

Personalised care and support for people affected by cancer: the impact of learning and development interventions on professional confidence

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Summary: Provision and participation in learning and development courses, specifically designed to support greater 'personalised care and support' for people affected by cancer, are shown to increase professionals' confidence in supporting patients.



Background

The recent NHS Long Term Plan advocates 'personalised care and support' for people affected by cancer (NHS England 2019)¹. However, there is limited evidence on the impact of support interventions. Implementation requires up-skilling the workforce, including increasing the confidence of professionals to discuss patient's holistic needs, referral to support services and offering more holistic support.

Aim

We aimed to measure nursing workforce confidence in the provision of personalised holistic care to people affected by cancer through the delivery of a learning and development programme. This forms part of the Macmillan funded Macmillan Living With and Beyond Cancer Programme, part of the South Yorkshire, Bassetlaw and North Derbyshire Cancer Alliance.

Delivery

19 learning and development courses were delivered on five topics, specifically selected to support greater 'personalised care and support' for people affected by cancer.

291 delegates, mainly clinical nurse specialists (CNS) in cancer care, participated between July 2018 and July 2019

Methods

As part of a five year change programme, the Macmillan Living With And Beyond Cancer Programme provided 19 learning and development courses based on five topics specifically selected to support health professionals in offering greater personalised care and support for people affected by cancer:

- The Macmillan Recovery Package
- Holistic Needs Assessment
- Motivational Interviewing
- Cancer and Learning Difficulties
- Cancer and Mental Health

Courses were delivered between July 2018 and July 2019.

Knowledge, skills and confidence were self-reported by delegates pre and post course, using a rating scale from 1 "I don't feel confident" to 5 "I feel very confident".



Results

Self-rated confidence was statistically significantly higher post-course for all five courses when compared with a pre-course (mean 2.6 vs 4.1, $p < 0.05$): recovery package (2.7 vs 4.22); holistic needs assessment (2.82 and 4.32); cancer and learning difficulties (2.88 vs 4.17); cancer and mental health (2.8 vs 4.18); motivational interviewing (1.81 to 3.74): all $p < 0.05$).

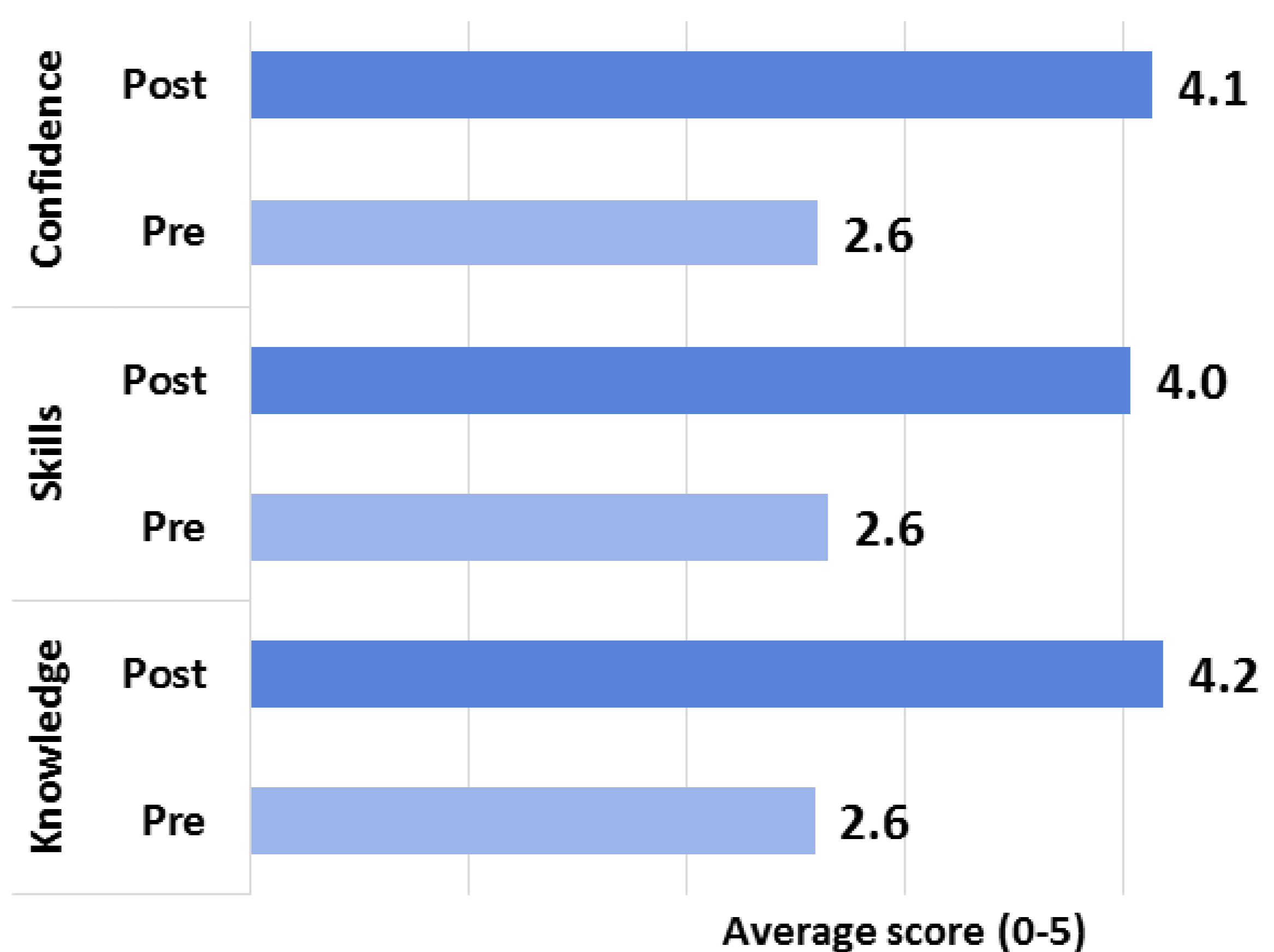
Table

Across all courses, mean scores for participants' knowledge, skills and confidence increased markedly.

Course	Pre-course		Post-course		p value
	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	
The recovery package	2.70	3	4.22	4	$p < 0.05$
Holistic needs assessment	2.82	3	4.32	4	$p < 0.05$
Motivational interviewing	1.81	2	3.74	4	$p < 0.05$
Cancer and learning difficulties	2.88	3	4.17	4	$p < 0.05$
Cancer and mental health	2.8	3	4.18	4	$p < 0.05$

Figure 1

Shows the average improvement in each dimension across the whole suite of courses. Average improvements were broadly the same for all courses, with the exception of Motivational Interviewing, where participants started from a lower base and moved further in terms of all three dimensions.



Discussion and conclusion

Provision and participation in learning and development courses, specifically designed to support greater 'personalised care and support' for people affected by cancer, are shown to increase professionals' confidence in supporting patients. More work is required to establish whether this led to sustainable change in practice with resulting improved patient experience.