



QI Project Check In – Joy in Work with Dr Devika Patel

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Psychological wellbeing has been under the spotlight over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, and now more than ever organisations are considering what matters to the people that work for them and the ways that staff can be facilitated to feel more joy and purpose at work. The theory of course, is that staff who are happier at work and feel more purposeful will provide better services, and in healthcare this means better care for service users.

Dr Devika Patel is a HEE Clinical Fellow and a Junior Doctor at BSMHFT, and she's involved in Quality Improvement projects with the Sparkhill Home Treatment Team and Junior Doctors that seek to put Joy In Work into practice utilising QI Methodology. She took the time recently to speak to us about the work and let us know how things are going so far.



For the past year I have been working as HEE clinical fellow for 4 days a week and with Sparkhill Home Treatment Team for one day. In my role as a fellow, I have worked on training junior doctors in a framework called Joy in Work. The framework created by Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IH), seeks to use quality improvement tools to improve staff wellbeing by asking them “what matters to you”. I have taken this project up in two forms. As a fellow I have created an online course which can be accessed by junior doctors in West Midlands, which guides them through planning their own QI project focused on the wellbeing of the MDT. On a smaller scale I tried out the tools with the Sparkhill HTT.

I started by engaging staff in one-to-one conversations about “what matters to them”. In this we covered what brought them joy at work, but also frustrations at work. Through this process we were able to create a visual mind map of common themes which was displayed in the office.

As my time with the team has been limited, the obvious constraints of COVID-19, along with several changes in senior staffing, the project has been halted at this stage. However, the project will continue with leadership from team managers, and will expand to include staff from Central Home Treatment Team. The next stage includes testing out small changes, suggested by the team, based on the comments from the initial interviews. The success of each change will be measured to see if it improves staffs experience of “joy”.

The main lessons I have learnt are:

- Start small and don't be overwhelmed by all the problems that need sorting. Getting some quick wins from the beginning can help get buy-in.
- Embed QI discussions into existing meetings. e.g. MDT or business meetings.
- Change takes time and persistence, which requires team effort. Don't try to carry the team on your own!

Sparkhill Home treatment team have been a pleasure to work with, and despite not finishing the project, the team has welcomed me and this project during difficult times. And it all started with a simple question- “What brings you joy at work, and how can we do more of that?”

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