

# USING VALUE-BASED INTERVIEWING (VBI)

TO DELIVER HIGH QUALITY  
HEALTH CARE AND IMPROVE  
PATIENT EXPERIENCE

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- Led by Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust, in partnership with the NSPCC and the Oxfordshire Adult Safeguarding Board.
  - Working across the trust, which covers four hospitals.
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## INTRODUCTION

Value-based interviewing is a way of helping organisations recruit the most suitable people to work within their organisational values. It focuses on how and why the applicant has made certain choices in their work.

This project involved designing and delivering a value-based interviewing system tailored to Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust, based on the

priorities of the organisation and its patients.

It aimed to increase staff engagement and improve patient experience by absorbing the core values of the trust into the recruitment process in order to recruit staff who share these values and are dedicated to delivering excellent care.

# WHY DID THEY DO THIS PROJECT?

Like many other NHS organisations, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust experiences challenges around the recruitment and retention of high-performing employees to deliver high-quality patient care. Within the trust, performance management issues were too frequently based on an employee's attitude and behaviour rather than technical ability.

Staff values and attitudes can have a major impact on the quality of care and patient experience. When recruiting new staff, incorporating information on the values, motives and attitudes of applicants, alongside their experience, skills and competencies, helps to gain a wider and more comprehensive view of the applicant.

Value-based interviewing (VBI) focuses on 'how' and 'why' an applicant makes choices in the workplace and seeks to explore reasons for their behaviour. It provides managers with a true understanding of, and insight into, candidates' values and behaviours, and how they are aligned with those of the organisation. By appointing people using VBI, an organisation is demonstrating its ongoing commitment to the values and behaviours which help create a safer environment for patients.

VBI is underpinned by robust research. It has been proven to facilitate the recruitment of people more aligned to organisational values and behaviours, and helps recruit high performing and effective staff.

## WHAT DID THEY DO?

Through adopting a value-based approach to recruitment, the project team believed that the trust would have more staff who adopt a person-centred approach to providing safe and compassionate care. Staff recruited through the process would be able to demonstrate the trust's core values through their behaviours, in particular excellence, compassion and respect through kindness, empathy and courtesy.

The project team aimed to demonstrate that VBI enables recruitment decision-making aligned with the trust's values; provides robust evidence to minimise gut feel about candidates; helps obtain more information about candidates' suitability; and contributes to safer recruitment and selection practice.

VBI training for employees (those who carry out interviews for prospective staff) was introduced into the six divisions in the trust, for recruiting to roles including nursing staff, medical consultants, administration staff, allied health professionals and executive appointments at board level.

The training sessions with interviewers were run over two full days, off hospital site, giving delegates an opportunity to step away from the working environment. Delegates were provided with information on what VBI is, and role play was used. Delegates' interviewing capability was assessed by the course trainers and feedback given to ensure that interviewers left the training with confidence in using VBI in their recruitment activity.

## WHAT IMPACT DID THEY SEE?

Since this Shared Purpose project began, over 300 employees have been trained in VBI technique, with a further 144 booked onto training. VBI is now being used across all six divisions within the trust, and for recruiting to many different roles.

Feedback from staff on the training shows that the introduction of VBI has led to improvement in the quality and effectiveness of the overall interview process at the trust. Qualitative feedback from line managers reflects an improvement in patient experience as a result of assessing values and behaviours at interview.

A predictive validity study provided statistically significant quantitative evidence that VBI was able to predict how individuals who were recruited as nurses and midwives would perform in post in relation to demonstrating the trust values. A predictive validity co-efficient of 0.38 was achieved.

Changes have been made to HR processes within the organisation, and the recruitment and selection policy and procedure for all groups of staff was amended to reflect VBI as an organisational-wide recruitment tool. Additionally, the weekly induction for new starters to the trust now includes an introduction to the trust's values and how the organisation hopes to live the values through delivering compassionate excellence.

The project team has received enquiries from over 80 other organisations that are interested in implementing VBI, and representatives from over 20 organisations have observed the VBI training so that they can understand the practical implications of implementing VBI.

## WHAT DID THEY LEARN?

The project objectives were set at a very early stage of the project planning process. The VBI project subsequently evolved and matured as the organisation grew its knowledge and experience of VBI.

### **Giving managers autonomy**

As the project developed, the project team's belief that the intervention should not be posited as mandatory was reinforced. There was a temptation in the original project roll out to set a deadline for when all appointments should include a VBI. However, as the project progressed this position changed. The main reason for the change was the response of managers through course evaluation and feedback post-course. All managers conveyed their desire to make the VBI intervention 'their own' and mandatory VBIs would take this decision out of their hands.

### **Consultation and communication**

At the start of the project the team didn't anticipate how important the development and communication process of the organisational values was. The development of the values with staff and the approval by the board enabled the project team, the trainers and the VBI champions to clearly position the work as being developed in consultation with, and with the support of, the whole organisation.

### **The value of partnership working**

Partnership working with the NSPCC, Age UK, King's College and other local partners brought untold learning from a number of areas. The value of different perspectives helped to shape the VBI project and its direction across the organisation, and has also increased credibility of the messages.

## WHAT ADVICE WOULD THEY GIVE TO OTHERS?

### **Get senior leadership buy-in**

Senior leadership buy-in should not be underestimated, particularly in light of the credibility that such support brings to a project.

### **Use storytelling**

Use powerful stories from those using the intervention to inform communication of the messages – these stories make it more relevant to stakeholders and more clearly demonstrate the benefits of the project.

### **Take time to reflect**

Take time to think and reflect before acting. Through reflection the project team can see how good ideas can grow into great ideas, and how what they believed to be the right direction was actually the wrong direction.

### **Mistakes are invaluable**

While it is tempting to focus on areas of the project that have not gone to plan and see them as failures or errors, the reality is that these help shape and inform the project.

### **Think about project ownership**

If a project has a strong association with the project lead, steps need to be taken to mitigate any risk around this, and to facilitate a smooth transition from project to 'the way we do things around here'.