

**Case study: NHS Ayrshire and Arran**

# Development of an E-Learning Module for Clinicians

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## The challenge

The original Co-Creating Health Practitioner Development Programme provided a model for enhancing skills and knowledge to support self-management. However, evaluation of the programme by participants and facilitators highlighted the need to adapt it if it was to become sustainable. Feedback from GPs cited clinical time constraints, lack of availability for additional learning and development, and a need for training to be delivered close to home to mitigate against time spent away from surgery.

Challenges included:

- increasing and competing demands on staff time to attend training
- length of the programme
- timing of the programme
- inflexible format of original training programme
- capacity of local Co-Creating Health Facilitators
- attracting clinicians to participate in training
- availability of training rooms
- training costs
- backfill costs for locum cover
- local geography.

In the short-term, Co-Creating Health funding helped overcome some of these challenges, but to maximise potential for sustainability and spread the Local Co-Creating Health Implementation Team (LOCCHIT) recommended that alternative and innovative ways to enable clinicians to enhance skills to support self-management were required.

## What we did

The creation of the e-learning training module 'Working in Partnership' was approved at the end of 2010, and testing of the system started six months later. GPs and Practice Nurses from one of the local practices started using the module as a pilot group in August 2011, and in October 2011 the module was released across NHS Ayrshire & Arran and is now available to all staff via LearnPro.

## Why e-Learning?

- **Sustainability:** Development of an eLearning module that encompassed the ethos and principles of Co-Creating Health was recognised as a sustainable means of providing training beyond the project phase of Co-Creating Health locally, and perhaps nationally.
- **Familiar Format:** Distance learning /self-directed learning and eLearning are familiar to many clinicians. Most clinicians take the responsibility for their own learning very seriously. NHS Ayrshire & Arran has an existing e-learning system, LearnPro, that is increasingly used to provide a range of training programmes to staff, and uptake of this format of learning is good.
- **Flexible Learning Format:** There are increasing and competing demands on staff time. By breaking the course into smaller online chunks (10-30 minutes) staff can complete the module at a time that is convenient to them individually. Additionally, the eLearning does not require them to be released from the clinical setting for long periods.
- **Flexible time and location:** The eLearning module can be accessed from work or home thereby providing a flexible learning option to fit with individuals' circumstances and learning preferences.
- **Maximising Available Facilitator Capacity and Support:** The existing Co-Creating Health training team consists of a small number of lay and clinical Facilitators (currently 8 clinical and 3 lay tutors) who would find it difficult to deliver enough face-to-face sessions to support the planned spread of the training. Whilst we plan to continue to develop Facilitator capacity, it will be challenging to have a sufficient number of Facilitators available to deliver only face-to-face group training as well as provide ongoing support to staff. E-Learning will allow staff to cover the theory online, freeing our facilitators up to deliver a single face-to-face session to supplement and reinforce the eLearning module, and to provide ongoing support to staff as they

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practice skills and gain experience in supporting patient self-management.

- **Cost:** Although the initial development of the eLearning module requires a considerable amount of clinician and technical developer time, the running costs thereafter are minimal. During Co-Creating Health we have been able to offer locum funding to enable clinicians to be released to participate in the training. In the longer term, funding will not be routinely available for this purpose, and the eLearning module offers an option for clinician training that minimises the need for locum cover and backfill funding.
- **Professional and Personal Development-Specific:** The eLearning module has been developed in such a way as to make it specifically relevant to clinicians in terms of skill and competency development that links to their ongoing professional development requirements, such as the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) and GP Revalidation. The course has been mapped to specific dimensions of KSF and GP Revalidation so that clinicians can see how it can benefit them personally and professionally. There are tools throughout the course that will help staff meet these requirements e.g. use of the CARE (Consultation and Relational Empathy)1 Measure, reflective exercises, links to service improvement.

## Overcoming the challenges of e-Learning

Some of the challenges in introducing an e-Learning approach are:

- **Maintaining Co-Creating Health ‘Partnership’ Principles:** Demonstrating partnership between the lay and clinical Facilitator is one of the most important aspects demonstrated during face-to-face clinician training. Demonstrating this partnership through elearning would be a challenge. It was decided that video and audio demonstrating this partnership could be a

solution. With support from NHS National Education Scotland (NES) short video clips demonstrating patient-clinician consultations, and modelling partnership working, were produced and have been embedded within the eLearning module.

- **Developing and Practising Skills:** Feedback from the original face-to-face sessions highlighted that practising skills through role play helps give clinicians the confidence to try these skills in practice. A practical session is therefore offered to supplement e-learning and also provides opportunities for peer support.

## Next steps

One General Practice team participating in Co-Creating Health has tested the eLearning module to date. In October 2011, the module was launched NHS Ayrshire & Ayrshire-wide, thereby giving all staff access to the module. To date 12 clinicians have completed an evaluation and feedback is encouraging.

There is growing interest in the module from other Co-Creating Health sites and other health organisations, providing an opportunity to share the module with colleagues outside NHS Ayrshire & Arran.

Evaluations will be monitored and the programme tweaked depending on feedback. Analysis of information will compare feedback between those who do and those who do not do the CARE measure as well as a comparison of eLearning model versus wholly face-to-face sessions.

The Working in Partnership eLearning module provides a widely available, sustainable training solution to help clinicians develop and enhance skills to support their patients to self-manage. However, it is recognised that one size does not fit all, people learn differently, and therefore a menu-based approach to training is required. A range of options that vary in format, time commitment and intensity are available to provide flexibility for staff.

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## Reference

1. Mercer, Stewart (2004), General Practice and Primary Care, Division of Community-based Sciences, University of Glasgow. CARE Measure