To Build Esthers' Capability from 70% to 90% in 6 months

ESTHER
Network for Health & Social Care
SINGAPORE

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Background & Methodology

Our Esthers are a group of volunteers managed by **THK** Cluster Support @ Ang Mo Kio and **THK** Community Befriending Programme @ Yio Chu Kang, who perform home-visits and befriend clients living in Ang Mo Kio. During home-visits, Esthers may encounter clients with high needs who pour out their emotions to them. As a result, Esthers face difficulties detaching themselves from their clients' problems, and this in turn affects their personal lives and morale as a volunteer.

As such, the project wants to find out if support provided to Esthers in the form of capability building can help them to better manage clients. If so, the project aims to build Esthers' capability from 70% to 90% over a period of 6 months.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO Esther?

During our first ESTHER Café, Esthers identified 3 broad areas that they wanted to receive training in – social skills, understanding clients' health needs and self-care. During our second ESTHER Café, we found that Esthers' **top concern was in self-care** (especially for senior Esthers) and they wanted to receive specific training in these 2 areas: a) How to Deal with Client's and Own Emotions and, b) Mindfulness

Interventions

1. Engaged Clinical Psychologist from SGH to conduct Mindfulness training.
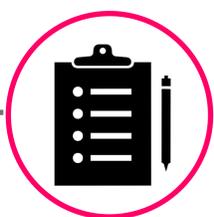
2. Designed pre-training evaluation form to measure Esthers' **skills, knowledge and attitude** before attending the course.

3. Conducted 2 sessions of Mindfulness training in Nov'19 for Esthers to learn concepts and apply mindfulness to daily life.

4. Esthers apply what they have learnt during and after home-visits.
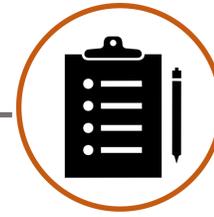
5. Conducted post-training evaluation 3 - 6 months later, to measure improvement in Esthers' **skills, knowledge and attitude.**

6. Collation and analysis of pre- and post-survey results for 6 Esthers.

Outcomes & Learning Points

Pre-Training Evaluation
Overall level of competency: **70%**

Overall improvement: **+12%**

Post-Training Evaluation
Overall level of competency: **82%**

Target Set: **90%**

Learning Points

Reasons why target of 90% was not achieved:
- Learnings need to be reinforced by Volunteer Coordinators on a regular basis before Esthers can apply them effectively during home-visits
- Survey forms were in English so Mandarin-speaking Esthers had difficulty understanding the questions, hence, affecting the accuracy of their responses
- Post-training evaluation was administered too close to training (i.e. 1 month difference). More lead time should be given to Esthers to familiarise with the techniques taught and apply during home-visits.

Further Analysis into Esthers' Skills, Knowledge and Attitude:

Skills
+9%
Pre 70% — Post 79%

Knowledge
+10%
Pre 68% — Post 78%

Attitude
+6%
Pre 83% — Post 89%

6 Esthers were surveyed for each category
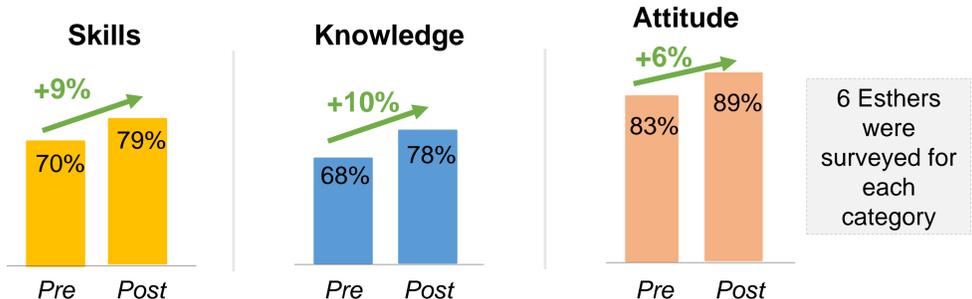
6 Esthers were surveyed and all of them showed improvement in skills, knowledge and attitude after attending the Mindfulness training, with knowledge displaying the greatest improvement. This was expected in view of the training conducted

Other Findings:

- All Esthers agreed that having Volunteer Coordinators to listen and guide them is most important in achieving self-care.
- All Esthers highlighted that they became more aware of the support and resources available after attending the Mindfulness training.
- All Esthers wanted Volunteer Coordinators to be part of their peer support group (if one is set up)
- All Esthers agreed that they feel best supported when Volunteer Coordinators listen to them with empathy.

Future Plans

- ESTHER Café will be conducted with **THK** Volunteer Coordinators as Esthers
- Volunteer Coordinators will be trained in areas such as showing empathy and active listening
- Another post-training survey can be administered in May 2020. If results are positive, Mindfulness training can be extended to all befrienders of **THK**.