INVOLVE

NHS
National Institute for Health Research

Top Tips...   6

Learning and development for public involvement managers

As a public involvement manager, these tips may help you to think through what knowledge, skills or experience you might want to develop to support you in your work, and how you might support the public contributors involved with you or your organisation.

1.   Identify your own learning or development needs

Consider using a 'Learning Needs Analysis' tool to assess what may help you in your role. The tool should allow you to see what skills, knowledge and experience would be useful, and to match these to your existing abilities and where there may be areas for development. This is likely to be useful during any annual review or personal development planning.
www.invo.org.uk/resource-centre/learning-and-development/learning-needs-and-tools/

2.   Find a learning or development opportunity

Use the 'Find and Share' website to see if there are courses or other resources where you can learn more. You can also recommend resources that you have found useful, or good training that you have received, on the 'Find and Share' website.
www.invo.org.uk/resource-centre/learning-and-development/ [**Coming Spring 2018**]

3.   Find a shared-learning group who might offer support and guidance

For some, linking with others managing public involvement can be a great source of support, information and personal development. There are existing groups for many NIHR organisations and health charities, which meet regularly to discuss common issues and to offer mutual support. Regional networks for public involvement also exist to link and offer support beyond NIHR. For more information, contact the INVOLVE Coordinating Centre (via email: involve@nihr.ac.uk or tel: 02380 595628), or your local Research Design Service: www.nihr.ac.uk/about-us/how-we-are-managed/our-structure/research/research-design-service/contact-us.htm

4. Discuss with each public contributor what they might like to learn or develop to support them in their role

You might consider using a 'Learning Needs Analysis' tool (see 1 above) to discuss the skills, knowledge or experience that are needed for the role, and which of these they already have. Role descriptions, or terms of reference, can be helpful for these discussions. And these discussions may be particularly helpful during any routine assessment or appraisal of involvement activities.

Ask public contributors how they prefer to learn – some learn best through training sessions, while others prefer to learn while doing the role. Others find on-line training or reading into a topic most useful. Much can be learnt from seminars or conferences, where expert speakers and group discussions share insights. It isn't all about training.

5. Consider offering a mentor or buddy to support newer members

Many public contributors new to their role might benefit from having someone to meet or talk to before or after activities, or ask questions of during activities.

6. Keep a record of the training you provide for public contributors

It is important to keep a note of which contributors have taken which training courses. This can help with reporting, budgeting and planning future training. Keep a note of people's feedback too, which will inform you about how useful training opportunities are, and whether these could be recommended to others.

7. Let others know about the training you provide

Put information about the training you provide on the 'Find and Share' system (see 2 above), so that others can see what is being offered by you and your organisation. You can use this system to learn from others about have done also.

8. Keep a record of your own training and development

Similar to 6 (above), keep a record of the training and development that you receive while in your role.

November 2017 (to be reviewed June 2018).

These tips are one of a set, produced as part of the INVOLVE Learning and Development Project.