

PARTICIPANT CASE STUDY

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Helen O'Connor - Specialist community public health nurse

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT?

The training was an opportunity to learn, reflect and improve practice working with children, young people and families who are seeking asylum or with refugee status in the South East.

For Helen the training enabled:

- Reflection on a deeper level about values, differences, reduced insecurities, building confidence and emotional intelligence.
- Greater understanding of intersectionality and how it connects to models of community nursing.
- Boundaries and limits around scope of practice to be better implemented and stuck to.
- Improved well-being, ability to carry out self-care and have self-compassion whilst working with trauma survivors.
- Opportunities to share learning and training on intercultural awareness in the Trust.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE TRAINING?

Supporting students

When supervising undergraduate and public health nursing students, Helen used person-centred principles she learnt about to ensure learning outcomes are aligned to students' strengths and passions to encourage their development.

Improved well-being and self-care

The training led Helen to apply better boundaries in her role, which enabled her to use her time more effectively and protect herself from burnout.

Team learning

Helen is presenting her learning from the training to her wider team in early 2026, promoting the online training and toolkit.

Trust-wide support

Helen was approached to develop training trust-wide on intercultural awareness and has attended organisational meetings on contingency accommodation, such as hotels for people seeking asylum, which brought together professionals across Hampshire.

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We do tend to take on a lot. Just mentally, emotionally and things play on your mind and it was really nice there was a focus on vicarious trauma. - Helen

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ENABLERS OF CHANGE

Networks and specialist teams

The training enabled different staff to meet each other and connect with specialist teams, gaining a greater understanding of the different roles supporting children, young people and families seeking asylum or with refugee status.

Support and confidence

Team support to be able to implement changes learnt from the training, and an organisational culture of safety and confidence for change.

BARRIERS TO CHANGE

Change fatigue

Existing change programmes, mean there is change fatigue, making it difficult to introduce new ways of working.

Time for training and development

On top of mandatory training, staff may not have the time or consider additional training on intercultural awareness as necessary.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Practitioners:

- Be self-aware, challenge unconscious biases, and lead with compassion, empathy, and curiosity to build trust and relational safety.
- Listen actively, ask questions to encourage safety, and recognise that feeling heard is therapeutic, as mutual respect matters more than being the expert.
- Embrace trauma-informed care by meeting people where they are, using their strengths, valuing diversity, respecting cultural differences, and embedding inclusion, accessibility, and psychological safety in all policies.