Coproduction Guidance

Co-production is at the heart of how the Recovery College works, utilising lived and learned experience to create and deliver courses for students to feel empowered in their mental health recovery.

This guidance is written to support your understanding of what coproduction is and what this looks like in practice in creating and reviewing courses, as well as any projects that the college is working on.

Definitions

In the NHS:

"Co-production is a way of working that involves people who use health and care services, carers, and communities in equal partnership; and which engages groups of people at the earliest stages of service design, development, and evaluation. Co-production acknowledges that people with 'lived experience' of a particular condition are often best [placed to advise on what support and services will make a positive difference to their lives. Done well, co-production helps to ground discussions in reality, and to maintain a person-centred perspective. Co-production is part of a range of approaches that includes citizen involvement, participation, engagement, and consultation".
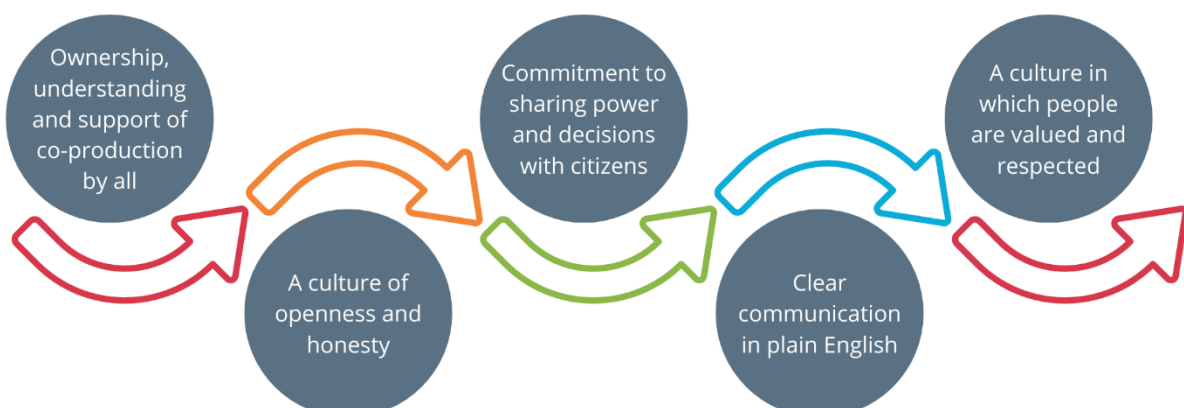
(NHS England, 2023)

In mental health services:

"Co-production is an ongoing partnership between people who design, deliver and commission services, people who use the services and people who need them".

(Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2019)

Values and Behaviours

From NHS England:

1. Ownership, understanding and support of co-production by all
2. A culture of openness and honesty
3. Commitment to sharing power and decisions with citizens
4. Clear communication in plain English
5. A culture in which people are valued and respected.

Before any course is developed or reviewed, it is essential that you consider the experiences of the people in the team or working group and how you are going to work in a way that is true co-production.

1. **Is the right experience included?**
   Each course, whether it is being newly developed, or reviewed, should have people involved who have the relevant lived or learned experience. For lived experience, this relevance relates to symptoms, diagnosis, or life experiences. For example, to produce a course on managing sleep, the lived experience needs to involve someone who has had challenges around sleep and who understands how this has impacted them. For learned experience, this relevance means that the person has worked with a number of people experiencing the symptoms and/or challenges – in this example, that they have worked with a number of people struggling with their sleep.

2. **What does co-production look like?**
   Co-production is about ensuring that all voices are heard in the production of a piece of work. It doesn't mean that everyone must agree all the time! Professional and respectful challenge is welcomed.

   - ✓ Meeting in person or virtually to share ideas and thoughts
   - ✓ Meeting in person or virtually to discuss a topic or aspect of the work
   - ✓ Emails and chats to share ideas and thoughts
   - ✓ Emails and chats about a topic or aspect of the work
   - ✓ Sharing your work and hearing other people's thoughts and/or ideas
   - ✓ Being receptive to feedback
   - ✓ Working together to seek solutions
   - ✓ Agreeing on areas of research to look at independently and sharing either in a meeting or via email or chat
   - ✓ Creating a piece of work independently and sharing with a wider team for feedback

3. **What is not co-production?**
   Co-production can sometimes feel like it slows down the efficiency of work, but this may be because you are meeting to discuss every detail and co-production does not require you to thoroughly discuss everything.

   - X Telling people what you think they should work on
   - X Allowing your work and/or ideas to be the sole focus
   - X Pushing through ideas without seeking feedback
   - X 'Pulling rank' in your respective role
   - X Checking every single word, font, and image with your team*

   *this is where work can get slowed down and the focus moves away from the main objectives into details that don't contribute to the overall focus.

4. **How do carers or supporters contribute to co-production?**
   The role of carers and/or supporters in co-production is incredibly important. They have a perspective that differs to the person with the lived experience of the symptoms, however, this perspective is categorised as lived experience as well. The courses at the Recovery College are open to everyone – including carers and supporters so their voice in co-production is valuable. It is not always possible to have this voice in the core team, but there are ways of including it (see focus groups).

5. **How can we include more voices without creating lots of work?**
   Some topics need more people involved to ensure a rounded approach and understanding. To involve more people, without over committing them and without involving twenty people in a piece of work, you can use focus groups. Focus groups can be used at any point in co-production.

   Focus Group involvement looks like:

   - ✓ In person or virtual meetings with others who have lived or learned experience
   - ✓ Sharing information virtually with others who have lived or learned experience
   - ✓ Creating polls and surveys to gain insight from people who have lived or learned experience
   - ✓ Sharing experiences which can be captured and incorporated into the work

   Focus groups can be utilised at any point in co-production:

   In the beginning….

   This is a great option if you have a topic that could be taken in lots of different directions. A focus group can support what you look to include and also how this information may be delivered, a webinar for example.

   Part way through….

   If you are finding that the direction of the work is going off course, a focus group could support your core team in getting back on track. You could also use a focus group if you are finding it challenging to agree on an issue or idea.

   Towards the end….

   Looking at what you were hoping to achieve with a course and the materials you have created, a focus group can help clarify whether these objectives are being met before you move on to the quality processes in the Recovery College. It can support making important changes at an earlier point.

Co-production Checklist

To support ensuring co-production is embedded in your work, there is a checklist in appendix A. The Quality Process at the Recovery College will require that you show how co-produced a piece of work is and this checklist can be used as a foundation demonstrate this (you will need to expand on these points).

When decisions aren't co-produced

It is important to understand that although the Recovery College is committed to co-production and hearing the views of people for many aspects of the work, there will be occasions where this is not possible.

The Recovery College must work within the guidelines of Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust and the wider NHS. Some decision making will not include the voices of everyone. Matters of health and safety and other related responsibilities are adhered to and not open for interpretation. There are also guidelines within the Trust that have been decided upon in other service structures such as branding.

Some decisions must be made in a timely fashion and the views of a handful of people only may be considered – this is still co-production. Other instances will require a managerial decision to be made – these decisions will be made in accordance to NSFT guidelines, policies, and processes.

References and Further Resources:

NHS England, (2023) 'Co-production' [Online] NHS England » Co-production, accessed 10th November 2023

Royal College of Psychiatrists, (2019) 'Working Well Together' [Online] Working Well Together | Royal College of Psychiatrists (rcpsych.ac.uk), accessed 10th November 2023

APPENDIX A

CO-PRODUCTION CHECKLIST

☐ There is relevant learned experience

☐ There is relevant lived experience

☐ I/we have sought and/or included the views of carers and/or supporters

☐ I/we have used focus groups to gather feedback and ideas

☐ All materials included have been agreed upon

☐ The work was shared between the core working group