

Building a culture that lasts

Take A Part is a Plymouth-based charity working where creativity, community building, and social justice meet. The small team co-creates projects with local people, not done to or for them – using art to spark connection and real change. Starting with what's the changes that communities want to see in their neighbourhoods. Their work explores environmental issues, histories, and people's stories. Beyond Plymouth, they share learning through consultancy, research, and international exchange, helping others embed socially engaged, values-led practice in their own work.



CHALLENGE:

It's not that there was a particular issue, but it's something that I just think you can always be doing more, you can always be doing better. We're a small team... each one of us individually has had a fairly significant life event, that you feel. We don't just separate out when we come to work. Sometimes we unpack it, sometimes we just hold it. So how can we find ways to allow people to be their authentic selves?

“People are burning out. The wider societal and infrastructural challenges that people are operating in are taking their toll. So anything that we as an organisation can be doing to hold that space as best we can... we want to try and help and pull together through that.”

KEY OUTCOMES:

1 Embedding Care and Accountability:

- Probably the biggest and chunkiest piece of work has been a complete rewrite of our policy suite, really trying to do it through a lens of how you embed a culture of care in the organisation
- If I leave my role, for whatever reason, it's there – it doesn't all walk out the door with me.

“I've rewritten our one-to-one templates and made them much more focused, not just on How well are you doing your job, but how well are you?”

THE PROGRAMME:

What I've really appreciated are the mentoring check-ins throughout the programme. Having somebody who's holding you to account, asking what's changed and how it's gone, is really helpful.

Sometimes I would arrive very full-brained, and having someone tease out and re-articulate things back to you in a way that gives clarity is such a helpful process. The peer learning opportunity has been great. We are really different, in terms of scale and sector, but it's been so helpful just to have those little moments with some of the others.





2

Personalised support:

- I went back to a conversation I'd had with one of the other people in the cohort who had an employee assistance programme, but take-up was really low. I thought, we're a small organisation, and if the take-up is so low, it might just be that I'm paying for something none of us use. So doing it on a much more tailored one-to-one basis seemed like a good thing to do. Two of my team members have had broader coaching, and it's been really lovely seeing that personal and professional growth through those relationships, whereas I had mentoring around CARE leadership.
- Work With Me passports opened up a space for a couple of tricky conversations e.g. communication preferences- why would it be coming through on WhatsApp and not my emails? We were able to just tease out a conversation that got right into the nuts and bolts of some stuff that it would have been really easy to never talk about and easy to overlook.

3

Taking action:

- . I think people are getting much better at talking about mental health. They want to do well, they want to do better. I think what this program does is actually help you to kind of go how do I stop talking about it and actually do it? And holding time to work through that process

THE IMPACT:

It's part of every one-to-one, it's part of every team meeting that we check in. Coaching is something I really want to keep funding because it's been really important to have someone outside the organisation to talk things through with. The next step is to bring the board into that accountability, so that this work stays – it doesn't depend on one person. It's important to keep coming back to the tools especially Work With Me Passports – we had conversations that probably wouldn't have been addressed otherwise.

CONCLUSION:

Absolutely get involved. You'll never regret spending time thinking about how to look after your team, and how to do it well. Be prepared to give yourself time to make the most of the opportunity. Think about who else in your organisation will help you keep moving it forward. This is the space where you start walking the walk, and not just talking the talk."

TAP

