

Action Learning Set Case Study for Joint Agency Forum

Background

Action Learning Sets was used along side a management development programme within the **London Probation Service**. The organisation was going through some considerable change and managers were facing tougher targets, a tightening on resources whilst working in what could be very difficult circumstances. Managers came from probation offices sited all over London for regular workshops covering new thinking and management development. They then meet in smaller groups for action learning.

Solution

Action Learning Sets were run in groups of six managers from different parts of the service. The aim of the group was provide a space to bring people problems that need tackling and to share best practice and learning

In the first session they agreed some ground rules in the form of "Ways of Working". Each person committed to attending each session which was run every 6 week for either the morning or afternoon. Each manager was given 40 minutes to bring their current challenge to the group. The manager would headline the issue and then the rest of the group would ask coaching questions using the GROW model to help the manager find some solutions to their challenge.

Next steps would be record and the group would receive a lessons learnt update at the next meeting. Each meeting had a facilitator who kept the group on track with timing and who also ensured discussions led to firm next steps. Members of the group also share how they were using certain elements of practice that came out of their management development programme that ran along side the action learning sets.

Results

The groups ran for a six month period and feedback was very positive. Managers said they really valued the action learning sets as it focussed on solving real problems and it really helped them move forward in their role. It was also felt that managers attending the action learning sets were build a greater level of confidence in dealing with the challenging people issues such as managing performance. Peer managers built real support networks and managers started to work much more in collaboration rather than isolation. Managers also said they felt better equipped to deal with challenges as they had learnt a lot about themselves and how others tackle people management issues.