Measuring the Impact of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Learning on Patient Experience Outcomes in the Workplace – A Realist Synthesis and Evaluation

Project Aim

The project aimed to devise and test a CPD Impact Tool that identifies mechanisms for measuring the impact of CPD learning on individual, team and organisational effectiveness in relation to improvements in quality of care and patient outcomes in the workplace.

Methodology

Realist Synthesis and Evaluation (Pawson and Tilley 2004) was chosen for this study because it focuses on understanding and explaining the mechanisms by which an intervention (CPD) works (or fails to work), thereby providing an explanation, as opposed to a judgement about its effectiveness. The key features of this approach are:

1. It is a methodological framework designed for complex policy interventions.
2. It is concerned with identifying causal mechanisms and their enabling or constraining conditions.
3. It is concerned with the context in which interventions operate.
4. It is concerned with the way in which the context influences the mechanisms by which an intervention works or fails to work.

The research objectives were agreed with commissioners as:

1. To develop a CPD Impact Tool that encompasses impact indicators.
2. To identify and test new impact indicators of effectiveness.
3. To refine the tool to ensure impact is captured at individual, team and organisational levels.
4. To provide evidence of evaluative impact for measuring organisational effectiveness of CPD programmes on the health and social care workforce.

Key References


Research Questions

The research questions were mapped to the domains of the Health Education England (HEE) Education Outcomes Framework (EOF) to articulate their implications:

1. Which indicators are useful for providing information on individual and team effectiveness in relation to improvements in quality of care and patient experience in the workplace (EOF Domain 1, 2, 3, 5, 6)?
2. How might these impact indicators be synthesised to develop a tool to measure individual and team effectiveness in the workplace? (EOF Domain 2, 3, 5).
3. What are the impact indicators of organisational effectiveness appropriate to include in a CPD Impact Tool (EOF Domain 1-5)?

Recomendations

1. Recommendations for Health Education England, Professional Regulators and Policy Makers
2. Recommendations for Commissioners of CPD
3. Recommendations for Providers of CPD Learning
4. Recommendations for Health Service Providers
5. Recommendations for Facilitators of CPD Learning in the Workplace

Indicators Identified for the Outcomes of Each Transformation Theory

1. Transformation of individual practice
2. Transformation of skills to meet service provision for society's needs
3. Transformation of knowledge/knowledge translation
4. Transformation of work place teams/context to deliver on organisational values

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