

Joining Forces New Perspectives 7-9 February 2024 Haarlem

Deaf Professionals: Fit for Future

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How it all began ...

- No recorded Deaf professionals in mental health care prior 1970s
- Dr Kitson inspired by Gallaudet university to employ deaf in healthcare
- The battle began to train Deaf professionals and funding for hearing staff to learn sign language
- First unqualified staff "Deaf therapists" employed
- Deaf Gain positive impact on service users in their recovery
- First deaf psychotherapist qualified
- Fully funded by NHSE so patients do not have to pay

'It is a very sophisticated language capable of expressing everything you can say in English.' (Kitson, 2015)





Great idea, good start

- Establishing more deaf adult mental health services
- National Deaf CAMHS to follow
- Wider engagement with other organisations, agencies, commissions, local authorities, voluntary sector
- More unqualified deaf staff were employed and first qualified deaf mental health nurse in 2003
- Nursing pathway was then well established, and we encouraged to get more qualified deaf nurses

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... but it was not smooth sailing

- Limited access to clinical training/funding
- Inadequate sign language interpreter provision
- Education (entry) requirement
- Lack of placements, supervision, professional development
- Audism
- Attitude
- Hearing leadership



Opening Doors

Deaf Professionals

- More Deaf professionals qualified (nurses, nursing associates, social workers, clinical psychologists, OTs, ward managers)
- Developmental pathways dependable on service/trust availability and entry criteria
- Low turn over in deaf workforce compared to hearing (Kim, 2021)

Service Users

- Shared lived experience
- Respect to their language and communication preferences
- Cultural capital
- Co-production towards shaping our deaf mental health services
- Inclusive tailored care



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Deaf led service

Competent services

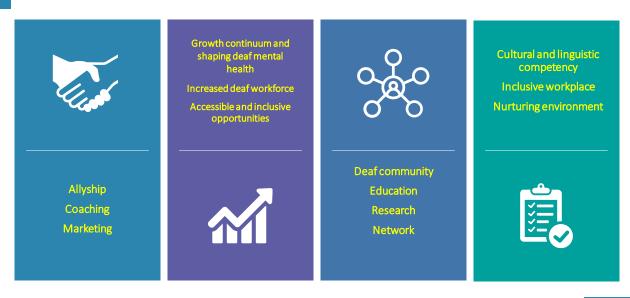
- Cultural and linguistic competency in shaping deaf MH services
- Improving attitudes and minimising biases
- Lesser dependency on sign language interpreters
- Deaf leadership
- Empowering professionals

What we need to do?

- Psychological safety
- Allyship
- Professional development
- Collaboration
- Co-production



Making Difference with us



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Thank you!

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