

STH Professional Development Forum 12th Dec 2023 , 6.30 – 8pm

25 attendees

Topic: Role Definition

Group feedback discussion notes

1 What makes you an STH Practitioner?

2 What would you need to take away to stop you being an STH practitioner?

3 How does your practice/role compare to other roles in related professions?

Group 1 Marie– w Francesca Kathleen Vicky Emma

What makes you an STH Practitioner?

- people plant connection, group heard a new term – ethnobotany – affect on people working with plants – bringing about therapeutic benefits
- Def need horticulture – technical? – certainly gardening wellbeing

What would you need to take away to stop you being an STH practitioner?

- STH training and being able to connect people with plants and to facilitate a group – skills to take away / aware of safeguarding / leadership

How does your practice/role compare to other roles in related professions?

- How does role c/w OT – active listening – big difference is how to communicate / manage groups and be responsive to whatever way the group is going
- Terminology dependent on training – practitioner from trellis / thrive – or other places use facilitator
- Could/should there be hierarchy for terms? Eg Practitioner assisted by assistant facilitator – but mostly people just one person bands – so perhaps only if big enough org, the different terminology could help.

Group 2 Kathryn w Neil, Sally, Caroline, Daniel

What would you need to take away to stop you being an STH practitioner?

- Jumped straight to this question as believed easier to unpick
- A qualification or experience relating to plant and garden, good enough working knowledge to ensure success
- Debated clients & defined needs – clear it is therapeutic so there must be a need which is intended to be met through that process
- Skills to be able to lead or facilitate to bring the horticulture and people together, measure outcomes

How does your practice/role compare to other roles in related professions?

- Comparable roles – a group member has a sister who is “OT facilitator” – working to become a qualified OT, who works to deliver a pre-defined set of activities.
- Curious as to benchmarking requirements of different professions – eg diploma etc.

Group 3 Kath B w Fiona Alison Frederick Liz

What makes you an STH Practitioner?

- Largely looked at what pieces needed to be in jigsaw – what things are essential to do role
- Safeguarding for all client groups
- For everything else basic / working knowledge, but depending on which client group – more of one or other – more support with MH conditions
- Counselling / listening skills
- Horticulture – at least to have basic yet thorough knowledge of activities eg sow seeds / take cuttings – idea of what to do with client group
- Element of teaching / leadership skills / group facilitation skills
- Or more adapted knowledge – eg training in MH or a physical disability – really all knowledge needs to be adapted

Group 4 Andrew w Liz, Viktoria, Alan

What makes you an STH Practitioner?

- Passionate about helping others
- Ability to facilitate / observe / undertake continuous CPD
- Great knowledge of client group and individuals
- Hort knowledge
- All about the people – passion for people
- Defined programme manages expectation
- Responsive to groups needs

Concerns

- Talked about MH and concerns: from a Trellis class recently people are worried that expected to be “ready” upon finishing training – what about inappropriate referrals
- Viktoria: talking about safeguarding and practitioners don’t always feel equipped – what to do or who to turn to if receive complaint against self
- Alan: Our vulnerabilities as practitioners – as a body we are here to support each other positive to come out of these meetings – hopeful it’s an outcome to be a more supportive network for exactly this...

Further discussion on these concerns

Fiona: agreed about the intention for this group and explained these concerns are all on the radar and invited Emma to elaborate on the groups work to explore supervision

Emma: as we start to look at competencies, the need for support of one another and of a body like we’re proposing is clear. Looking at this and supervision – what exists already – 1:1 / peer group / ability to connect / as people have pointed out there are lots of STH projects which are “just one-man-bands” Started to look at other professions in UK to understand how we can model.

Kathryn: one reason to get behind association is to have the confidence in own ability to reject an inappropriate referral – be able to know and say not the right person to help at this time. As professionals we want to help but we need to be able to say no.

Fiona: Question to ask “where does our practice end” Know what we are not – when being asked to do something beyond scope of practice – see christina’s comment from chat:

Christina: Establishing a professional register and a professional body would also make it clearer to the outside world what a STH practitioner is and is not, eg not a mental health worker, not offering talking therapies

Kath B: with a focus on safeguarding clients - we want to ensure that people who are not safe to work with client groups do not get in [to the association]. Particularly when people are single practitioners, a danger. If we're in a group, we can challenge or question the person & their handling situation. But some people are predatory – even in regulated professions – we need to make sure that people don't come in and cause harm. Will shut down the sector. Gave example of how in previous role, was on dental register – every year, have to confirm indemnity insurance before being able to renew register – so we'd need something [similar] to be part of condition of registration

Fiona: all in our sights: make sure what is good practice is clear – what is malpractice is clear – practitioners are protected. Whole point is to make sure clients are safe. PSA question hinges on if setting this up will mean net public benefit.

Group 5 Damien w Clare, Becc

What makes you an STH Practitioner?

- Plenty of things already being said
- STH practitioner connects and engages people in nature, in partic hort and plants. Care and nurturing.
- Skills to recognise what in the landscape provides you with opportunity, skills to ensure a garden / nature is thriving and doing well despite adaptatins made to needs of clients.
- Dedication and passion to be able to do that
- What would you take away – it was the people focus – instead just getting the job done.
- Ensuring clients are safe.

Alison (in chat) summarised: Social & therapeutic outcomes are more important than the horticultural outcomes.