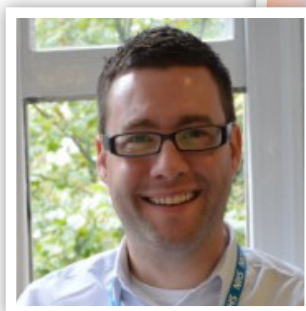


Q&A

Gareth Turner, Therapy Lead at Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust, recommends the Affina Team Journey



Tell us about your team

We are a Community Rapid Access Team offering a 7-day service in the London Borough of Camden. It's a large, multidisciplinary team with two leads - therapy and nursing. Our team members include nurses, HCAs, physios, OTs, administrators and a pharmacist.

What led you to the Affina Team Journey?

When we were invited to take part in the new programme, it seemed like perfect timing. We had just emerged from a challenging period, dominated by leadership issues, but there was a real sense of wanting to get things right.

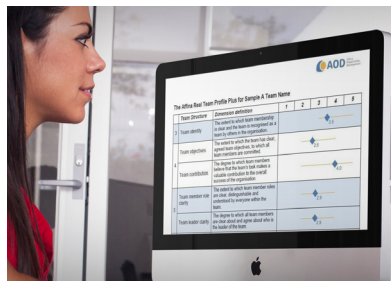
How did it work?

We used the team assessment* to get a clear idea of where we stood as a team and the key areas we needed to work on. After careful preparation and investing time in 1-to-1s, we brought the entire team together for a series of *Affina Days*. This felt so special, particularly the first session, in person. Working with an expert facilitator was really beneficial and with AOD's Madeleine O'Brien we were in good hands. We agreed our team objectives – what we wanted to achieve in the next six months and who was going to lead each part of the work.

“Whatever the situation with your team I recommend you give team development a chance.”

What results did you see?

It speaks volumes that we hit our targets and increased our throughput despite the incredible challenges of Covid-19, which meant fewer staff, higher case load and overnight changes to staffing and services. Everyone stepped up and bought into the programme. There has been a real cultural shift, from silo working to collective leadership. We are ONE TEAM - more cohesive, appreciative and proactive than before and people want to stay! Recently, the team took part in a second assessment* which revealed an upturn in 12 of the 13 measures.



“Everyone stepped up and bought into the programme.”

What could others learn from your experience?

You have to give staff headspace to buy in and engage, something the Trust recognised and fully endorsed. It's also important to have an open forum in meetings – a safe, inclusive environment – because staff on the front line are best placed to identify issues and opportunities for improvement. Whatever the situation with your team I recommend you give team development a chance. It might seem airy-fairy but it's a practical and evidence-based approach. Even if you're doing well, it will help to maintain performance and you can always improve.

What next?

As a result of the team journey, we established the rapid access improvement group (RIG), which is currently driving QI projects, such as handover improvement and two-hour response rates. This small group is tasked with continuous improvement, but with active input, involvement and encouragement from the whole team.

*The team assessment (pictured centre) works by analysing responses to an online questionnaire sent to the team. A simple one-page report tells you how the team is working and levels of agreement between members.

The Affina Team Journey is just one of a mix of tools used on the CNWL team development programme.

The choice of tool depends on the needs of the team.

