

Showing Up as Our Whole Selves

The Diversity Trust is an equalities organisation dedicated to influencing social change to create a fairer and safer society. They provide consulting, training and lived experience consultancy to public, private, and voluntary sectors, alongside youth and community programmes that amplify LGBTQ+ voices.

Although the Trust had always championed inclusion and equality for others, the team recognised the need to bring the same openness to their own workplace wellbeing. During the programme Sam moved out of the Diversity Trust team but is taking the learning forward.



CHALLENGE:

Normalising the practice of accepting mental health and well-being within ourselves and within our team, within the organisation to create more psychological safety. To be able to talk about things that were difficult, to create a better space. To get something built that was co-designed, co-produced. I wanted people to own it. I wanted it to be theirs, to help create a path for days that were hard.

“ This isn't a tick box exercise. This isn't a fad. This isn't an Instagram slide set. These are real people who wake up every single day, including myself, and think, 'Oh, another 24 hours to go through'. And it's exhausting.”

“The development sessions were just bang on. They galvanised the team. It's a lot of value from those sessions alone, and I miss them”

THE PROGRAMME:

Educational sessions were fantastic primers, I really loved the distinction between mental health and wellbeing. The nuance within mental health as well, because I'd been on mental health training before and that distinction wasn't there. Basically, it was like, 'mental health is bad.', that's not the messaging that we got from this programme, what we got was mental health is a very human thing. Some days it's great. Some days it's trash. The bounding, the safeguarding, the care principles, really well done it was great.

KEY OUTCOMES:

1 Connection and cohesion:

- I found in one-to-ones, the same stressors were coming up, but I'd never really witnessed those stressors combined in community, it was a collective stressor, that was really insightful for me
- The people who were on the programme were not just people within my team, we were generally siloed, it drew us all together and started to create a commonality in the topic and really trying to understand it.





2

Personal Growth:

- An eye-opener for me to look at what I was doing and think, 'Oh, I need to change something' because I might be showing up for my colleagues and my team, but the one person I'm not showing up for is myself.
- The programme reignited my passion for looking at mental health.
- Being on the programme at the time where I was no longer going to be employed in that organisation. I think if I hadn't been on the programme, I wouldn't have been able to manage that change. I don't think I would have had the awareness around that change that I needed at the time.
- **It acted as a very wonderful compass for me.**
- I can't say what's next for the Trust, but what's next for me is training. I've already attended a couple of webinars around trauma-informed practice. I am exploring all the resources I can on that to make sure that I'm knowledgeable around that. Personally, it's just growth, growth and settling.

3

Sustainable change:

- It doesn't mean that at the end of the program, everything will be fixed and amazing and your HR nightmares will be gone. What it means is that you'll have the capacity and some of the tools you need to actually continue doing that work. It doesn't end at the end of the programme. It's a way of being

THE IMPACT:

The way you held space when we were having the difficult conversations in our sessions was priceless. Can't put a number on it. Can't even put a feeling on it. It was transformational. Your facilitation guidance was impeccable, you know, and your energy coming into that space instantly diffused any anxiety in me. People felt comfortable. Showing up as myself and welcoming other people to show up as themselves, even if, you know, that's highly polished and anxious or a boiling hot mess, with mismatched socks on. It doesn't matter. Come as you are. I want that to be the thing that I bring every single day of my life now.

CONCLUSION:

If you're a leader and hesitating, do it for the people that you lead because they need it, you've got responsibility to create that safety for people. And if you do it, your relationship to people changes. They start to open up to you. The connection deepens. They trust you. They work better. And this is what we want to achieve— basically, is we want a better environment to live and work in. So it's scary, sticky stuff might come up. But that's okay. You're in good hands.

