

HEE Primary Care Fellowship Programme – Wellbeing. Laura Creasy

I entered the fellowship with a lot of excitement about what could be achieved. I decided to do a group project with the other wellbeing fellow as we were both passionate about the same topic and thought it would lend itself better to 2 people being involved.

Our idea was to create a podcast for the local GP trainees based on wellbeing. On researching we found that there are already a large number of other podcasts created by doctors on the subject of wellbeing, so we decided that we wanted to make sure it was especially relevant to GP trainees in our area, and that it would also help to advertise the PSWS, who were acting as our mentors for our project.

We started by attending some of the sessions given by the PSWS and reviewing their website and the Thames Valley GP school website to see what support is available for trainees. We noticed that there isn't a specific section dedicated to wellbeing on the Thames Valley website at the moment.

We wanted to research what the most helpful topics to cover would be, and other information about whether a podcast would be received well and issues such as how long it should, how frequent etc. To achieve this we attended GPVTS day release teaching and gave a talk on wellbeing, then had breakout groups to gain feedback. We also sent a survey to all Thames Valley GP trainees asking similar questions, to which we got 54 responses, mostly positive about the idea and giving some idea of topics etc. Main learning points from this were that there was a desire for short bite sized topics, which were positive with solutions offered, rather than just discussing what the current issues are. Some of the suggestions for topics were a bit overwhelming and not something we would be able to help with as they were outside the reach of a podcast, eg issues with training posts, concerns about pay scales, support of international GPs and equality of supervision. There was a general feeling that there was a lot of talk about wellbeing, but little actual practical information out there, so we wanted to make sure we focussed on practical tips that would be realistic for a GP trainee to use.

We went on to record a pilot episode on the topic of wellbeing, and this was played to a focus group from which we got feedback from 12 individuals. This highlighted the need for short episodes, focussed, and incorporating practical tips on how to incorporate the topics into day to day working life, as well as the need for the information to be evidence based. One individual preferred the idea of a blog to a recording.

As such we used peer reviewed journals to get an evidence base for 3 topics – mindfulness, nature based interventions and positive psychology. We recorded these episodes, each at about 10 minutes long. These topics were chosen after the feedback received and after discussing with our mentor from the PSWS about which topics tend to be most well received. They were also areas that had a good evidence base of their effectiveness. We are waiting to get the go ahead from the Thames Valley Primary Care school to get them added to the website – this has been agreed in principle by the head of school, but there have been delays in them actually getting uploaded.

This project has been a real eye opener for me. It was amazing how long it took to get even simple tasks done, due to not knowing who to contact, or massive delays in responses from contacts even after chasing them up. Most people are only in their education role on certain days of the week and so take time to reply, and there would often be email chains of many people trying to find the right person who could ultimately help. Finding times when both myself and the other fellow were free

and could be undisturbed to do the recordings was also a challenge, as they would have to be re-done if there was a distraction, and then they ended up needing to be re-recorded a couple of times anyway due to technical difficulties.

I wasn't aware of how poor my IT skills were until it took many, many days to work out how to get videos that people 'outside of my organisation' would be able to view, or how to set up an MS teams form that could be shared. Since the fellowship was only for 2 sessions a week this would mean weeks could go by just trying to sort out a simple IT issue.

I also struggled a bit with imposter syndrome, feeling that I wasn't qualified enough to be giving people advice on wellbeing when I am not an expert in this area. However this was addressed to some extent by making sure everything we talked about was based on evidence from peer reviewed journals, and also following positive feedback we received after a focus group.

Over time, our initial idea of a weekly podcast with lots of guests coming to talk to us got refined to 3 quality recordings that would be kept on the GP school website long term. This was to address the issue of upkeep after our fellowship is finished, as well as the time taken to organise everything and ensure what we discussed was kept evidence based with sufficient research behind it to back up what we were saying.

I would like to thank everyone for the opportunity to have participated in this fellowship which has offered me so many learning opportunities.