



## Lancaster University

### Empowering partnerships

CETAD is the work based learning centre in the Faculty of Health & Medicine at Lancaster University. We have worked in partnership with a local NHS Teaching Hospital Trust to map out a development programme designed to empower their Ward Managers in the constantly changing NHS landscape. The partnership involved the Director of Nursing, her team and senior members of the HR and OD team together with CETAD staff and the outcome was the design and delivery of a contextualised Postgraduate Certificate in Organisational Change.

The content for the programme was developed around an NHS organisation that wanted to encourage and support their Ward Managers to become 'Change Agents' and super numerate in order to ensure high quality care throughout the patient pathway. The development of the programme was built around core national clinical leadership competencies, key organisational values and participant self review via a repeated 360 degree skills questionnaire.

The programme was delivered off site via interactive workshops facilitated predominantly by university tutors however key sessions were delivered by the NHS Trust staff on subjects such as finance and budgets. Forty Ward Managers, two groups of twenty were enrolled on the programme which was delivered over a twelve month period.

#### **Innovative work place assessment methods were introduced and included:**

- A group task to analyse the drivers for change impacting on Ward Managers.
- The completion of a personal development plan linked to change, the Trust's competence framework and 360 feedback.
- The production of a change management project proposal.
- A reflective diary on their experience of leading others through change.
- The design of an evaluation for achievement of change in a work context.
- A final group presentation to design and conduct their own evaluation of learning from the programme and their experience of working in action learning sets.

Some of the outcomes that reinforce the real learning from the programme and the impact at an organisational level were evaluated by the students as part of their final group assessment exercise.

They include:

- The Ward Managers have developed a very strong local network; a loud voice within the organisation.
- The Ward Managers are more resilient and as a result more able to cope with and to get more involved in change as they have more understanding of a manager's role within the change process.
- They have more confidence as leaders and are therefore better equipped to deal with difficult people.

An initial evaluation of the programme has evidenced that the partnership working between CETAD and the Trust, with the Trust delivering specialist inputs to the programme, is a successful model. A greater awareness and understanding of finance was a desired outcome for the Trust and following their finance input it has been recognised that Ward Managers now have more financial awareness, more understanding of budgets and a better insight into how it all affects their wards and departments.

As a result of the programme new networks have been formed and their power and value cannot be under estimated. Without exception all line managers have cited the positive impact of supportive peer networks. Peer support has enabled the sharing of good practice, offered the opportunity for discussion and afforded shared understanding of challenges facing others in the same role in different areas of the Trust. Ward Managers have made links across the Trust and so now feel less isolated and part of a bigger team.

The programme design which enabled group presentations to be assessed has clearly contributed to building new peer networks. The Action Learning sets facilitated by the Trust have again enabled Ward Managers to work together and supported them in finding solutions to problems. As this facilitation was undertaken by the Trust the sustainability of the continuation of these powerful networks will be possible and in the fullness of time it is anticipated that they could become self facilitating.

The partnership that was formed between the Trust and CETAD to deliver this initiative has clearly been successful. The success of the programme and the lessons learnt in developing it, have ensured that it will be transferable; the model can be adapted and offered more widely to other NHS Trusts. In completing this programme participants have achieved a Postgraduate Certificate. As one criterion of progression to senior clinical positions within the NHS is the achievement of a postgraduate qualification, a further benefit of this programme is a group of staff with the capabilities to progress within their organisation.