Using blended learning to develop competence

NHS Education for Scotland

eCom Scotland

Setting the Scene

NHS Education for Scotland (NES) is a Special Health Board, whose mission is to provide educational solutions that support excellence in healthcare for the people of Scotland.

Since 2012, NES Psychology directorate has been developing a programme of work aimed at addressing the training needs of the NHS Scotland workforce in relation to psychological interventions in physical health care.

In 2015, evidence was reviewed that suggested that psychological problems account for a considerable proportion of the disease burden of both long term conditions and medically unexplained physical symptoms. The costs of this disease burden are generally independent of the costs associated with treating any psychological problems.

Psychological interventions have been shown to improve these problems, particularly where such treatments can be integrated into the overall plan. This can also have economic benefits.
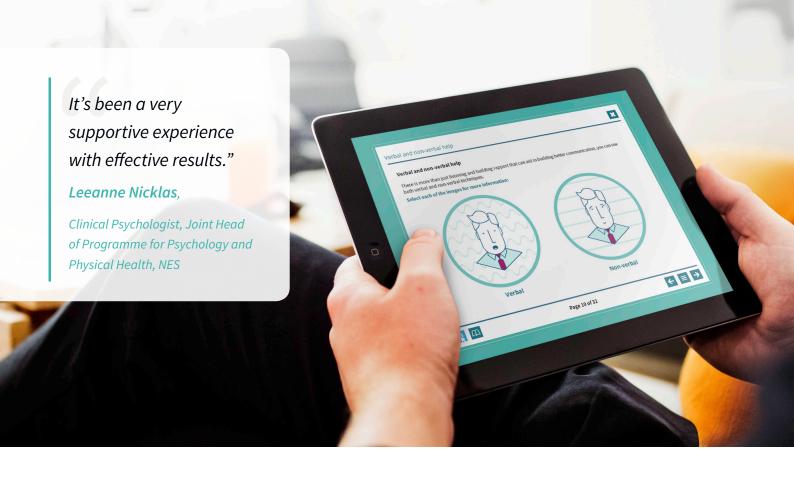
The Challenge

NES wanted to train multi-disciplinary staff in the competencies required to deliver brief psychological interventions for people with physical health conditions.

NES already had two courses they were delivering face-to-face: Developing Practice and AsSET training (DEPA). However, they wanted to reduce the amount of face-to-face delivery time, to allow for more development via coaching and problem solving. They also wanted to bring the learning closer to their individual practice, as well as incorporate methods of experience, reflection, theory and experimentation to ensure implementation of the psychological skills into practice.

NES also faced the challenge of the differing needs of their learners; a varied range of health professionals, such as specialist nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, medics and clinical managers.

> *It's been a very supportive experience with effective results."*
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> **Leeanne Nicklas,**
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> *Clinical Psychologist, Joint Head of Programme for Psychology and Physical Health, NES*

The Solution

eCom Scotland were appointed by NES and recommended a blended learning approach, with training initially being delivered via two eLearning modules, followed by face-to-face coaching and problem solving sessions.

eCom's instructional designers used their expertise to undertake a thorough review of existing NES content. Then, working closely with the subject matter experts, developed a consistent structure for both of the eLearning modules, as well as potential future modules. They adapted the original content, suitable for delivery as a face-to-face presentation, into easily understandable language for digital delivery. eCom's designers also introduced iconography throughout to provide visual cue points, to promote engagement.

Working in collaboration, eCom's instructional and multimedia designers created a number of visual elements and activities to promote reflection, experience and experimentation between the modules and the face-to-face workshops via easily accessible PDFs.

The resources that eCom developed can be used throughout the length of the training program and have clear signposts to additional learning resources.

The Benefits

eCom provided NES with engaging and convenient material for the range of learners undertaking this blended training.

eCom delivered both modules simultaneously and designed them to give learners the flexibility to complete the activities or reflections that suit their own practice at the time which is best for them.

eCom's effective use of the blended learning approach helps maximise the effectiveness of the DEPA training by giving learners a good grounding in the fundamentals of the subject so they can get maximum benefit from the subsequent face-to-face coaching sessions with the trainers

This new resource successfully ensures competence and confidence of learners across the NHS Scotland workforce in providing a range of psychological interventions to people with physical health conditions.

eCom Scotland

Customised Learning Technology Solutions

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