



Emerging Findings From Year 3

Help through Crisis activity booklet

This booklet shares some of the things we've learned from you during the case study visits and includes activities for reflecting on the learning. It accompanies the Emerging Findings learning paper. We have focused on three key themes based on the overall evaluation questions for the HtC programme:

1.

How do partnerships engage with people facing crisis?

2.

Which services and delivery models are effective in providing crisis support?

3.

What support do staff need for the work they do?

In this activity booklet, we have included some key findings and questions for you to reflect on. The questions may raise things you have already addressed, or they may highlight areas that could be improved further. You'll see that some of the questions are designed for partnerships to use within your teams, and others should help you as you speak to people who use your services. This is another way to help ensure co-production is central to shaping your services in future. These are just ideas that you will need to adapt so that they are appropriate for your local circumstances and the people you support.

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ENGAGING WITH PEOPLE FACING CRISIS

What did we find?

The high levels of need for the support provided by HtC partnerships means there can be very little time to do outreach work. Even without going to people directly, HtC partnerships can feel overwhelmed with the extent of demand for their services. People's support needs are also often complex.

This level of demand for services can make it hard for teams to find the time to assess how referral pathways are working and whether a project is reaching the intended people. However, this understanding is essential for delivering a service effectively and maximising its impact.

What does this mean for partnerships?

High levels of demand may mean that people who should be prioritised in a local area are being missed. For example, if they are not already linked to services or do not refer themselves for support. It can also mean that some people receiving support may not have the greatest levels of need or may not fully meet the criteria for the HtC project.

Instead of thinking about the challenges of "hard to reach" people, a better approach is to start by recognising that they can be "easy to ignore". Partnerships should reflect on what they *can* do to ensure different types of people receive support. There are great examples of outreach in this paper.

Strong local knowledge and good monitoring systems will help provide the evidence of who is accessing services and who might be missing out. Adapting referral criteria and processes may also be necessary to change who is receiving support.

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Q

Questions for you

- How do you manage access to and demand for your services? Why do you manage it this way?
- Are there any groups that are being missed out from your support?
- How could you improve (i) your outreach or referral pathways and (ii) your eligibility criteria to ensure those who most need your support can access it?
- How can your knowledge of the local context be improved? Who else can you speak to/involve?

Q

Questions for the people you work with

- How did you find out about the service?
- What types of people do you think would benefit from [the service] who don't seem to use it?

ENGAGING WITH PEOPLE FACING CRISIS

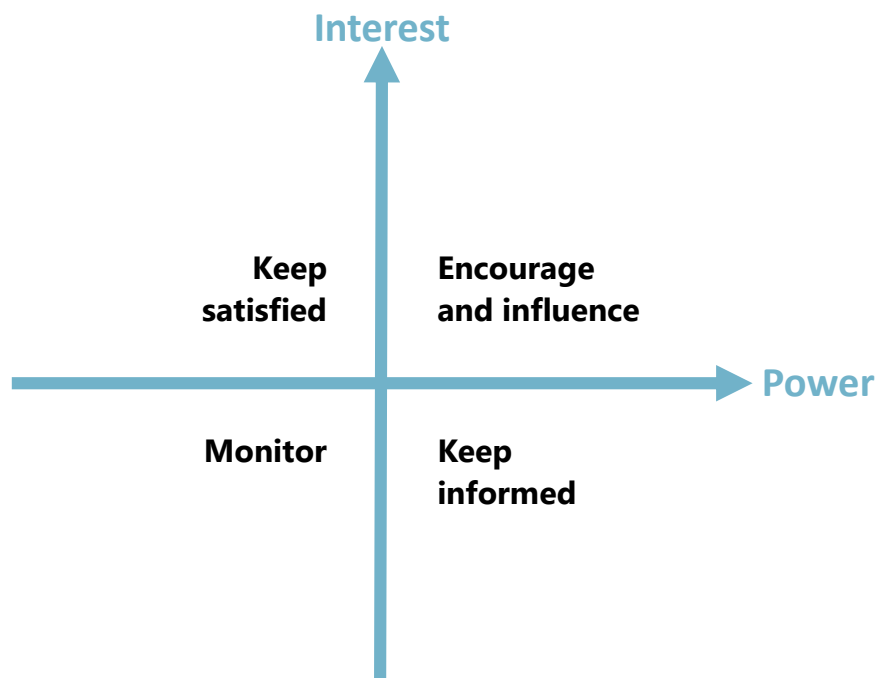
What actions are you going to take?

If making better links with other organisations is something you would like to think about further, we've suggested an exercise below you could do on your own, with your team or with the beneficiaries you work with.

Suggested Exercise

HtC partnerships are working with lots of local organisations including other charities, statutory services e.g. the local council and local health services, as well as some national organisations like the Fund. To help think about whether you could reach out to other organisations or make the most of the connections you already have, you can complete a stakeholder mapping exercise.

1. List all of your stakeholders (all the organisations you are working with at the moment, or would like to work with in the future).
2. Plot them against how much power they have, and how much interest they have in your work using the chart below:



3. Think about how you could work more closely with those in the 'encourage and influence' quarter.

EFFECTIVE RESPONSES TO IMMEDIATE CRISIS

What did we find?

Partnerships use different models to deliver support, but holistic, person-centred approaches are crucial. This can be done in different ways, but often relies on an advice or case worker to provide an ongoing contact point for people. Developing this kind of relationship can help to build trust and allow support to be tailored to an individual and their circumstances.

Community centres and other ways of co-locating different kinds of support creates a feel of community, and is often seen as a good way to help people develop social relationships.

However, there is a risk that co-locating services can mean that individuals who are excluded from a space lose access to a wide range of services. As such, there may be advantages and disadvantages to this model.

What does this mean for partnerships?

There is no one approach to effective crisis support. However, small changes can make a difference so it is worth exploring what you can learn from other HtC projects to improve delivery.

For example, there can be dependency on a single case worker. This builds trust when people are first dealing with crisis, but can become challenging when people no longer need intensive support. A drop in centre or hub can help make it easier for people to develop confidence and resilience, because they can build relationships beyond an individual case worker. This helps people feel comfortable in a familiar place where they can access support.

Whatever model is used for support, creating a welcoming environment and involving volunteers are effective, practical ways to improve support and make people feel at ease.

EFFECTIVE RESPONSES TO IMMEDIATE CRISIS



Questions for you

- How are you creating a good first impression? How could this be improved?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the model you use to offer support?
- How might the opportunities and support you offer volunteers be improved?



Questions for the people you work with

- What did you think of [the service] when you first arrived?
- Overall, how could [the service] be improved further?
- What other issues are there that you would like support with that [the service] didn't help with?

EFFECTIVE RESPONSES TO IMMEDIATE CRISIS

What actions are you going to take?

If ensuring people have a good first impression of your service is something you would like to think about further, we've suggested an exercise below which you could do on your own, with your team or with the beneficiaries you work with.

Suggested Exercise

Take 15 minutes and go outside. Walk down the street before returning to the building where support is provided. As you approach the building, go slowly and look around you. What is around the building? How might someone feel as they approach?

Continue to enter the building. What can you see? Is it clear where to go? How might you feel coming into the space for the first time?

When you are back inside, write down what you were thinking and feeling. Is there anything you could change about how people reach your service?

SUPPORTING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

What did we find?

Staff providing crisis support are working to help people in difficult and complex circumstances. However, the demands of providing effective support are not necessarily matched by adequate resources, within and outside organisations.

This can result in:

- Capacity pressures on frontline staff, contributing to higher levels of stress and burnout.
- Frontline roles becoming more demanding, with increased risks and responsibilities as the scope of the support they provide changes and expands.
- Frontline staff feeling a greater sense of responsibility for those they support, with fewer statutory support services available to help people in crisis.

What does this mean for partnerships?

It is important that individual staff members do not feel solely responsible for the people they work with. As well as good line management, partnerships could consider offering clinical supervision, developing codes of practice or tailored organisational policies and procedures, or setting aside time with colleagues to share and reflect on staff support needs.

Partnerships should also consider co-producing services with staff. This involves increasing individual staff members' autonomy and involvement in decision-making. This is something wider research has shown can reduce levels of burnout.

SUPPORTING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS



Questions for you

- Are frontline staff able to share responsibility with others appropriately? If not, what gets in the way?
- Are frontline staff able to set clear boundaries? If not, what gets in the way?
- How are staff supported in their roles more generally? How could this be improved?



Questions for the people you work with

- What did [staff and/or case worker] do that was particularly good?
- What did [staff and/or case worker] do that could be better?
- What might you be able to offer as a volunteer to support other people using [the service]?

SUPPORTING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

What actions are you going to take?

If reflecting on a specific aspect of your work is something you would like to think about further, we've suggested an exercise below which you could do on your own, with your team or with the beneficiaries you work with.

Suggested Exercise

Reflective practice is a way of studying your own experiences to improve the way you work. It is frequently used in some professions like medicine. It can be a helpful way of thinking about your experiences at work, and building on your knowledge and skills developed on the job. There are lots of different models of reflective practice based on answering a series of questions. One approach based on the Gibbs reflective cycle is on the right. Start with describing what happened and work your way around the circle.

Description:
What happened?
Start here

Feelings:
What were you thinking and feeling?

Evaluation:
What was good and bad about the experience?

Action plan:
What will you do next time?

Conclusion:
What else could have you done?

Analysis:
What sense can you make of the situation?

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS!

If you have completed any of these exercises and would like to share your reflections, please head over to the Help through Crisis Slack site or share your reflections or examples directly with the Learning, Support and Evaluation team using the email below.

As always, if you have any comments or questions about the topics discussed throughout this activity booklet, please get in touch with us through Slack or the email address below.

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