

# “We’ve all come together as one - inmates, staff and managers”

## Dialogue as a means of facilitating partnership working and implementing new standards in prison healthcare

### AIM

To work in partnership to ensure the provision of a quality prison healthcare service that meets with NHS standards, and that contributes to a ‘healthy prison’ overall.

### BACKGROUND

This intervention was set up as a partnership between Prison Dialogue, HMP Blakenhurst and the Redditch and Bromsgrove PCT with a joint agreement and reporting process.

### HOW WE ARE WORKING

Dialogue entails thinking and learning together, and requires conversations and relationships to shift into new patterns. Dialogue sessions bring together mixed groups of inmates, staff and managers in conversation. They provide opportunities for all of the participants’ voices to be heard; for the sharing of ideas about how the healthcare unit and the prison actually work; and about how people behave. Dialogue works at many different levels, from the individual, through the interpersonal to the organisational. Dialogues are not action groups but a place to wonder about how things occur and how they might happen differently. It is here that cultural change can begin through the relationships that are formed, and through working closely together to explore and address issues of concern.

### EXAMPLES INCLUDE

- the implementation of a no-smoking policy;
- nursing staffs’ attitudes to informal interaction with patients/prisoners;
- the dilemmas between ensuring security and providing care in a prison context;
- attitudes of prison officers to people with mental health needs.

### OUTCOMES

- improved knowledge about what is happening on the unit and why, that can form the basis of clear planning and action;
- improved relationships, communication and shared understanding on the unit;
- improved patient care and understanding of individual needs.

### NEXT PHASE

- incorporate what has been learned into practice;
- develop a framework for an on-going process of communication and relationship-building, enquiry, planning and action.

### WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT THE INTERVENTION

*“We are not being called down to Healthcare to deal with crises nearly as much as we used to be” Prison Governor.*

*“Everyone enjoys it whether they talk or listen. You can get the wrong idea about someone then you hear them talk and you change your mind” Nurse.*

*“I want to stress how important it is that this is a place and opportunity to bring issues of concern to” Nurse.*

*“I appreciate the staff coming into the sessions. It means there’s not so much of ‘us and them’. You have to look past the uniform. There are some things that there are no easy answers to. That doesn’t mean to say we shouldn’t think about them and talk about them” Inmate.*

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