



NHS eLearning Highlights Lived Experience of People Using Substances to Cope With Trauma



Setting the Scene

NHS Education for Scotland (NES) develop and deliver education and training to support NHS, health and social care, and other services and to drive best practice. In order to support the recovery of people affected by psychological trauma and improve life chances, the National Trauma Training Programme (NTTP) was formed in collaboration with Scottish Government and COSLA. The vision of this programme is: “A trauma informed and responsive workforce, that is capable of recognising where people are affected by trauma and adversity, that is able to respond

in ways that prevent further harm and support recovery, and can address inequalities and improve life chances.”

The NTTP has developed a range of learning resources towards this aim, and organises training resources according to four practice levels across the workforce: Trauma Informed, Trauma Skilled, Trauma Enhanced and Trauma Specialist. At the Skilled level there is a suite of eLearning modules aimed at developing trauma skilled practice for anyone who has direct contact with people who may have been affected by trauma, in whichever role or setting they work. One module within this suite of modules aimed to look at the relationship between trauma and substance use.

The Challenge

There are many misconceptions and biases when it comes to talking about and working with substance use. One of the aims of this project was to address these and encourage compassionate attitudes towards substance use by educating in an emotionally engaging way.

As this eLearning module is part of a suite, it was important to NES that this new module had the same feel as the other three existing modules. We were also aware of the sensitive nature of the content, which meant that it was very important to choose and create the right imagery which was respectful to those with experience of using substances to cope with the impact of trauma.





A lot of consideration was required to strike the best balance between having a strong impact and not exploiting the shock factor that is often linked with the topic of substance use.

The Solution

eCom's eLearning team took time to review the existing trauma skilled practice courses on TURAS (NES's platform for training and learning resources). These courses were used as a foundation for the storyboarding and graphics.

Throughout the project, regular meetings occurred between NES and eCom to keep the goal of creating a respectful and emotionally impactful piece of eLearning in mind. These were made up of the project lead from NES, and an instructional designer and designer from eCom.

Including the designer in the content review stages allowed

for ideas for bespoke graphics to be discussed and planned as early as possible.

The content was created in conjunction with a group of people with lived experience to ensure that the messages were about real people and had real people in mind. Including accounts from people who have had interactions with workers across the services they accessed (e.g. housing, drug & alcohol services, benefits advisers, healthcare professionals) and seeing the difference trauma-informed care can have on how those people felt, helped to create an empathetic course which engages with learners emotionally.

The Benefits

The focus, efforts and passion that went into this project from the entire project team led to a beautifully designed and emotionally impactful eLearning

course that eCom are proud to have been a part of producing. Sally Jowett, the project lead at NES, appreciated eCom's involvement in this project:

"It's been such a joy to work on it as you've really shared your interest and passion for the project from the beginning, and been so thoughtful and creative about how to ensure it has the biggest impact it can do for the learners."

Initial feedback from learners who have completed this module on TURAS has been very positive, with people stating they were able to take something away from it.

We are confident that this resource will have a positive impact on attitudes towards people who use substances to cope with trauma and the care they receive and hope this will continue to reach new audiences.



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