Critically analyse how your contribution to your ipe team impacted on the functio...

Inter-professional working and teamwork are an essential component of the National Health Service (Department of Health, 2000). A team is defined as a small number of individuals that have complementary skills that are mutually accountable for a common purpose and goal (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). In this instance the common goal was to formulate an interdisciplinary concept to enhance multidisciplinary practise, to critically analyse its??™ effectiveness, and to introduce the concept for assessment. This essay critically examines how my personal contribution to my inter-professional working team affected the team functioning and overall output, with reference to theories of group dynamics and personality traits. Effective teams require a mix of skills and recognising individual skills and experiences in others enhances the team structure (Calman, 1994).

Belbin (2004) described character traits, which provided an overview to team roles. Using this model, I am defined as a Shaper and a Resource Investigator. I am described as being extrovert, having drive and a readiness to challenge ineffectiveness, however am prone to become irritated and demonstrate impatience. As a team, we retrospectively evaluated ourselves and shared the findings in order to define roles in relation to team dynamics.

A performing team requires key members and defining member types ensures maximum effectiveness and output (Belbin, 2004). In addition to this, I also completed the MBTI, or Myers Briggs Type Indicator test (Dunning, 2003) which stated that I demonstrated Extravert Sensory Feeling Judgement (ESFJ) personality traits. The five steps of group development (Tuckman & Jenson, 1977) are a useful framework for identifying the stages that a group experiences whilst establishing effectiveness. I have previously

implemented adult learning courses, and am therefore aware that group

formation, participation and effectiveness can be hindered by

communication, individual personalities and cohesiveness (Anderson &

Kyprianou, 1994). To enhance communication I defined a method of

communicating as a group, and confirmed that the team was able to do this

effectively. I ensured that we all had contact details for each other and set

up a personal group discussion site on the intranet as good levels of

communication are associated with high levels of innovation (West, 1999). I

was aware that the group would informally disperse to operate individually

and that individual clinical and educational differences are a major obstacle

to inter-professional working (McPherson et al., 2001) and that this can

hinder the forming stage of the group (Shaw, 1981).

To promote team working at this stage, I suggested working in pairs. Small

group working can increase overall output where larger groups can decrease

volume (Shaw 1981). To enhance this, individuals were put together

according to their clinical settings and ultimately their ease in meeting up.

At this stage of development the group appeared to formulate with no

concerns, and we documented that communication and commitments would

be the only perceived obstacle. However not expecting conflict in a

multidisciplinary group makes conflict more likely (Ovretveit, 1995), and in

retrospect I would discuss aspects that could cause conflict in further detail

whilst at the formulation stage. At the initial stage of group formation I

demonstrated Shaper/ Resource Investigator traits (Belbin, 2004) by

determining the ineffective process and by addressing how it can be

improved. I accomplished this by process mapping the existing and proposed

concepts. The idea was then conceptualised by the Implementer/ Coordinator and the relationship to the core subject determined.

Belbin (2004) stated that in early team development the Shaper and Coordinator are the key team contributors and this became apparent in our team. In contradiction of Belbin (2004) team role traits and definitions, at the initial point of group formation, I manifested a Chair role in which I offered responsibility for the core administrative tasks to the team. I choose this role as I was keen to remain engaged with the task and involved with the whole group, and wished to be deemed as efficient by other group members. This type of role reflects the MTBI analysis of my personality type (Dunning, 2003) and that team roles and responsibility are chosen to reflect the role the individual wishes to impress upon the group (Shaw, 1981). During the process of researching and developing our concept and presentation, some team members became detached from the group and from attending meetings.

As a complexity of group team-working the group can become dominated by a few members and subgroups can form when 8-12 members belong to the team (Hellriegel et al., 1992). Our team became operational with half the members and decisions were made using the authority of four members of the group. This resulted in these members planning and developing the concept without interaction or participation from all group members. Sharing and listening is a key aspect of group formation and is central to team development (Calman, 1994). I was aware that this may affect the group development and within my chair role, I assumed responsibility for informing the whole group of decisions and outcomes of meetings using our pre-

arranged method of communication. This enhances team development as team members are more committed and productive when fully informed and involved in decision making (Blechert et al., 1987).

However, the absent group members did not access the minutes to review findings. Although the team has a responsibility to inform and retain contact with all the members, team members have a responsibility to respond as this affects decision making processes (Ovretveit, 1995). In the final few days prior to the summative assessment, the entire group arranged meetings to coordinate the presentation and to define final roles. Although the group had appeared to establish norms and similarities within the module introduction week (Anderson & Kyprianou, 1994), and that we had verbally agreed that we were performing as a group, certain individuals detached from the group and were reluctant to participate in tasks.

It was apparent at this stage the team had not yet processed all five stages of group development as defined and were not yet performing as a group. (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). At this time I became irritated and frustrated with the increased workload and the reluctance to share responsibility which reflects my Shaper Resource investigator role (Belbin, 2004). To overcome my own feelings and to reunite the group, I tried to individually discuss aspects of the presentation and personally sought their ideas and cohesion. This reflects my MTBI scores (Dunning, 2003), as an ESFJ I am keen to maintain harmony.

I feel that this contributed and enhanced group dynamics at this point although I was aware that the group had yet to process the ??? storming???

stage (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). On the final preparation day, we analysed our presentation as a team and it was decided by the Completer/ Finisher that my individual contribution would be deleted from the presentation. This resulted in a group discussion, in which I became defensive of my contribution and unable to accept its exclusion without discussion or justification. As a result of this, I felt that although I was an active group participant, my contribution was inadequate and it resulted in me wanting to detach from the group.

This is defined by Markiewitz & West, (1997) who state that climates that exercise high control and low autonomy for individuals restrict the function of teamwork and result in members becoming detached. After discussion, the group finally decided to retain my contribution, which resulted in an elevation in my mood and relationship with the team. We also discussed the presentation as a whole, and conflicting opinions were verbalised regarding the content and timings. The team members that conflicted in the overall layout were the same members who previously demonstrated detachment and a lack of cohesion from the group at the point of research. In my role as chair, I continued to improvise the content and layout so that the majority of views and opinions were met, whilst ensuring that all conflicting views were verbalised.

Denial of any conflict and not allowing resolutions to be made affects dynamics and therefore affects the team output (Ovretveit, 1995). My improvisation at this time reflects my MBTI scores (Dunning, 2003) and appeared to have a positive input on the team as the content of the presentation was improved. Task conflict rather than interpersonal conflict

improves team effectiveness (De Dreu & Van de Vliert, 1997). At this point the team appeared to become united and fully operational. Acceptance and completing the storming stage defined that we were finally performing (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977) and as a team we were satisfied with the content of the presentation and our individual contributions. The following day we completed the assessment with an audience of assessors and peers, and the peer feedback was complimentary to our delivery and concept. At the end of the presentation, the group was reluctant to leave the room and had arranged to remain in contact using the methods that we have initiated at the beginning. This enhances the five stages of group dynamics as we were mourning the closure of the group (Tuckman &Jensen, 1977).

The ability to acknowledge my own strengths and limitations and my personality traits that involves and includes others are skills that were essential to the overall group dynamics and output. In future group working environments, I will continue to remain enthusiastic and ensure that the individual views of participants are acknowledged and valued as this is defined as one of my personality strengths in my MBTI (Dunning, 2003) and involving all the group increases individual satisfaction (Shaw, 1981). In addition to this, I assessed that although I am typed to be an important component at the forming stage, my role adjusted to each stage of the task and process as necessitated.

From the overall team output and the response to our formal assessment by our peers, I feel that I had a positive impact on the team and contributed to a successful outcome. Total Word Count: 1550. References Anderson, A.

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