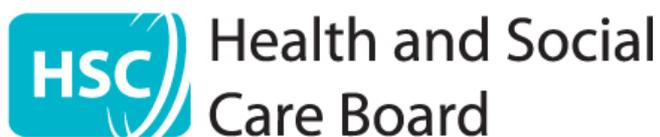




LOST FOR WORDS PROJECT

PROJECT REPORT

This project was funded by the Health & Social Care Board and the Community Foundation, Northern Ireland.



Community Foundation
NORTHERN IRELAND

2016

Background and Rationale

Lost for Words is a training programme aimed at supporting people who do not use speech as their primary means of communication. Its aim is to help ensure that people who are *Lost for Words* are able to get their views heard, understood and acted upon.

The *Lost for Words* project was created by ARC (NI) working in partnership with TILII (an advocacy group of men and women with a learning disability), including patients and staff in Muckamore Abbey Hospital.

The project was funded by the Community Foundation Northern Ireland and the Health and Social Care Board. This vital funding enabled Lost for Words to be rolled out free at the point of delivery over the whole of Northern Ireland.

The target audience for Lost for Words was two fold:

- Staff who work everyday, or are in regular contact with people with a learning disability who do not talk
- People with a learning disability who want to learn more about how to communicate with their peers who do not talk

Priority access was to be given to staff that were working with individuals undergoing the resettlement transition under the Community Integration Process.

So what did we do?

In the first phase of this project ARC NI supported stakeholders to work together to develop a DVD as part of the training package. After piloting the course, evaluation illustrated that the course content could be further improved to fully meet the needs of staff and people with a learning disability to engage with their peers.

service users the correct set of skills to meet the outcomes of the project.

The second phase of the project was the inclusion of practical advice on alternative communication techniques. This was necessary to ensure the continued growth and development of the project, ensuring staff and people with a learning disability felt better equipped to communicate effectively with people with a learning disability who had no verbal communication.

Again this was co-produced and co-delivered by people with a learning disability.

The course was revised to offer the following learning outcomes below to the participants.

By the end of the course the participants will:

- Be familiar with the range of ways in which people communicate without speech

- Have an introduction to Active Support and Intensive Interaction
- Be familiar with objects of reference and sensory referencing
- Learn the first stages of PECS
- Have an understanding of augmentative and alternative communication
- Learn basic Makaton Signs
- Be more confident in communicating with people who do not use verbal communication

So what did we deliver?

- 123 staff across the Health & Social Care Trusts received the training;
- 93 people with a learning disability received the training;
- 378 staff within the Community & Voluntary Sector received the training.

Evaluation forms were completed at each training session.

In total 382 staff returned the form.

- 96% said the trainer had excellent subject knowledge;
- 95.5% scored the co trainer excellent for her presentation and communication skills; and
- 99% said the course will help them in their work

Post Evaluations

A final email was sent out to participants to capture if their practice had changed as a direct result of the course.

Dympna Casey - Team Leader, Parkanur College:

“I've had a wee chat with the staff to get their feedback and everyone was very impressed. They said it gave them the confidence to communicate more effectively with one resident in particular. They also said that the format of the training was excellent and provided some very useful information.

We are actually now looking into getting Makaton training because of how well ‘Peter¹’ reacted to that particular part of the training. We have noticed that he is much more confident in communicating with us now. We are assuming this is because he saw us making an effort to improve our techniques.

Overall we all found the course immensely useful and in our last inspection RQIA were quite impressed we had participated in the training. Thank you for providing us with the training. It was a really worthwhile course.”

¹ Name changed to protect individuals' identity



Jacqueline MacBride - Curriculum Manager School of Health and Social Care, North West Regional College

“Just making contact mid-year by way of keeping in touch. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the excellent Lost for Words Training that was delivered on three different occasions now to our groups of students. The feedback from the students has been excellent. It is a huge benefit for our HND and Access students (and staff) to have the opportunity to learn from someone with your level of expertise and experience in the subject. The delivery was most engaging and informative.

I have attached the assignment that the HND/HNC students completed which allowed them to reflect on what they have learned from your training and this was also a formal part of their assessment. We have recently carried out student liaison meetings and students again were reinforcing to us that they valued your presentation very much and the relevance it had to their assessment. The students also felt that it had benefited the client groups, which the students are working with.”

Benjamin Campbell - Assistant Clinical Psychologist, Mount Oriel Community Learning Disability Team

“I just wanted to give some feedback on the Lost for Words training provided by ARC and facilitated by yourself. I found out about the training through Community NI and felt it would be a great opportunity to gain a bit of education and awareness of non verbal communication for staff within psychology. I run the Assistant and Associate Peer Support Group (AAPSG) which includes psychology staff who work across Belfast Trust in different capacities, and the feedback I got from everyone involved was that the training was of tremendous value in terms of building awareness for those who had never worked in a learning disability setting as well as for staff that do work in learning disability. Some members of the group work with individuals with Acquired or Traumatic brain injury, and they felt they could practically incorporate some of the methods mentioned in the training into their work, some of which were things that they had not previously considered. For group members who don't work in departments that would involve non verbal communication, it provided a great insight into the challenges and strategies involved to work in that type of setting.

The training itself was lively and engaging, and the resources provided were really useful for the group. The fact that it was free of charge meant it was more accessible than other types of training.”

Conclusion

In conclusion, the project was highly successful in reaching both people who use services and staff involved in the resettlement process. Lost for Words achieved over its anticipated targets for engaging with staff in the voluntary and private sector by 147%.



The project found securing attendance from Trust staff most challenging, with budget cuts and travel embargoes being cited as the reason for non-attendance.

The North West Regional College had 139 health and social care students take part in the project. 90% of these students were in work placements within Health & Social Care Trust(s). This meant that Lost for Words had reached them in the early stages of their careers in the sector.