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**EQUIP: Enhancing the quality of user involved care planning in mental health services**

- **What is EQUIP?**
  EQUIP is a joint project between the University of Manchester and Manchester Mental Health and Social Care NHS Trust, along with the University of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust. It has been awarded nearly £2 million by the National Institute for Health Research to examine ways to improve user and carer involvement in care planning in mental health services. The project will run for the next five years and has four stages. It aims to benefit service users, carers and mental health professionals.

- **Develop**
  In partnership with service users and carers we will first develop a workable and acceptable user/carercar-led training package for mental health professionals to improve how much users and carers are involved in care planning. We will run a number of focus groups to find out training content, duration and the delivery requirements of the training package.

  We will also develop a tool to accurately measure user/carercar involvement in care planning. Interviews with users, carers and mental health professionals will determine the priorities and core concepts of quality user/carercar engagement and involvement in care planning.

- **Evaluate**
  We will then evaluate how well the training package works and how cost effective it is. We will do this by delivering the material to some Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs) and In-patient Teams and comparing this with current practice in others in the two NHS Trusts. We want to assess: **Does a user-led training package lead to increased user involvement in care planning for service users with severe mental illness under the care of CMHTs and In-patient Teams?**

- **Implement**
  Alongside this, we want to discover what organisational changes need to be made by these mental health teams and the wider NHS systems to improve user involved care planning. We’ll seek to get a detailed picture of the existing systems of care planning in both of the Trusts. We will then interview users/carers and clinicians to find out what they think will prevent or encourage user involved care planning. We’ll compare this with what we find actually prevents or encourages user involved care planning in the outworking of the new care planning practices that result from the training.

  Additionally, we want to discover the impact of the training on professionals and service users under their care. Interviews with service users will explore what impact they think the training had on: their experience of care and the everyday management of their mental health problems; what their interactions with staff were like; and how far the care planning helped or hindered them compared to their experience of previous systems of care planning. We’ll interview staff to explore their views, expectations and experiences of the training and what it has been like to put lessons learned into practice. We will observe care planning meetings to see how service user/carers interact with professionals.

- **Disseminate**
  The training package will be offered to up to 10 NHS Mental Health Trusts and we will advise on improving user involved care planning. We will produce a tool for NHS Trusts to help them assess the extent of user/carercar involvement in care planning. We will also publish materials for users and carers on what to expect from care planning to help them bring about positive change.

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