Value Management in mental health care settings

February 2023

We asked staff from NHS Highland and NHS Forth Valley to reflect on their experiences implementing the Value Management approach in mental health care settings and to share their insights into what made it work for them. Could this work for you? This report considers:

- **Factors** that may have supported Value Management in these teams
- **Benefits** staff thought Value Management provided

Can a Value Management approach bring benefits in mental health care settings?

Successful implementation of a Value Management approach has been demonstrated in acute general hospital settings. This collaborative has shown it can also support teams in making improvements in mental health settings including during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We share here some of the factors that staff from NHS Forth Valley and NHS Highland identified as likely to have helped enable the approach in their mental health settings, and also how it made a difference. (See also Easter Ross case study.)

Could Value Management work for you?

By giving insight into enabling factors and relevant context, drawing directly from practical experience, we hope to help others delivering mental health care services decide if they could benefit from introducing a Value Management approach.

This team is one of a number across Scotland who are taking part in a collaborative led by Healthcare Improvement Scotland, working in partnership with NHS Education for Scotland and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement.

To read more about the collaborative, please see the interim learning and impact report.

This case study is one in a series that looks at how teams have implemented the Value Management approach.

Enabling features of these mental health settings

The starting point for these teams

Staff reflected that factors related to their teams' existing experience and care environments may have supported the Value Management approach including:

- multidisciplinary approach to care and risk-based decision making
- organisation of the team and reduced hierarchies, and
- workflow demands and relatively static nature of teams.

Collaborative, multidisciplinary team approach

Value Management works best with a whole team, multi-disciplinary approach with openness to improvement ideas from all.

Staff interviewed all noted a **decreasing hierarchy** in day-to-day interactions between staff, and that this had supported their Value Management approach. They also pointed to the commitment within mental health to **shared decision-making.** This practice helps to build collaborative team working more generally.

"Our hierarchies are already flattened…
particularly between nurses and doctors".

- Coach

Peer network – learning from similar teams

Value Management teams have found sharing and learning with each other beneficial, both in terms of using the method and improvement ideas.

Staff reflected that they were **able to learn from a larger pool of mental health teams delivering similar services and facing similar problems** and engage in friendly competition around improvement.

Workflow demands and staffing continuity

Stability of personnel in teams and having control over diaries helps teams to develop their approach to Value Management at their own pace, and to set their own improvement agendas.

Compared to other specialities there is often **more continuity of team membership** in mental health, particularly medical staff who don't frequently rotate. Often there is a **lower proportion of reactive care work** (because of the type of patient needs) and **fewer externally driven targets** allowing more control over workflow, priorities and time management.

"We work a lot in teams and we spend a lot of time … discussing things and having quite open conversations. And I think we want to strive towards a real multidisciplinary way of working in terms of approach to our patients".

– Consultant

Previous Quality Improvement experience

Value Management enables teams to take control of their own quality improvement agenda.

Several of the Value Management mental health teams in these boards had already seen benefits through **involvement in other quality improvement initiatives** and it was felt that this had given them a good foundation for learning and implementing Value Management.

"We were so engaged with the Scottish Patient Safety Programme pre-COVID, [that] we were already in the mind set of quality improvement, we'd already seen the benefit"

– Former Team Lead

Implementation - success factors

Putting staff experience at the centre

Often the Value Management approach has been introduced using teams own experiences to identify **quick improvement wins that matter to staff**, and improving routine review of staff experience.

This reassured staff that the approach **empowers teams** – giving them control over their improvement agenda – and built buy-in.

❝ "Staff experience is at the heart of the value management approach".

Coach

Leadership and governance

Teams' service managers have taken an **enabling approach**, allowing teams to go at their own pace. Where involved, medics have sought to **counter hierarchies**.

Clinical governance systems have also helped spread both the method, and improvement ideas arising from it.

❝ "It feels more about the team changing themselves than, you know, the consultant doing it to the team".

Consultant

❝ "You feel like you get a better understanding of when you're trying to address things and taking that Value Management approach, you know. … I think it's quite helpful rather than someone just telling you it, if you're actually part of that."

Consultant

Learning resources and networks

Local education provision is tailored to teams' needs and stage, with team leads encouraged to connect and share learning. In NHS Forth Valley the formal programme is open to any individual involved in Value Management (including senior managers) and this is thought to have facilitated wider organisational awareness and support.

Outwith the education programme coaches have facilitated a network linking clinicians between NHS Highland and NHS Forth Valley.

❝ "…the last couple of [new] teams were much readier for change. I think part of that is the competitiveness, because it's spoken about in their clinical management teams and clinical governance meetings every month and there is a bit of *'we're missing a trick not doing that'*".

Coach

Coaches' sustained credible support

All interviewed noted the coaches' key role in implementation and spread including:

- Sustained enthusiasm and commitment (over years) to Value Management and its spread
- High (clinical) credibility and strong trusting relationships among teams and managers
- High level of personalised coaching and support to implementing teams
- Fostering national links and sharing learning

For more information

This report complements and builds on a series of case studies that looks at how teams have implemented the Value Management approach.

Read the Value Management case studies on our ihub webpages.

For more information on our Value Management Collaborative, contact: his.valuemgt@nhs.scot.

Acknowledgements

Method

This report compiling insights from participants was prepared using information from the following sources:

- A review of previously conducted case studies and information collected in Phase 2 of the VM collaborative.

- Exploratory/planning meetings with Healthcare Improvement Scotland and NHS Education for Scotland colleagues, and with locally based Value Management Collaborative Coaches in NHS Highland and Forth Valley working with mental health teams.

- 4 interviews/discussions conducted with the Value Management coaches, with clinical and general management staff working closely with the teams in these boards (6 informants in total).

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Value Management is "a way of upending the hierarchy, getting staff to take more ownership, identify problems that wouldn't been identified by management and require frontline insight, et cetera."

Manager