

# AI HELPS HOMELESS CLIENTS DEVELOP THEIR RESILIENCE

## BACK ON YOUR FEET PROJECT –WORKING WITH HOMELESS ENGAGED IN SUBSTANCE MISUSE.

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### CONTEXT

I initiated conversations between myself and a manager for a homeless hostel about whether using an AI based approach could contribute to helping homeless hostel residents be more resilient, especially to support them as they moved on into independent living and training and volunteering. I had noticed in earlier contacts with this world that people made progress, but when they experienced setbacks that caused them to go into depression and back into substance misuse.

### PURPOSE

To train hostel staff in AI and engage with them to make their work more strength based. In particular to develop and pilot a programme for hostel residents.

### IMPACT

Most residents that were involved made unexpectedly great progress – 5 out of 8 moved into independent living within 4 months, and have maintained tenancies. All of them engaged in training and education, and dealt with difficult situations and decisions in a very resilient way. Several demonstrated increased ‘emotional resilience’ and managed their own responses better than in the past.

### DURATION OF EVENT

Stages in development of AI in work with homeless hostel.

1. ‘Definition’:
  - Dec 2009: Exploratory conversations with hostel manager
  - Agreement of funding for a pilot
  - May 2010: AI conversations with staff to introduce them to the strength based approach
  - June 2010: 2 day staff training in AI
  - Formation of core group from those who were most interested to do more
2. Planning of a 3 day residential programme for homeless hostel residents together with core group of staff
3. June mini AI session to introduce residents to this way of working
4. July 2010: Delivery of the residential programme
5. Identification of how the staff intended to follow it up in the hostel
6. Ongoing application by staff – including weekly 2 hour drop in AI based sessions

7. Oct 2010: Review meeting with residents after 3 months, producing achievement diagrams. Also production of the video hearing from them about their achievements
8. Jan 2011: Repeat residential
9. Feb 2011: Piloting of one day AI course for those residents who couldn't go away for a longer period
10. June 2011: Evaluation done by hostel staff of residents achievements
11. Sept 2011: Roll out of the programme to more hostels locally
12. Oct 2011: Residential for new staff/hostel

### RESOURCES

To train staff and develop and deliver the initial pilot was quite intensive – approximately 20 days; however it has resulted in staff being able to independently develop their approach.

To roll the programme out to 6 other hostels is taking 9 days

Also costs of a cheap youth hostel for the residential and a venue for day courses.

### FURTHER RESOURCES

The author has made a description of the project “Back on my feet” Roads to recovery in a Westminster homeless hostel. Furthermore she has written an outline of the Stages in development of AI in work with homeless hostel. Source information for both documents can be found on learningeurope.eu. Last but not least a video and more information can be found on:

[http://www.appreciatingpeople.co.uk/?page\\_id=127](http://www.appreciatingpeople.co.uk/?page_id=127)

[www.cdf.org.uk/web/guest/biglocal](http://www.cdf.org.uk/web/guest/biglocal)

### GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION (INCL. BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER MEETING)

Given the chaotic nature of the client group the facilitator needed to be comfortable with chaos and inattention and disruption. It was also important to give the members permission to absent themselves at any point if things got too much for them –but then to encourage them to come back and to talk about things.

### SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS

Essentially we converted the AI process into a personal development programme, which operated a little bit like group coaching.

It was important that the staff and the hostel in general supported the strength based approach in daily contact with residents on their return from the residential.

### WHAT SPECIFICALLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS?

The fact that clients were being asked to focus on their strengths and successes rather than the story of problems that had apparently led to them being in this situation.

The commitment and dedication of great hostel staff who engaged in the process themselves.

We encouraged as much as possible a culture of full sharing of the process – staff were not just observers.

The fact that residents were asked to articulate their own vision, and then some small steps to lead them towards it (and, of course, the generative power of the process).