

Tomorrow's Leaders: Developing agents of change in the diabetes specialist nurse and dietitian workforce

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Aims

DSNs and dietitians are increasingly expected to lead service improvement but often struggle to access the right support. Diabetes UK aimed to give them the skills and confidence to lead improvements in diabetes care across their local area.



Methods

In partnership with Leicester Diabetes Centre and TREND UK, we developed a three-day leadership course for DSNs and dietitians. Since its inception in 2015, over 130 nurses and dietitians have participated in the Tomorrow's Leaders programme.

The programme pairs leadership theory with a really practical focus on what the learners are working to improve in their system, using coaching to support people to develop their plans.

“Really excellent course – very inspiring and brilliant to hear what’s happening in other centres and networking.”

Results

The development of leadership skills for improving diabetes care is the primary aim of the programme. Successive course evaluations over the year have shown that **100%** of those who participated in the course felt more confident leading improvements in diabetes care and felt more confident as a leader, as a result of this training.

Through developing the leadership skills, and providing a platform to share best practice, this programme supports DSNs and dietitians to deliver high quality services. Examples of action plans implemented include:

- **improving access to services** and reducing variation through better communication across primary, secondary and tertiary care
- **improving patient engagement** with young adult (transition) services by developing innovative models of service delivery
- **setting up an accredited training programme** for healthcare professionals in primary care; delivered to excellent feedback.

Feedback from participants over the year have indicated better leadership, more cohesive team working and improved engagement within multidisciplinary teams. All participants to date have said that following the course they feel more confident signposting patients to Diabetes UK. This ensures that patients get accurate and accessible information about their diabetes, helping them to better manage their condition.

The Tomorrow's Leaders programme not only allows us to reach more people with diabetes with accurate information but also enables us to continue to grow a network of healthcare professionals who are improving diabetes care across the country.

“Really nice to network with dieticians and DSNs from all over the country. Valuable days for motivating and inspiring practice.”

Conclusions

This course enables us to continually grow a network of healthcare professionals who deliver real and tangible changes to improve diabetes care. It has demonstrated the ability of DSNs and dietitians to lead improvements in diabetes care with the right support.

“Inspirational. The positive energy was palpable. People who were quite low came back with not just ideas but action plans on the road to success!”

For more information visit www.diabetes.org.uk/tomorrows-leaders



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