

#LookingAfterYouToo
Coaching support for all
primary care staff

NHS



Case study



Role and context

Dr Amit Bharkhada is based in a semi-rural practice in North-East Leicestershire, covering between 12-12,500 patients. The practice is staffed by a group of six partners, one salaried doctor, a retained doctor and supported by a network of nurses, healthcare assistants, a pharmacy team and undergraduate trainees.

As a result of COVID-19, Dr Amit explained the traditional approach to delivering medical services changed dramatically as the practice had to move to remote triaging to ensure both staff and patient safety. He described this as challenging, especially as a result of how rapidly the change had to be made, and the need to maintain patient expectations during the unsettling period.

Challenge of COVID-19 on own wellbeing

Dr Amit said that as the processes of patient service delivery became clearer through updated guidelines, he felt that he was coping well and "if a change means that you are improving things then I am very much up for it." However, there was still an underlying apprehension about COVID-19 transmission because as a doctor there was still a professional responsibility to see patients. As a practice they made a strong commitment to ensure that staff were equipped with the relevant PPE and supported in terms of personal wellbeing. He says:

"Sometimes we all have challenges in our professional working life, and you want to see how you can better overcome these to put the organisation in a more enhanced position than it was before."

"...stressors do occur, and these have to be handled in a caring and human approach."

The practice set up 'meeting points' which were times when practice leaders would meet to discuss any practice needs as a result of CCG guideline updates, but also how the practice could best support staff and build caring relationships.

How #LookingAfterYouToo coaching helped

It was the impact of COVID-19 and wanting to improve the outcomes of the 'meeting rooms' that triggered Dr Amit to contact the #LookingAfterYouToo virtual coaching service. Having also been recommended the service by a trusted colleague, he approached the service as an 'open book'

with the hope that the coaching would provide him with some skills or methods to understand decision making processes in team meetings, and challenge these processes constructively with the aim of improving outcomes.

Dr Amit used the coaching service once. Throughout the session he said he felt that the coach was able to listen and understand the situations that he was describing and explained how he felt that he was “connecting with someone who was very professional in their role, who was being really objective and providing valuable coaching techniques.” The coach signposted Dr Amit to reading and resources that described how people may perceive communication as ‘threats, safety or drive zones’ and he said that “seeing how things change when you look at meetings through these perspectives was really, really helpful.”

Dr Amit explained that this helped how he conducted himself in consequent ‘meeting rooms’, thinking more clearly about what was said and how he said things. In his opinion “this was what was of most value.” He says if he felt like he needed more support or further issues arose then there would be no hesitation to using the service again.

Personal impact of the coaching

He was able to approach subjects using language that was “less challenging, less threatening and more supportive, professional and courteous” which led to more opportunities for reflection in meetings. Dr Amit says that:

“It is these types of conversations that make me a better clinician and a more rounded doctor...you are not taught these types of things in medical school.”

Practice impact

Dr Amit has strongly recommended #LookingAfterYouToo to other colleagues. He says:

“Sometimes it can be a real strength talking about your vulnerabilities to other people ... you become more rounded, and this can help the practice run well and more efficiently, improve patient care and the organisation.”

#LookingAfterYouToo is free coaching support available to all primary care staff.

Book your session at a time that suits you.
Sessions are available 7 days a week, either by video or telephone.

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