideration and response to Black Lives Matter at all levels in the system.
- > Flexible and adaptive approach to meet demand of busy managers enabling opportunities to move between cohorts, catch up on missed sessions and be released for work-related priorities under pandemic circumstances.

Key Challenges

- > Ensuring resilience, well-being and safety of all stakeholders within unprecedented pandemic environment with multiple lockdowns and related factors.
- > Redesign and intensive delivery of three programme strands within a tight timeframe.
- > Initial and ongoing engagement of the sector during the pandemic.
- > Sourcing suitable, accessible virtual delivery platform to move from in person to virtual delivery
- > Ensuring facilitators and operations teams were trained and proficient in the selected platforms.
- > Working to understand and fit within participant's limitations of software and access, without impacting too much on the delivery
- > Engaging the sector at a particularly difficult time and LA/Trust ability to enable participants to protect time for online learning.

Key lessons learned

- > Good quality CPD is required even during times of stress and pressure within the sector if not more so.
- > Good quality CPD is of as much value to middle leaders as front line leaders.
- > Systems and processes that can be configured to allow the 'rhythm of teaching and learning' and 'culture of containment' to deliver an experiential programme
- > Retain development of material and delivery style that embraces anti-racist and anti-discriminatory supervision practice.
- > Increased use of technology builds familiarity, confidence, and problem-solving skills and is likely to make future delivery more effective.
- > Dedicated and skilled technical support with experience of relational working for all or part of the delivery is emotionally and professionally containing for the delivery team and participants.
- > Smart surveys allowed swift access to feedback to allow Delivery Lead to reflect and respond as necessary.
- > Give further consideration to digital inequality and equality to access.
- > Onboarding sessions increase engagement with the course, materials and allow testing technology.
- > Within pandemic context it often takes increased time for LAs/Trusts and their teams to engage due to workload pressures and as primary form of contact is emails.
- > Feedback has indicated the course is of value to participants at all levels of experience.
- > Participants and facilitators prefer a digital platform that allows them to feel connected as a group and that works seamlessly.
- > Virtual delivery lends itself to pan-regional cohorts which have proved to be beneficial in shared learning and experiences. It also allows flexibility of movement for participants who miss sessions due to workload/pandemic issues.
- > It is possible to create a reflective, energised space that provides and builds a learning community via online delivery.
- > Value of creating CoP for facilitators that evolves as the programme develops.

Impact on Participant colleagues, Children & Families

- > **Connection to Social Work Practice with Children and Families** – enabled participants to re-connect to the social work profession, their practice and the children and families they support; enabling them to appreciate the value of relationship based practice and how to achieve this.
- > **Learning and Development** – having an opportunity to access learning and development opportunities has influenced participants to prioritise this for the people they supervise and make space for CPD and encourage learning transfer. One participant shared that she has started to invite her supervisees to reflect on their own history, career progression, current role and what this means for their future.
- > **Emotional Containment** – participants have taken the resources, tools and models into supervision and used these to invite their supervisees to share their feelings about their work with children and families. One participant gave an example of how she had used the cards in the Resource pack to facilitate a conversation with her team about how they were feeling and this had a significant impact on the mood and energy of the team.
- > **Individual Reflective Space** – these sessions enabled participants to have the time and space to reflect on themselves and what they bring to their role. One participant shared how she has been able to develop the practice and confidence of an NQSW team by emulating the facilitator.
- > **Group Supervision** – has helped participants to find new ways to structure sessions with their teams and give constructive space to explore case work. One participant gave an example of how the multiple perspectives of a child protection case which had become ‘stuck’, and how ‘stepping down’ resulted in positive change from the family, which may not have been achieved otherwise.
- > **Local CoP** – some senior managers shared how they have met with their participants and considered how they can keep meeting together to share ideas for reflective supervision practice and develop protocols, policies and approaches in their service. One Head of Service attending the StS Programme reflected that this aspect had led him to think about how he could implement group supervision for his service and prioritise this sort of space for himself.
- > **Reflection and Slow Thinking** – many participants have commented on the value of having reflective opportunities across the different components of the programme but also learning the value of slow thinking and how to achieve this in their own supervision. One participant shared a story of a colleague presenting her with a dilemma and instead of jumping into action, she found the self-discipline to pause and think about her response and then approach the dialogue with the colleague differently – she reflects that this helped to respond in a way which undoubtedly had a more helpful impact for the family they were discussing.
- > This feedback reflects stories shared by many other participants, through their comments during the face-to-face aspects of the programme, feedback at the end of the taught sessions and reflections in their 1-1 sessions.

Participant Experience

It is pleasing to report a consistent satisfaction rate of 96 % on all delivery areas (bar workplace support) across all programmes and is comparable to previous years. Response rates on workplace support for learning transfer were also very good albeit slightly lower at between 83 and 96%.

Facilitator Experience

LDPs engaged from contract start through Community of Practice (CoP) events. The Covid-19 pandemic had an impact on the CoP meetings which aimed to support facilitators’ orientation, training and networking virtually. The majority of facilitators who delivered Waves 1 and 2 continued with their engagement. This quotes sums up the overall feedback:

As a PSDP facilitator I can never thank the delivery team enough for the support, encouragement and development that they have continued to offer over the three years of the programme. They have been amazing to work with total commitment to the quality and success of the programme. I know how much participants have valued the programme as I have heard their feedback first hand but as a facilitator I feel so privileged to have been a part of this journey. A truly excellent piece of work that I am proud to have been a part of. Thank you.

PSDP Resources and Tools for Practice Supervisors open access website

The PSDP Resources and Tools for Practice Supervisors open access website contains over 100 resources to support practice supervisors in providing critically analytical, emotionally containing, reflective and curious supervision. All resources have been subject to a diversity review. The first resources were released in Nov 19 followed by two additional releases and includes sections aligned with the StS Programme, a CPD guide and impact of the programme.

Evaluation & Sustainability

Evaluation is conducted through day delivery feedback (see Participant experience) as well as a series of Learning Needs Evaluations (LNE) which also demonstrate impact.

Attendance and completion rates were high and comparable to previous years with an average cohort attendance of 95% on Day 1 of the generic and bespoke cohorts and 88% for StS cohorts. The greatest change is in 'Performance management and improvement' and 'Emotionally intelligent practice supervision'

LNE data shows an increase of 14.99% in generic and bespoke participants' knowledge, skills and confidence from start to end of the programme. The increase is 11.03% for StS participants'. The greatest change is in 'Developing excellent practitioners' and 'Emotionally intelligent practice supervision'.

Conclusion

The PSDP Consortium team are impressed with the levels of engagement from LAs/Trusts and participants particularly during the pandemic which has had an unprecedented global impact. We are very grateful for the support of the DfE commissioning team and the Local Delivery Partners for their ongoing commitment to the programme under these circumstances. We commend the hard work of all facilitators, management and operational colleagues for their commitment and desire to ensure the ongoing success of the PSDP. All involved have shown great patience and resilience which has resulted in the successful and impactful delivery of Wave 3 of which we are very proud.

This is captured in the following comments from a participant who attended the bespoke programme:

The PSDP course which provides learning through six key aspects of professional leadership has undoubtedly been revolutionary for me. I can't sing enough praises for the content of this course and the course leaders whose skills and containment took me and others through what I would call a journey of discovery and enlightenment. I have seen the immediate transformation. For example, after my first attempt at a systemic questioning approach to supervision with my supervisee, I was rewarded with a heartfelt "thank you [participant], I really enjoyed that reflection", and that million dollar moment made me feel ten inches taller and 2 dress sizes smaller and so happy that I had broken through!. My other supervisee said, "I feel so much better after supervision, there is clarity of direction and I feel that you listen to how I am feeling". So there it is, I also have discovered that I am a good container and I owe this transformation to this course which should be made mandatory training for all managers.