



Communication Now Ltd
PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT IN EDUCATION

A SERVICE FOR TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF

Bringing time for reflection and redirection at work
Enhancing staff wellbeing and supporting school success

*"It gives me more opportunity for learning, to explore the way
I do things and move on from there."*

Teacher

www.communicationnow.co.uk



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MISSION STATEMENT

To make it possible for teachers and support staff to manage the process of teaching and learning with continuing satisfaction and fulfilment for themselves and their pupils.

SERVICE PROVISION

Professional Support can be offered in the format of both group staff development programmes and one to one structured sessions.

Programmes can be developed to meet your school's particular situation and needs.

Individual Professional Support Sessions provide teachers and support staff with a safe working relationship in which they can explore and resolve experiences and issues arising from their work in school. This dialogue and discussion is separate and different from any other meeting or relationship currently within a teacher's remit. The sessions are facilitated by a skilled practitioner, working to a contract based on the teacher's own agenda within appropriate professional confidentiality.

This Professional Resource offers staff :

- Time to reflect on their own communication, practice and skills.
- Personal support through an ongoing professional relationship.
- The opportunity to consider their own perspectives, assumptions and beliefs.

WHAT CAN IT ACHIEVE?

Working in a school makes demands on the whole person; teachers and pupils alike bring concerns from their outside lives into the classroom and into their learning and social development. The continual emotional strain which these demands place on teachers is often acknowledged but rarely resolved until crisis or breaking point is reached. Structured time for reflection offers a practical solution to this ongoing largely unmet need in the teaching profession.

There is an increasingly viable case to be made in establishing a link between staff well being and student attainment and overall school performance.

The premise that attending to staff wellbeing and support is centrally important in sustaining the health and success of the whole school, is based on guidelines for best practice and current research in the field of education.

See - National Healthy Schools Standard Staff Health and Wellbeing 2002

'Staff Wellbeing is key to School Success' Research by Birkbeck College and Worklife Support 2007

The policies and practice of Communication Now are based on this premise.

Emotionally resilient staff are effective staff and Professional Support programmes and time for individual reflection and support enable staff to develop their strategies of self management and sustain energy and enthusiasm.

HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?

We are currently working in a number of schools offering Professional Support time through various projects.

These include:

A series of work shops on Managing Change followed by 1:1 sessions offered to all staff.

A series of workshops on Managing Workload and Staff Wellbeing, with individual follow up sessions offered.

Developing a Staff Wellbeing Policy through a staff consultation process and piloting various Staff Wellbeing programmes.

We can provide a consultative service to design the best programmes for your school and its particular needs.

Regular time for professional support individually or in small groups, following an initial school based consultation, enables teachers and support staff to consider and explore their own particular experience in the school setting. Working in the security of an accepting professional relationship, teachers have time to talk through concerns, achievements and future plans on their own terms, based exclusively on their individual experience and professional practice.

"This is an opportunity for colleagues to explore their thoughts and reactions to professional matters and experiences and potentially identify opportunities for mutual support and guidance"
Head teacher

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT IN ACTION

How one school chose to incorporate Professional Support Time into the teachers' regular practice.

Participants

The Head Teacher : 12 Teaching Staff

Ann Beynon : Education Consultant and Facilitator for Professional Support Time

Context

A Primary School in an area of high levels of social deprivation.

Time frame

1998 - 2006 The practice is now established and ongoing.

ACTION

- A. The head teacher worked with the consultant during the summer term 1998, reflecting on the status quo in the whole school community and exploring the implications of initiating a change process in the school culture for himself and his staff.

*"An opportunity to discuss issues or concerns outside the usual context of employer/employee or managed /manager."
Head teacher*

- B. As a result, regular Professional Support Time was offered to each teacher to establish a Communication Project through out the school during 1999-2000.

"Expressing feelings can restore a sense of personal well being and balance as can keeping a check on areas of concern and under development. The formative function of Professional Support gives space for free thinking and devising new or different strategies."

Taken from the School's Professional Support Contract

- C. Each teacher established a weekly group session in class time, to enable the children to listen to each other and develop their self awareness and communication skills in a supportive accepting environment.

"When I stay calm it seems to have positive results. It takes time."
Teacher

D. In individual Professional Support sessions each teacher explored their own needs and concerns coming from their experience in the classroom, within an agreed, structured contract.

"It's a bit like medicine. You don't want it, but when you go, or when you have the medicine, you feel better for it."
Teacher

E. Professional Support Time continued to be offered to the teachers' group after the end of the Project, facilitated by the co-ordinator of the Personal Social and Health Education programme.

"My job is to let the staff talk and let them think and sometimes ask a clarifying question."
Professional Support Facilitator

F. Finally the head teacher established a regular period of protected staff time available to all teaching staff for Professional Support Time. Ann Beynon continues to facilitate individual Professional Support Time with the head teacher and the teacher who facilitates the teachers' group.

"Professional Support Time often involves reviewing attitudes to and interpretation of events and professional relationships and decisions made or proposed. It is an appropriate way of discussing personal thoughts and feelings regarding professional areas."
Head teacher

OUTCOMES

The teaching staff are generally more able to offer sustained, skilled interventions in pupil interactions. One teacher summarized her use of Professional Support Time as being able :-

"To explain why I have taken certain actions. To understand why I took those actions and the results of my actions. To be able to learn from the experiences and use them to the best advantage next time."

There is increased confidence and willingness amongst the team of teachers to share their professional experience and offer support in managing change.

"Often I experience comradeship and it reminds me that I am not alone in my way of thinking, both educationally and in the emotional support of children."
Teacher

DIRECTOR Ann Beynon

Ann developed this service based on her substantial experience in teaching, counselling, management and supervision. The model for Professional Support Time was created through years of training and support experience with teachers within an Local Authority Advisory Service and a County based Student Support Service.

In 2003 she completed a master's degree in Counselling Training and Supervision at Bristol University, focusing her narrative research on the evaluation of the Professional Support model of practice in education. She brings this experience to this new and innovative service for teachers, designed to provide skilled, ongoing and reflective time for personal support and professional development.

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Pam Winter

Pam is a counsellor, trainer and supervisor with a background in teaching in further and higher education. Having managed a staff support service for staff working with children, families and young people, she became interested in staff wellbeing through developing professional support and supervision. For the past three years she has developed a consultancy service for staff support and wellbeing, including coaching and organizational development.

She joined Communication Now in 2008

TEAM

Julie Barnes

Independent Facilitator and Supervisor

Penny Leake

Freelance Supervisor & Counsellor formerly Teacher & Social Worker

David Schaller

Head Teacher Primary School

SERVICE CONSULTANT

Hazel Johns Formerly:

LEA Adviser, HMI,

Director of Bristol University Counselling Education and Training Programme

ADVISORY GROUP

Chrissie Bedwin

Management Consultant

Meg Purdy

Teacher, Counsellor, Supervisor

Alec Raynard

Teacher, Counsellor

Dick Saxton

Manager, Counsellor

John Seddon

Counsellor, Supervisor

Sarah Talbot

Counsellor

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION PLEASE CONTACT :

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“ Reassurance, challenge, guidance and 'thinking through' time”
Head Teacher

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