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Steve Morgan

Practice Based Evidence Consultancy, UK

Implementing positive risk-taking in practice

Do we pay enough attention to the impact that the language we use has on the people we serve, and the ways in which we serve them? Our adherence to professional jargon more often serves to exclude and/or confuse other people. This is most notable in the language of risk, particularly where the negative connotations can often drive a blame culture and promote an unnecessary risk averse approach. Where is the person within such a picture? Assessing and managing risk is an essential skill; but, so too is calculated and reasoned risk-taking. My concept of 'Positive Risk-Taking', initiated in 1994, brings the language of risk, strengths and person-centred outcomes together in a clear and sharp focus. As a concept, it is underpinned by the principles and practice of good risk assessment and management, applicable to all facets of mental health, wider health, and social care considerations. The concept is focused on the outcomes, rather than solely being led by the risks. Taking risks for positive outcomes requires a clear definition and description; but, it is also underpinned by the fully recognized components of mental health good practice, focused and contextualized risk assessment is counter-balanced by a full strengths assessment; supervision and support is complemented by teamwork and team-focused training. Collective decision-making enables balanced and reasoned risk-taking decisions to be made with confidence, and the identification of individual responsibilities for action to be outlined within a thoughtful plan.

Biography

Steve Morgan attained a Diploma in Occupational Therapy at Oxford in 1986, and an MA in Practice Development at Middlesex University in 1998. He worked as a clinician in ward and community settings, and also as a trainer for the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health. In October 2001 he established his own independent consultancy, Practice Based Evidence, and continues to provide practice development, service review and training services. He has also worked as a case manager since 2013 for people experiencing Acquired Brain Injury. He has over 60 publications, including textbooks, practice & training manuals, and journal articles.

workingwithstrengths@gmail.com

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