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Family Violence Workplace Support Program Manager Training Activities

Role Play

Trainers can help break up the pace of the day with fun interactive sessions called Energisers. Energisers are especially useful after lunch or long periods of sitting, when the group energy is frequently at its lowest and/or participants can seem to be the most disengaged. Energisers are also useful when the group, trainer included, simply needs a fun break from training sessions

Description: Participants will apply principles of the learning in a simulated role play, utilising the case study of ‘Sophie’, an employee who is experiencing Family Violence and her ‘Manager’. This activity should take 20-30mins depending on the number of participants involved and group discussion afterwards.

Objective: The use of role-plays provides participants with the opportunity to try out different ways of applying sensitive inquiry practices when working with family violence disclosures from employees and experiment with different communication styles and techniques.

Materials: Handout with instructions for each person in the role play, one for each member of the pair.

Directions: The facilitator will explain how the role-play will work based on the following instructions:

1. Participants will need to work in pairs.
2. Advise the participants one person will play the role of ‘Sophie’ (an employee) and the other will play Sophie’s manager for one round (consisting of 5 minutes) then they will swap positions. It is recommended that you call for someone in the pair to volunteer to be Sophie.
3. Hand out the instructions for each ‘role’ in the attached handout (see Handout 1&2).
4. Participants need to be advised to read through the instructions carefully on their handout and then start the role play.
5. Participants are expected to utilise acquired skills from the training with emphasis on sensitive inquiry, listening and communication skills and offering ongoing support or referral.
6. Facilitator will monitor the role-plays in order to provide feedback to participants.
7. The facilitator will signal the end of the role play.
8. Each pair will then undertake informal debriefing with each other to discuss and provide constructive feedback. (2mins)
9. Debrief - The facilitator will then conduct a group discussion/wrap up to discuss feedback, key messages and learnings from the activity:

Sophie:

* How did you find the experience
* What did the manager do that help you feel supported
* Did you feel believed? How was belief communicated?
* Did the manager show respect for your experience and decisions?
* Did you feel you had some control of the discussion?
* Can you identify one skill the manager could work on?

Manager:

* How did you find the experience?
* What were you trying to achieve? Did it work?
* What did you do to make Sophie feel same, in control and believed?
* What did you do well? What was hard to do?
* Can you identify one skill you need to practice more? How will you do this?
1. De-role - Ask participants to say 3 facts about themselves to bring them back to their real selves. (5 mins)
* Ground rules should be set prior to the commencement of the role-play. These guidelines act to maximise the involvement of participants and promote a non-threatening environment for learning.
* Monitor time- You should monitor the time allocated to the role-play. The participants should be aware of these time limits. It is important to allow adequate time for participants to prepare for the role as well as time for debriefing after the role.
* Group members to take turns- It is important that, where possible, all group members take their turn in participating in the role-play, however the facilitator should check in with participants to ensure that they are comfortable with playing the role of Sophie as managers may have a prior experience of family violence. It may be prudent to ask participants to volunteer in the role of Sophie rather than having participants publically declining to play the role of Sophie.
* Provide constructive feedback- Participants should be aware of the need to offer constructive feedback. All feedback should focus on examples within the role-play.
* The learning within the role-play should remain confidential and not talked about outside the group forum.

Wrap‐up/Discussion: Remind participants that the purpose of this activity is to practice responding to a disclosure of Family Violence in a supportive setting, not to point out what people are ‘doing wrong’.

Key points to ask participants:

* Effective – What worked? What did ‘Sophie’ feel was helpful and allowed her to feel comfortable to disclose her experience? What did the ‘Manager’ feel they did well?
* Do more of – What could there have been more of? Was there anything that could be added or expanded upon?
* Improve – What could have been done differently? Remember to remind participants that feedback to each other should be constructive and involves sharing of information and observations, not blaming or giving advice.

Guidelines for the facilitator for giving feedback to the group:

Characteristics of Effective Feedback.
Feedback is essentially communication of information about performance, the purpose is to be effective in motivation and facilitating behaviour change

* Feedback should be descriptive, rather than evaluative or judgmental
* Feedback should be specific, rather than general
* Feedback should focus on behaviour, rather than on assuming personality traits
* Feedback involves sharing information and observations, rather than giving advice
* Encourage learners to decide for themselves how to handle the problem
* Feedback can often usefully be phrased as a question to draw attention to a specific issue.
* Feedback should be limited so learners are not overloaded - it is more valuable for a learner to take away one or two key messages to consider and act upon, rather than overwhelm them with all possible issues.
* Feedback should be incomplete: encourage learners to reflect further on the issues.
* Feedback should be to the point, clear and unambiguous.
* Feedback should be verified or checked with learners
* Learners should be encouraged to comment and expand on the feedback.
* Avoid misleading, meaningless or dishonest feedback

Handout 1

Instructions for ‘Sophie’

You have been asked to attend a meeting with your Manager, you are not aware of the purpose of this meeting.

The ‘Manager’ will ask questions in relation to your safety and experience of Family Violence as they have noticed some signs and an impact on your work performance.

You are in a long term relationship. Your boyfriend has been very controlling and occasionally threatens or is physically violent (about once every 1-2 months) for which he is very sorry afterwards. You do not see yourself as a domestic violence victim or abused but rather that you have had a ‘troubled or difficult relationship”. The worst violence has been pushing and slapping but you have never had to seek treatment. He constantly monitors your movements, tells you that you are incompetent and stupid and criticises your parenting. He does not like any of your work friends or family and you have stopped seeing them. You are feeling afraid, anxious and a bit depressed but not suicidal. You are not sleeping very well and your children are a bit unsettled.

You may elaborate on the story to help the role play flow. It may be appropriate to show some signs of being upset or show now emotion at all, depending on how you wish to respond to the manager.

You open up if the Manager uses good active listening skills and you feel like they are not being judgemental. You feel comfortable to disclose your situation and accept a referral to ongoing support.

Handout 2

Instructions to the ‘Manager’:

Sophie has always been a reliable and well regarded nurse – however over the past month she has been distracted at work, has called in sick several times without a medical certificate, and last week you noticed bruising on her upper arm.

She has also withdrawn from staff social activities, stating that she is short of money and that she is spending time with her boyfriend.

* Would you ask a question?
* How would you frame that?
* What would you ask?

Listen without judgement, empathetically and without interrupting.

It is important to also remember that the key is to not force a disclosure of Family Violence; also that you are not a Family Violence expert (no-one is expecting you to be), and offer referral to ongoing assistance if a disclosure is made by Sophie.