

# Using Emotional Intelligence and NLP Training to Promote and Sustain Relationships within KTPs

Ruth Slater, Ailsa Brotherton, Christina Lyons, and Karen Whittaker

University of Central Lancashire

## Context

The School of Nursing and Caring Sciences at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) currently has 3 KTPs at various stages – one is completing year 2 of a 3 year project, another is just starting and one has experienced a delayed start because of initial problems with recruitment of an Associate. Participation in health KTPs is a new endeavour for UCLan because it only became possible to develop projects when eligibility criteria changed 3 years ago. It is also new for our partners.

Our partnerships are with local Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and so the nature of the KTPs is different from those with traditional businesses or commercial companies. Primary Care Trusts are not profit making organisations; they commission and deliver patient care. For this reason, defining the “product” is not easy. In our projects, the ‘products’ are mechanisms to change behaviour through commissioning contracts. In addition, the business goal is to generate savings rather than profits. These savings can be articulated in a number of ways, such as actual money saved or budgets spent more effectively.

A specific interactive research model is emerging from our experiences. This involves actively engaging with stakeholders throughout the research process, from conceptualising the focus of the research to dissemination. It also takes account of aspects of knowledge brokerage<sup>1</sup>. Knowledge brokering brings people together, building relationships and sharing ideas and evidence that help healthcare stakeholders do their jobs better. Essentially, it is the human connection that makes knowledge transfer - the movement of knowledge from one place or group of people to another. Most knowledge brokerage models help draw researchers and decision-makers out of their silos helping them to see beyond their immediate boundaries so they can collaborate and communicate to arrive at evidence-based decisions. Brokering is the active, relationship-building aspect of knowledge transfer, a third-party role dedicated to linking researchers and research users so information, innovation and support can flow freely between them<sup>2</sup>. However, our

---

<sup>1</sup> Source: <http://www.longwoods.com/product.php?productid=16807&cat=331&page=1>

<sup>2</sup> Source: [http://www.fcrrs.ca/brokering/pdf/Montreal\\_Report\\_e.pdf](http://www.fcrrs.ca/brokering/pdf/Montreal_Report_e.pdf)

interactive model differs in that the researchers themselves, in addition to knowledge brokering; also engage in activities to bring about change rather than just acting as an independent third-party.

Anecdotal evidence from previous KTPs in other disciplines indicates that where projects fail, it is usually because relationships have broken down or do not develop appropriately. Our experience to date has been that a heavy investment in partner relationships is required for KTPs to be successful. This became apparent during the development of projects at the bid stage and has become increasingly important in sustaining the projects.

By focusing on partner relationships, it was possible to identify areas where skills development might be useful. It was agreed that a supportive training programme to enable partners to develop their relationship skills might help to sustain the partnerships.

## **2 Why Training?**

We understood that in theory and in an ideal world, communication between all the parties involved in the partnership should be healthy, open and positive – all moving in the same direction towards a shared goal. Yet, where KTPs fail, it is often because there is a breakdown in the ‘relationship’ between the parties.

The breakdown of the relationship gets in the way of achieving the outcomes and work cannot proceed.

It was agreed that there could be great benefit in providing some ‘communication’ training at the initial stages of the partnership – highlighting the importance of self awareness, self management and relationship management during the communication process. By getting off to a good start, it was anticipated that this would help sustain the partnerships throughout the projects.

## **3 Why Creative NLP?**

The purpose of the training was to help facilitate the KTP’s achievement of objectives through heightened Emotional Intelligence; exploring communication and understanding how you think to achieve the results you want. This focuses on increased self awareness and self management coupled with increased social awareness and relationship management. Neural Linguistic Programming (NLP) focuses on your thought processes and how these affect physiology, emotions and behaviour (the neuro part), whilst the linguistic aspect explores the use of language to conceptualise and communicate experiences to others. The programming part supports the individual to understand their personal strategies and internal processes that influence learning, decision making and problem solving. By utilising a bespoke training approach, the aim of the training was to use NLP approaches to deliver the best possible outcomes for both the KTP projects and the partnerships.

The Creative NLP programme aims were tailored to give people the opportunity to find out about themselves along side others through experience, reflection and theory. This was to enable participants to play an active part in

building on existing relationships (established in bid writing) and to create an even more motivated, dynamic and successful partnership.

A fundamental principle of the NLP training was that you firstly coach yourself to reach your full potential. The course was designed to enable individuals to:

- Become aware of the importance of knowing themselves and how to achieve their maximum potential.
- Develop a greater understanding of the value of excellent communication in all walks of life.
- Greatly enhance their ability to observe and listen to others; to listen to understand, rather than to reply.
- Develop greater flexibility and choice of their behaviour and language.

This provides them with a greater opportunity to work well with, and understand, the other members of their team:

- Manage change in an ever changing world.
- Gain greater self confidence and self esteem.
- Build more fruitful business relationships with a wider variety of people.
- Run more effective meetings including those involving conflict.
- Have a greater success rate in both planning and achieving defined objectives.
- Develop a greater awareness of how people are motivated thus enhancing performance.
- Improve their ability to coach and appraise people.
- Explore and achieve an appropriate work / life balance.
- Understand the importance of receiving and giving feedback.
- Know more of what you want and how to move forward.
- Have greater understanding about the important relationship between thinking, feeling and behaviour.
- Know more about what limits you place on yourself by thinking in the way that you think.
- Start to remove fears, rigidities and defences leading to greater self esteem.

The anticipated benefits of the training programme were:

- KTP more likely to be a success.
- We recruit the right candidate.
- More compatible partnerships.
- Best practices shared.
- Productive partnerships.
- Additional personal and professional development.
- Enhancement of commitment.
- Motivation for KTP
- Establish ground rules enabling the group to be more focused and bond quicker.

- Great way of getting to know one another.
- Helps to spot the ‘politics’ early on and deal with them.
- A more united KTP will help the associate to get on board quicker.
- Less fire fighting.
- Less procrastination.

## 4 Our Training Model

Several training models were considered before the bespoke training provided by Alchemy was selected. This model of training was particularly relevant for our training needs as it incorporated the key features we were looking for; relationships, developing the individual and focusing on the KTP project for the benefit of the organisations involved in delivery of KTPs,

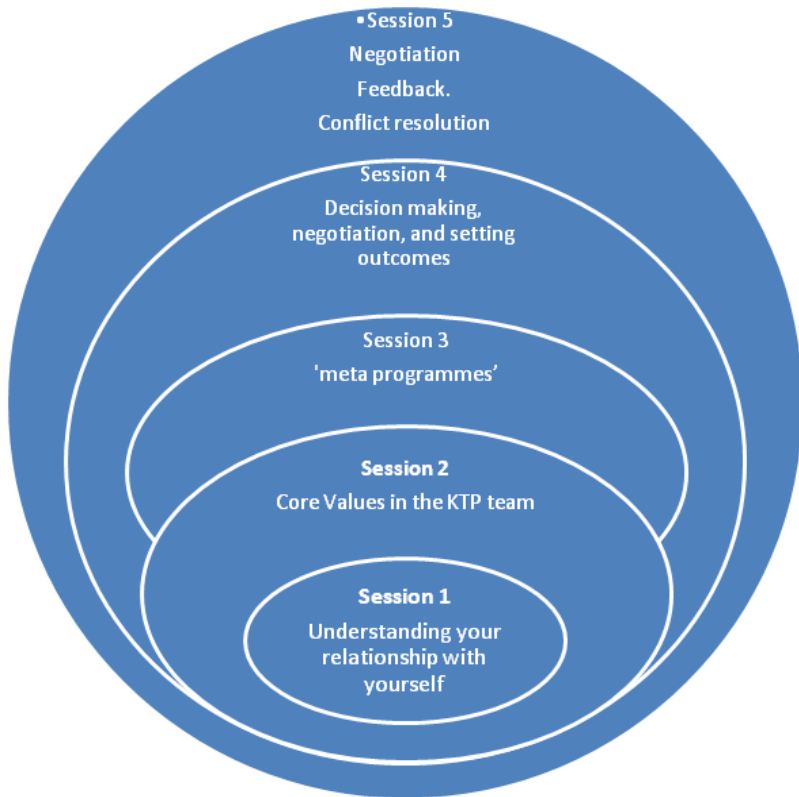


*Reproduced with permission of Alchemy*

## 5 The Training Model Developed

Initially there was a lot of uncertainty around what the group wanted and therefore the type of course to deliver. Overall it was agreed that the focus would be improving emotional intelligence and communication and how to improve these within the KTP teams so that they progress effectively. The training began with a focus on self and moved out through the small KTP team, the wider KTP team and ultimately the organisations involved in the partnership.

This allowed for recognition and understanding of the different cultures within the organisations and the demands on team members which led to a shared understanding of individual and organisational values and goals.



## 6 Residential and Session 1

The dinner and informal social evening with overnight stay was well received and enabled participants to socialise outside of their formal work environments. This helped both NHS partners and academics to be seen outside their formal work roles. It is possible that this helped challenge stereotypical views and enabled participants to be seen as individuals.

The following morning the group felt fragmented and diverse. Participants were joining and leaving at different times, whilst others were dealing with balancing the day alongside other issues. This raised the issues of commitment and prioritising time. This led to discussions about the sometimes unreasonable pressures people were working under, particularly NHS colleagues. There was some uncertainty about people's roles in the KTP and the relevance of this course and the content in terms of the KTP and the rest of their work life.

This produced a group of people some of whom were not sure whether to belong (inclusion issue). The overriding memory of the day was people 'toing and froing' – a sense of there not being enough time for this course – intertwined with some positive feedback and support.

## **7 Session 2**

In response to feedback from the residential, session 2 focused on the process of the KTP as a means of uniting the group and getting a 'buy in' from individuals. In order to get a 'working group' the inclusion issue had to be resolved.

By working with individual values participants were able to explore what underpins who we are and how we work. From this we were able to compare and contrast values held within each KTP team in order to begin to build cohesive, values based partnerships. This led on to an exploration of each team's KTP working values. These values then became the foundation to the group – a reference point for decision making, conflict, leadership and vision. The participants that attended this session have remained the core group throughout the remaining sessions. Commitment was established.

## **8 Session 3**

Ground rules were negotiated in terms of timings and topics of discussions and were agreed at the beginning of this session. This clearly helped with focus and bringing the group back to the agenda and also 'jelled' the group a little bit more.

The content of the session was based around 'meta programmes' – intrinsic values – how we each experience the world. The session was to aid the process of interviewing prospective associates for two of the KTPs. Interview processes usually concentrate on the knowledge and skills of the candidate – the Meta programmes help to identify people's attitudes, beliefs and values and their strategies (habits) – all of which can affect, sometimes adversely, knowledge and skills. This proved to be extremely useful for all members of the group. It enabled participants to become more aware of their own Meta programmes and provided greater insight into their own practices.

## 9 Session 4

Decision making, negotiation, and setting outcomes were the focus of this session. Workable models in each of these three areas were explored so that participants had something to take away and work with when needed.

With commitment and ground rules solidly established, by this session participants had achieved a great balance between completing the content and building rapport amongst one another.

## 10 Session 5

The focus of this session was to reflect on what the participants had learned and achieved. It became apparent that the roles of each member of the KTP team needs to be clear in order for individuals to feel more able to commit to the partnership and the training. The commitment (inclusion issues) should be established before embarking on this programme but the training helped to “cement” commitment.

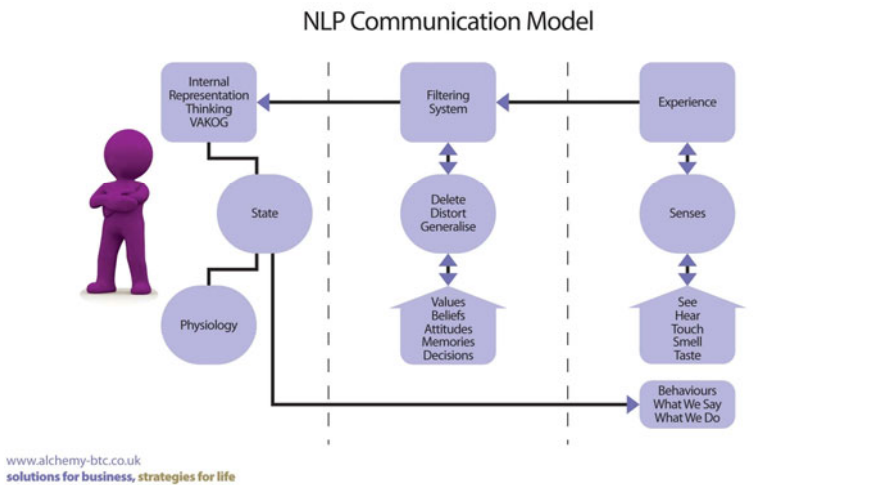
A number of key points arose:

- Managing the KTP through values.
- Understanding one another’s Meta programmes.
- Decision making.
- Negotiation.
- Feedback.
- Conflict resolution.

Running along side all of these areas it is important to recognise continuous reference and awareness of individuals’ communication styles and how to enhance communication with others.

A more cohesive, supportive group with a willingness to develop themselves and their KTPs has emerged from this process. There seems to be more willingness to address issues now that the group is moving towards greater openness and increased honesty with one another. This type of work requires a willingness to engage with the process and recognise that all participants are all on a development path. Each individual comes to this path at different stages and therefore although all participants are exposed to the same knowledge and skills, how we use them may differ. This may be contingent upon individual propensities but also how open and honest we are with ourselves.

One of the significant outcomes at this stage of the evaluation is the improved communication. Using a new model of communication shared within the training has provided the teams with a shared language, focusing on listening to understand rather than listening to respond. Team members now fully understand the importance of checking out understanding and communicating this in a way that can be understood.



*Reproduced with permission of Alchemy*

## 11 Conclusion

Knowledge Transfer is not something new; everybody engages in Knowledge Transfer in one way or another. As such the need to support, manage and organise the process in a more effective and beneficial way was one of the key drivers behind the training.

KTPs are challenging and involve a team of diverse people who have individual wants but share a common goal. However, problems do arise as people do not always express what they truly feel, giving mixed messages, resulting in confusion.

The training was aimed at improving communication, building rapport and uniting the KTP teams. Individuals learnt new ways to communicate, how to respond and how to feel. Feedback so far has been positive. However, at this stage, we don't know how successful the training will prove to be in the longer term but we are very pleased with initial results.

So far the process has helped the teams develop their relationships and contributed to recruitment and selection of two KTP Associates. We plan to evaluate each KTP in six-months time and then again at the end of each Partnership.