

Carers Evidence Summits Case study/good practice prompts	
Contact details:	
Organisation: Sutton Carers Centre	
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What did you hear from carers that led to this piece of work/service?	
<p>Mental Health Carers had, for many years, reported that they were not being listened to by professionals in Mental Health – frequently being excluded from the Care Pathway and not getting access to any support in their own right. Carers wanted the opportunity to speak to the teams looking after the person they care for, to share their experiences and expertise and be involved in the Recovery of the person they care for alongside being enabled to access services that protected their own health and wellbeing needs.</p> <p>The Triangle of Care (ToC) approach enables MH Trusts to identify how they work to support and work in partnership with Carers, and recognize ways in which they could improve services. In 2006 Sutton Carers Centre (SCC) identified that the framework would outline the actions required in an easily understood way therefore addressing the needs expressed locally by Carers. In 2010 they started to more formally support the local MH Trust, SWLStG to implement the 6 key elements of the ToC at a local level.</p> <p>As a result of the ToC work being done at a local level South West London & St Georges NHS MH Trust (SWLStG) included ToC in their updated 2010 Families & Friends Strategy and in 2012 the Trust signed up to the Membership Scheme, and the staff from Ward 3 and Sutton Carers Centre were asked to present their experiences and positive outcomes as examples of good practice at a national event.</p> <p>Through the ToC approach we have developed strong partnerships with the Sutton based Mental Health Teams, as well as SWLStG MH Trust as a whole. This enables us to liaise with professionals at a local level, and also participate in Trustwide forums and initiatives, in order to improve the experience of Carers involved with the Trust and include them as partners in care. As a result, many Carers have become Representatives at the various forums, ensuring that their voices are heard and they feel listened to, supported and are able to contribute to service improvement initiatives.</p> <p>Slowly but surely over the years Carers have reported not only improved processes to support them in their caring role but also attitudinal changes from staff leading to increased involvement as “partners in care”.</p>	
Describe your service	
(Include how long the service has been running)	
<p>Sutton Carers Centre is an independent charity that delivers a wide range of local support services to meet the needs of Carers in Sutton. This includes 1:1 emotional support, information & advice, benefit advice, training, activities and access to breaks. We are part of the Carers Trust national network of Carers Centers and Crossroads Care schemes across the UK.</p>	

Sutton Carers Centre has been established for over two decades. The Mental Health Carers Service was established in 2003 following a consultation with Mental Health Carers who expressed a need for a dedicated service with specialist knowledge in the field of mental health. Since that time, the Service Manager has been a consistent presence and this, alongside stable funding, has enabled the service to grow according to capacity and need and SCC currently employs 3 fulltime members of staff to attempt to meet the needs of the c650 mental health carers registered. The Service works specifically to support Carers of adults with MH or substance misuse issues. We offer specialist information and advice, 1:1 support and access to activities and breaks for MH Carers.

In 2010 a member of staff from SCC was specifically funded by the local authority and PCT (now CCG) to work with Jasper Ward (now Ward 3), the Acute Inpatient Service in Sutton to improve outcomes for Carers of people with mental health issues. The SSDW supported the Ward Team to complete an initial ToC Self-Assessment and develop an action plan to embed ToC in the service. This included the SSDW attending weekly Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) meetings to actively promote partnership working with Carers, support Carers during meetings and encourage/support professionals to identify and involve Carers throughout the Care Pathway.

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The Team also introduced a policy where by Carers are invited to attend an MDT Meeting within 2 weeks of admission to be given an opportunity to meet with the care team, share their views and experiences and raise any concerns thus Carers were more able to feel involved from the very earliest stages of the admission of the person they cared for

Further audits have been undertaken and have reflected a change in the attitude of staff – they are more ‘carer aware’ and actively work with Carers as “partners in care” as well as enabling them to access support in their own right

As a result of the ToC work being done at a local level SWLStG included ToC in their updated 2010 Families & Friends Strategy and in 2012 the Trust signed up to the Membership Scheme, and the staff from Ward 3 and Sutton Carers Centre were asked to present their experiences and positive outcomes as examples of good practice at a national event.

As a result of the ToC approach we have developed strong partnerships with our colleagues at SWLStG. The SSDW continues to attend a weekly review meeting and work closely with the Carers Champion on Ward 3 to continuously identify ways in which support for Carers can be improved. Policies have been developed to ensure that Carers are now included as part of the admission and discharge process. There are ‘Carer Welcome and Discharge Packs’ available and they have recently hosted a ‘Ward Walk’, which encouraged Carers with experience of the Ward pre-ToC, to return and evaluate some of the new processes and procedures that have been implemented as a result of ToC.

The work has now been extended by using the same model to work with the local Community MH Teams and Home Treatment Teams, joining them for a ‘Carers Surgery’ once a month.

What impact has this had on:

- Carers
- Staff and/or
- The organisation

Carers:

- Have advised that they feel more supported as a result of the ToC. There has been a significant increase in referrals to Sutton Carers Centre and a notable reduction in complaints from Ward 3.
- Have reported that they feel more able to communicate with the professionals involved in their loved ones care as a result of being included as Partners in Care and this in itself has reduced their levels of stress.
- Are actively identified and offered support and/or a referral to Sutton Carers Centre. This enables them to access support and advice that can assist to maintain and/or improve their own wellbeing.
- Have identified improvements on the Ward during the Ward Walk, both in their process and policies and in their overall attitude to Carers: One participant stated “I think that if more Carers did the Ward Walk they would find that they would not worry about their loved ones so much.”

MH Trust staff:

- Have seen the benefits of working with Carers and are keen to continue to improve Carer Engagement thus sustaining cultural change in relationships and views of each other longer term. Additionally, staff report that they feel more confident in working with and supporting Carers.
- Have, as they have become more ‘Carer Aware’, been more able to identify areas that require improvement and devise and implement action plans to address those specific areas that require more focus.
- As a result of the ToC approach on Ward 3 there is now a Trustwide protocol for all Carers to be invited to an MDT meeting within 2 weeks of admission.

Organisationally:

- Representatives from local Carer Services now have regular presence on wards and in teams, acting as a ‘voice’ for Carers and ensuring that Carers are recognized and supported throughout the Care Pathway.
- A Trustwide ToC Audit was undertaken in Summer 2013 which identified key Carer priorities across the Trust.
- The SSDW from SCC recently undertook a 6 month secondment as Carers Project Officer at SWLStG to assist them to embed ToC and focus on Trustwide Carer Priorities that had been highlighted as a result of the ToC approach thus increasing capacity and sustainability longer term.
- We have learnt that establishing cultural change is time consuming and at times frustrating and the work requires patience and dedication to maintain momentum

- Partnerships between voluntary sector and statutory sector mental health services have been strengthened maximizing impact for the community of Sutton.

How is the work funded / commissioned?

The ToC project is jointly commissioned by the London Borough of Sutton and Sutton Clinical Commissioning Group to implement the project.

Is this a rural or urban service (would it be transferable)?

Suburban – but could be replicated across rural or urban environments.

Has this work been spread or replicated anywhere else? Please give details.

As a result of its success, the model that was initiated in Sutton has now been replicated on other Wards in SWLStG. There is a member of staff that acts as Carers Champion on each of the local inpatient wards and as a whole SWLStG work in partnership with local Carer organisations in each of the 5 boroughs, with representatives from Carers Services regularly attending local and Trustwide meetings and forums and providing direct support to inpatient and community teams to embed ToC and good partnership working with Carers.

We were also asked to present our ToC journey at a Good Practice conference in May 2013 so that we could share our experiences with other organisations and offer them examples of how this way of working can improve Carer experiences and the positive outcomes it can have, as well as act as inspiration to encourage them to join the ToC membership scheme and evidence that this approach can improve the lives of Mental Health Carers.

How has the service been evaluated? Is there a measure for success?

The ToC Audits that have been completed in Sutton, reflect that staff are becoming more 'Carer Aware' and are able to identify areas that require more focus. In fact some areas that were previously assessed as 'Green' have since been marked down as staff have recognised what improvements can be made.

More carers are invited to ward rounds and there is now a trust-wide protocol for every Carer to be invited within 2 weeks of patient admission

There has been a notable reduction in complaints and an increase in compliments

Dramatic increase in identification of carers and referrals to Sutton Carers Centre.

Helping Carers to trust again after what may have been negative previous experiences – The Ward Walk was designed to reassure Carers that their past experiences have been taken into account and improvements have been made. The positive feedback clearly reflects the success of the measures that have been put in place as a result of ToC.

Is there anything we haven't captured that you would like to tell us about?

The ToC is an effective "common sense" framework to implementing effective carer support. Maximizing opportunities and resources through partnership work additionally means that cultural attitudinal changes take place over time. It is essential that momentum is sustained especially during organizational changes and to ensure this happens consistent funding and strategic planning must be in place so "buy in" from commissioners is essential.

Please return to: Barbara.Zutshi@nhsiq.nhs.uk by Tuesday 3 June 2014

If you would like more information before submitting your case study, please email Barbara.zutshi@nhsiq.nhs.uk

For more information about NHS Improving Quality's Commitment to Carers work, please see: <http://www.nhsiq.nhs.uk/improvement-programmes/experience-of-care/commitment-for-carers.aspx>