

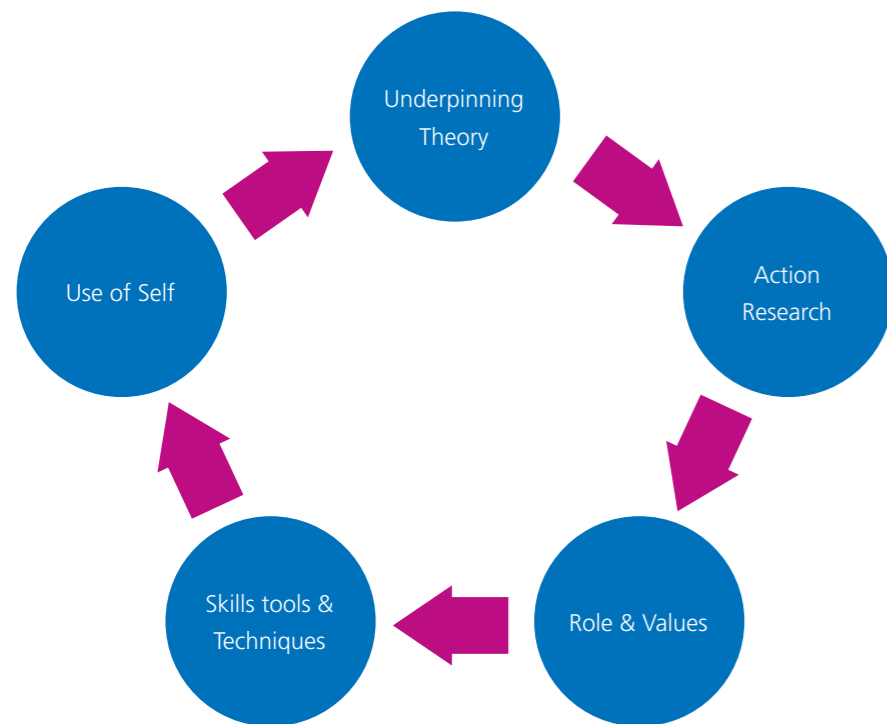
ASSURING THE COMPETENCE OF SYSTEM ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS LEADING THE WAY IN THE UK

In 2016, Deborah Davis (NHS North West Leadership Academy Managing Director) was involved with system leaders who were asking a critical question **'where are the NHS and social care organisation development (OD) practitioners who are competent and capable of proving expert OD support at the system level?'** This is the core question of how OD is assured at a system wide level.

As the health and social care sector moves forward, tackling issues through

working with multiple organisations and citizens groups is becoming the norm. These partnership and whole-system level interventions require OD practitioners who are competent working across organisational boundaries, comfortable with ambiguity and highly skilled at intervention design with groups of system-level executives who seek to build coalitions for delivery services. Perhaps most importantly, they need to be able work with the changing nature of power in our society as citizens and co-designers.

WHAT DOES AN OD PRACTITIONER NEED TO KNOW?



Ref: Kathryn Farquhar

"IT HAS BEEN A PRIVILEGE TO TAKE PART IN THIS INNOVATIVE PROGRAMME AND I HAVE GAINED SO MUCH FROM MY EXPERIENCE. ALONG WITH BEING RECOGNISED FOR MY OD PRACTICE AT A SYSTEMS LEVEL IT HAS GIVEN ME THE IDEAL OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT ON HOW I CAN BETTER SUPPORT OTHERS TO BRING ABOUT TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE ACROSS BOTH SYSTEMS AND PLACES, FOR THE BENEFIT OF THOSE WHO LIVE AND WORK IN THE REGION. MOVING FORWARD I'M COMMITTED TO HELPING SHAPE THE PROGRAMME AND THE FUTURE OF OD PRACTICE IN THE NORTH WEST AND UK".

RITA EVANS

"ALTHOUGH THE OD CLAIM TOOK ME SOME TIME TO COMPLETE I AM REALLY PLEASED I DID IT. I HAVE HAD A LONG CAREER IN THE NHS AND REFLECTING BACK MADE ME REALISE I HAD BEEN 'DOING' OD FOR A LONG TIME AND IN MOST OF MY ROLES, NOT JUST IN THE ONES WITH OD IN THE TITLE. I REALISE THAT I HAVE A WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE WHICH HAS GIVEN ME CONFIDENCE IN MY ABILITY TO LEAD OD IN THE SYSTEM".

SUZANNE HAMILTON

Organisation Development is a field of practice, not a regulated profession and OD practitioners enter the field via many routes. There is no single qualification that makes it easy for system executives to be confident that a person is able to undertake OD work at the system level (or any other level for that matter). Understanding if an OD practitioner is capable is about looking at: their route to practice, their formal accredited learning, experiential learning and their track record of delivery. Most OD practitioners do not have all this evidence easily at hand.

We set out with the clear purpose of supporting system executives to locate, develop and deploy their NHS practitioners and also to build the confidence and capability of OD practitioners to work within and outside of their organisations. Early on, we discounted the idea of running assessment centres, setting up an action research

project working with fabulous OD practitioners from the North West who have led the way in this work.

Using an approach centred on the development of a claim of practice, with hard evidence against the North West OD competency standards and the Chartered Institute for Professional Development OD standards, our pioneers diligently reviewed their career experience, life history, OD success and learning. The outcome was a focus on the practitioner's own in-depth assessment of their practice and the production of a formal portfolio of their body of work - their 'claim'. The claim can then be objectively validated (not assessed) by a panel of system level leaders and OD experts. This work brings OD practitioners in line with other professional groups who demonstrate their continued professional competency by reflection and evidence presentation.

In October 2017 we were delighted that four North West OD practitioners were the first in the UK to be validated as system OD practitioners and are leading the way in their work.



DAN CABORN
Manchester Metropolitan University



SUZANNE DOUGLAS
Formerly Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust



RITA EVANS
Leading GM, North West Employers



SUZANNE HAMILTON
Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Subsequently it was decided that this approach to the issues of system OD practitioners would be rolled out as further action research across the NHS in England. This work is now steaming ahead with many OD practitioners starting their claiming process. We are so delighted that the NW has led the way in this piece of work.

The success of this programme is very much thanks to the valuable contribution of my fellow validation

panel members: Alex Heritage, Deputy Chief Executive of NHS Transformation Unit and Shelly Rubenstein, Chief Executive Impact Care and their expert knowledge and experience of System Leadership.

Authorship: a great many people have participated in this work; this short piece has been produced by Dr Maxine Craig who chaired the validation panel as part of the team. Maxine is a former NHS Head of

OD who now works as a freelance OD practitioner, working across systems. At the Leadership Academy the work has been led by Carole Swindells, Senior Associate.

A REPORT OF THIS GROUND BREAKING WORK WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM THE NHS NORTH WEST LEADERSHIP ACADEMY'S WEBSITE LATER THIS YEAR.