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Pathways of Effective Transition

National CAMHS Support Service
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It has long been acknowledged that transition from child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) to adult mental health services (AMHS) is not planned or executed well and is often experienced poorly by young people. In recognition of this the National Mental Health Development Unit (NMHDU) and Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) commissioned OCB Media in partnership with Cernis Limited to produce flexible and innovative learning materials to be used by health and social care professionals to improve their knowledge, skills and understanding.

Project challenges

The major criterion was to encourage the sector to rethink and improve their current practice and for this reason it was important to create materials that would be highly engaging as well as being able to meet the needs of a diverse group of practitioners and trainers. The primary audience includes mental health professionals and social care practitioners, but the resource will also be of interest to youth workers, teachers and GPs.

> *One of the most important issues we identified was the lack of good training resources for practitioners working in adolescent or adult services with young people and their families at a difficult time during the transition from adolescent services. This new training resource can be used by individual practitioners to improve their own knowledge and skills, or adapted to train colleagues and teams. OCB and Cernis took enormous care to make sure that the learning resource was helpful, accurate and relevant. They stretched us to really think about what it was we wanted to convey, took enormous care over the wide range of activities and information and created an e-learning resource which is both challenging and fun.*

Kathryn Pugh
National CAMHS Support Service and National Mental Health Development Unit Young People's Transitions Project Lead

Solutions

Due to the complexity of the subject matter a case based approach to learning was taken, as opposed to a more linear course approach. For each of the eight learning areas a story based around a different fictional character was created, blending a highly engaging visual style with animation and narration. The learning was then 'hung' around this central character, exploring how they would respond in different circumstances. Thus learners were able to progress through their learning whilst having it mapped to the story of an 'actual' case. Not only did this provide a significantly empathic hook for the learner, it also rationalised the whole learning experience to the actual working environment within which the newly acquired knowledge would be utilised.

Furthermore the modular approach to learning allowed learners to focus on those areas which were directly related to their needs, as opposed to having work through a linear course progression. Not only did this allow 'just in time' learning to be delivered, the resource can be used as an efficient knowledge reference tool beyond the initial learning experience.

Benefits

For the first time all practitioners in the mental health workforce have ready access to learning and development resources, free of charge, which are designed to help them appreciate and explore the issues and challenges in planning, implementing and monitoring effective transition from child and adolescent to adult mental health services. The unique course structure enables health and social care professionals to select from eight animated case studies, according to their particular needs and knowledge gaps. Every case study introduces and illuminates a topic and its concomitant issues, which are developed in more depth throughout a series of mini modules, each including interactive exercises and printable summaries. Those who choose to work through all the case studies may also take the summative assessment and this could be set as a prerequisite for all staff working in this area.