Welcome to the latest edition of the Wessex Professional Support Unit Newsletter. We will update you on events and developments made over the last few months.

**Changes to Exam support**

The Wessex PSU is committed to providing excellent support for Trainees who require additional help with passing exams.

We are therefore in the process of recruiting and training more exam support specialists to ensure we can continue to deliver the high quality support that we currently offer.

**Dyslexia Support for Doctors in Training**

**Practice Guidance now online**

The PSU would like to highlight a resource produced for doctors with dyslexia, their case managers, clinical and educational supervisors.

The *Practice Guidance* outlines a menu of working strategies used by doctors to help overcome the challenges of dyslexia. It draws upon the experiences of doctors throughout the Wessex area and was produced as a result of research commissioned by HEE Wessex into this under-investigated area.

The Professional Support Unit is keen that trainees are able to access this guidance which it hopes will prove to be a valuable resource for Trusts as well.

**How does dyslexia manifest itself in doctors?**

Dyslexia can affect time keeping, speed of working and the ability to take patient histories, as well as the more commonly known traits such as slow reading or poor spelling.

Other aspects mentioned by the 14 research participants included completing documentation and a difficulty in summarising.

A key feature of dyslexia is a weakness in short-term memory which can impact on
the ability to absorb information especially if that’s combined with having to make notes.

Time management and organisational aspects such as prioritising can be a difficulty.

Many referrals to the PSU result from failed exams. Revision techniques successfully used by others may not work for the trainee with dyslexia and many good clinicians are challenged by the speed at which they have to read and answer the MCQs.

But if one aspect sums up how dyslexia manifests itself in doctors it’s slow processing: things just take longer.

What workarounds have been found effective by doctors in the study?

Many are very simple but that does not mean that they are automatically acquired; others rely on assistive technologies.

Using templates helps structure written work; dictating letters for administrators to type up and the use of a mnemonic as a memory prompt in patient consultations all helped in the writing process.

“I use the Wessex consultation structure mnemonic. This has worked well for me as a guide when asking questions.”

Checklists and task lists help ensure a methodical approach and can be used as a basis for working out prioritising with seniors.

“My supervisor gave me some useful advice: do everything to complete a task unless there is an emergency otherwise you end up with a lot of unfinished tasks.”

“When reading, two things help: not being worried about the fact that I can’t get through huge quantities of text at any one time, and realising that I need to break things down. I find it quite useful to make notes, to park ideas.”

Many of the workarounds involved colour and diagrams. Making mind maps as a revision tool was popular as this taps into the strong visual channel that people with dyslexia often have.

“All of my revision notes were mind maps and I used mind mapping software. I was able to upload lots of pictures which stuck with me.”

Gail Alexander
Dyslexia lead; PSU Virtual Support Group
Wessex PSU Newsletter August 16

Dates for the diary

Peer Supervision Meetings
Wednesday 26 October 2016

PSU Development Days
Thursday 22 September 2016

PSU Reference Group
Wednesday 7 December 2016

Quality & Governance meeting
Wednesday 12 October

Wessex PSU Dashboard

As we approach the midpoint of the financial year we would like to share with you the nature of work and level of activity that has taken place so far. (Please note all information correct as of 23/8/16)

Breakdown of referral type within this financial year (47 referrals as at 23/8/16)

- 89% New referral (standard)
- 6% Self referral
- 4% Re referral

Monthly Open Case Activity 16/17 (correct as at 23/8/16)

- Apr-16: 162
- May-16: 120
- Jun-16: 104
- Jul-16: 101
- Aug-16: 89
- Sep-16: 69
- Oct-16: 50
- Nov-16: 31
- Dec-16: 72
- Jan-17: 13
- Feb-17: 9
- Mar-17: 14

Current open cases compared to Feb 2016

- 0-6 months: 61
- 7-12 months: 48
- 13-24 months: 27
- 25 months+: 19

Open Cases - Referral reasons

- Health: 2%
- Aspergers: 4%
- Conduct: 15%
- Exam Failure: 27%
- Capability: 6%
- Career: 1%
- Other: 44%
Contact us

You can contact the Professional Support Unit whenever you have a query relating to our work, or if you’re looking for advice on a referral or active case.

If you have a general query you may find the answer on our web pages: http://www.wessexdeanery.nhs.uk/support/support/professional_support_unit.aspx

Alternatively you can contact us individually as below:

Mrs Julie Worthington, PSU Administrator: julie.worthington@wessex.hee.nhs.uk or 01962 718428

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