

H.O.P.E VAWG Leadership Programme

Impact Report

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Foreword

By Meena Kumari, Founder of H.O.P.E

It is with immense pride that I present this impact report on the H.O.P.E VAWG Leadership Programme. This initiative was born out of a deep understanding of the systemic barriers facing Black and Racialised staff within the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) sector – barriers I have witnessed and experienced myself. The lack of diversity in leadership and the difficulties many face in career progression are not just statistics; they are the lived experiences of dedicated professionals who are passionate about making a difference.

The Leadership Programme is more than a training course; it is a transformative journey designed to empower racialised individuals to not only navigate but challenge the sector.

We have worked to create a safe and supportive environment that provides the necessary tools and skills for participants to become confident leaders, capable of driving positive change in their organisations and communities. The programme's emphasis on developing skills, providing networking opportunities, and addressing issues such as racism and microaggressions speaks directly to the needs highlighted by research in this area. It is also heartening to see the commitment to this vision from organisations across the UK.

I am deeply grateful to the City Bridge Trust and other funding organisations for their invaluable support in making this vision a reality. Without this support, many individuals would not have had the opportunity to participate in such a life-changing experience. I also want to extend my heartfelt thanks to Sarah Wigley, Sandra Pollock, and associates of H.O.P.E for their tireless work in developing and delivering this unique programme. Your commitment and expertise have been instrumental in its success.

Most importantly, I want to express my gratitude to the participants of the Leadership Programme for their courage, dedication, and willingness to embrace this journey. Your stories and determination inspire us all. Finally, I thank Paul Morris and Dr Roxanne Khan of onEvidence for their diligent monitoring and evaluation of the programme, which is vital in ensuring its continuous improvement and impact.

Together, we are creating a sector that truly reflects the diversity of the communities it serves. This is just the beginning of our journey.

Background

Research by Dr Olumide Adisa and Dr Katherine Allen at the University of Suffolk in 2020 highlighted that the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) sector is unrepresentative of the communities it serves. This underrepresentation poses a significant barrier to providing effective and accessible responses to survivors and perpetrators of violence.

Without diverse representation, service providers may find it challenging to build trust and rapport with victims and perpetrators, who might feel misunderstood or alienated. This potential lack of cultural competence may result in less effective interventions, as the nuances of different cultural backgrounds may not be adequately addressed, leading to reduced engagement with services by those who need them most.

In response to this issue, in 2021, the Drive Partnership commissioned H.O.P.E Training and Consultancy to conduct focus groups with racialised staff in the VAWG sector. This research aimed to understand the reasons for the problem of underrepresentation and identified several key issues:

- Racism within the VAWG sector
- A lack of appropriate support from sector leaders
- Limited opportunities for development and career progression
- Feelings of frustration and isolation
- A fear of speaking out, leading some to consider leaving the sector

These findings highlight a clear need for workforce development and leadership training that specifically addresses the issues and needs of racialised staff to improve representation and retention within the VAWG sector.



**VAWG
Leadership
Programme**

H.O.P.E VAWG Leadership Programme

The H.O.P.E VAWG Leadership Programme was launched in 2022 and focuses on four key objectives: increasing diversity in leadership, improving retention, developing skills, and providing networking opportunities. The curriculum is presented as a framework of characteristics and competencies, designed to guide and support sector staff to develop their professional and leadership skills. The curriculum is supported by one-to-one coaching sessions to provide a safe and supportive environment for participants to address any personal or professional issues that might impact their leadership development and career journey, focusing on decision-making, problem-solving and emotional intelligence skills. The programme aims to address systemic barriers that prevent racialised staff from entering the VAWG sector, remaining in the workforce, and progressing to leadership positions.

The H.O.P.E VAWG Leadership Programme is a 12-week course for Black and Racialised staff members working in the VAWG sector. It is designed to equip participants with the tools to break through systemic barriers.

The programme has run annually, since 2022. The third cohort, and focus of this report, ran from November 2024 to February 2025. Fifteen organisations secured places on the third cohort, with some being funded and others paid. Participants in the programme expressed an interest in developing a variety of skills including: goal-setting and planning, decisiveness, communication, motivation, delegation, conflict management, dependability, team building, and integrity. Participants also wanted to develop their understanding of leadership models, workplace psychology, and issues of racial trauma and microaggressions. Many participants were funded by their organisations, which shows strong organisational support for leadership development. Other participants were funded by City Bridge. All participants had access to Zoom, enabling remote participation.

The purpose of this impact report is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the Leadership Programme, drawing on evaluation data collected throughout the programme. This report will present findings based on pre-programme data, which includes participant demographics, self-assessments of leadership skills, and expectations for the programme. It will also present findings on post-programme data to complete the impact report. The analysis will assess the programme's effectiveness in meeting its objectives, including increasing diversity in leadership, improving retention of racialised staff, developing leadership skills, and providing networking opportunities. By examining both pre and post programme data, the report offers a detailed understanding of the programme's impact on participants' leadership skills, confidence, and expectations in terms of career progression within the VAWG sector.

Target outcomes

The H.O.P.E VAWG Leadership Programme aims to achieve several key outcomes related to leadership development and equity within the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) sector. These target outcomes are designed to address the systemic barriers faced by Black and Racialised staff.

The primary objectives of the Leadership Programme are:

- **Increase diversity in leadership:** The programme seeks to address the underrepresentation of racialised individuals in leadership positions within the VAWG sector. By equipping participants with the necessary skills and confidence, the programme aims to empower them to take on leadership roles and contribute to a more diverse leadership landscape.
- **Improve retention of racialised staff:** The programme acknowledges that many racialised staff members feel unsupported, isolated, and frustrated, leading some to consider leaving the VAWG sector. By providing a supportive environment, developing skills, and creating networking opportunities, the programme aims to foster a sense of belonging and encourage these professionals to remain in the sector.
- **Develop leadership skills:** Participants have identified various leadership skills they want to develop, including: goal-setting, planning, decisiveness, communication, motivation, delegation, conflict management, dependability, team building, and integrity. Participants also want to develop their understanding of leadership models, workplace psychology, and issues of racial trauma and microaggressions. The programme aims to enhance these skills and provide participants with practical tools and frameworks to lead effectively.
- **Provide networking opportunities:** The programme aims to facilitate connections between racialised professionals, creating a supportive network of peers who share similar challenges and aspirations. This networking component is intended to provide ongoing support and collaboration opportunities for participants, both during the programme and beyond.

In addition to these core objectives, the programme aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- **Empower individuals to use their voices:** Participants want to feel empowered to express their views in their workplaces, including with senior staff and management. They aim to develop the ability to navigate difficult conversations, challenge unhelpful behaviours, and advocate for change.
- **Build confidence:** Participants seek to increase their confidence in their abilities, their work, and in future positions within the sector. Many participants

report feeling a lack of confidence, and hope the programme will help to address this.

- **Address the impact of racism and discrimination in the workplace:** Participants have expressed a need for a safe space to address racism, discrimination, and racial trauma. The programme seeks to help them develop resilience, advocate for an inclusive workplace, and address microaggressions.
- **Enhance understanding of workplace psychology:** Participants are seeking to understand how psychology can improve the workplace and enable them to recognise effective leadership.
- **Improve understanding of funding streams within the VAWG sector:** Many participants have expressed a desire to better understand how to navigate funding streams in the VAWG sector.
- **Create more positive and inclusive work environments:** Participants want to create more equitable and inclusive work environments for themselves and their colleagues.

By achieving these target outcomes, the H.O.P.E VAWG Leadership Programme aims to make a significant contribution to transforming the VAWG sector, creating more equitable, diverse, and effective services to combat violence against women and girls.

Results

Initial assessment of participant knowledge and aspirations

The pre-programme evaluation, conducted between 30th October and 30th November 2024, provides valuable insights into the participants' perspectives, understanding, and expectations before commencing the H.O.P.E VAWG Leadership Programme. The survey included a mix of multiple-choice and open-text questions, designed to assess various aspects of the participants' readiness for the programme.

“I would like to take more leadership positions in future, and can find this difficult being in a majority white space.”

Participant demographics and initial feedback

The programme attracted a diverse group of 27 participants from various backgrounds and organisations within the VAWG sector. The average age of participants is 41.8 years, with the majority of participants in their 30s, and an age range from 23 to 63. The programme has a strong representation of Black, Asian, and other ethnic minority groups, with 10 participants identifying as Black, Black British, Caribbean or African, and 7 as Asian or Asian British, as well as participants who identify as Pakistani, Indian, Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups, White and Black Caribbean, and White and Asian. The programme also included both female (25) and male (2) participants. The programme attracted staff from a variety of roles, including support workers, project managers, and senior leaders, working with both survivors and perpetrators. The programme has a strong London concentration with 18 participants, but also includes participants working in other locations, such as Wolverhampton, Bristol, Manchester, Derby/Nottingham, Milton Keynes, and West Yorkshire.

- A total of 27 participants were included in the evaluation.
- The evaluation confirmed that the participants found the booking process to be generally easy, with 70% agreeing and 15% strongly agreeing that booking onto the programme was straightforward. Only 7% disagreed.

- Participants also reported positive experiences with communication from H.O.P.E, with 56% agreeing and 33% strongly agreeing that communication was easy. 11% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Understanding of key concepts

Pre-programme, the evaluation explored participants' understanding of several core concepts relevant to the Leadership Programme.

- **Psychology of the workplace:** A significant portion of participants indicated a need for more knowledge in this area. 30% disagreed and 37% neither agreed nor disagreed, with only 30% agreeing and 4% strongly agreeing that they had a good understanding of the psychology of the workplace.
- **Leadership models and styles:** Participants showed a clear gap in their understanding of different leadership models and styles. 37% disagreed and 37% neither agreed nor disagreed, with only 26% agreeing, and 0% strongly agreeing that they had a good understanding.
- **Microaggressions and racial gaslighting:** More participants felt confident in this area, with 59% agreeing and 15% strongly agreeing that they understood what microaggressions and racial gaslighting are, although 22% neither agreed nor disagreed. Only 4% disagreed.
- **Racial trauma, tokenism and self-confidence:** Participants' responses to this question were mixed, with 44% agreeing, and 7% strongly agreeing, that they had a good understanding. However, 41% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 7% disagreed.
- **Personality types, emotional intelligence and resilience:** There is a clear need for development in this area with only 33% agreeing that they had a good understanding. 48% neither agreed nor disagreed, and a combined 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- **Difficult conversations:** Participants were somewhat divided on their ability to have difficult conversations with managers, with 33% agreeing and 7% strongly agreeing that they had a good understanding, and 44% neither agreeing nor disagreeing.
- **Effective supervision and burnout:** A large number of participants were unsure, or lacked understanding, in this area, with 37% neither agreeing nor disagreeing and 15% disagreeing that they had a good understanding. Only 37% agreed and 7% strongly agreed.
- **Navigating funding streams:** Participants expressed the least confidence in their understanding of funding streams within the VAWG sector, with 52% disagreeing that they had a good understanding, and 33% neither agreeing nor disagreeing, with only 11% agreeing.
- **Using voice in projects:** Participants showed moderate confidence in using their voice in projects and communicating with senior managers, with 33% agreeing and 15% strongly agreeing that they had a good understanding, and 33% neither agreeing nor disagreeing. 19% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Anticipated personal changes and expectations

“This course will benefit me as I will gain experience and knowledge on leadership, develop and improve skills, and do it in a setting with other people like me. I am exciting to put the skills to use in the VAWG sector and hopefully, with time, go into a managerial setting with confidence that I can do it without second guessing myself.”

Participants were asked how they expected the course to change them as a person. The following key themes emerged:

- **Increased confidence:** Many participants hoped to gain confidence in their abilities, decision-making, and communication, particularly when speaking to senior staff or in public.
- **Enhanced leadership skills:** Participants expressed a desire to improve their leadership skills, including their ability to manage teams, have difficult conversations, and navigate complex situations.
- **Improved understanding:** There was a clear expectation that the course would provide a better understanding of workplace dynamics, the psychology of racism, and how to challenge structural inequalities.
- **Networking and allyship:** Participants expressed excitement about the opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals, build networks, and find allies within the VAWG sector.
- **Personal growth and resilience:** Many participants hoped the programme would empower them to overcome self-doubt, develop resilience, and feel more empowered.

Communication feedback

Participants were also asked how communication could be improved:

- The responses were overwhelmingly positive with participants reporting that they were happy with communications thus far.
- Some participants suggested that an update between signing up and the course start date would be helpful.
- One participant noted that they had dyslexia and found red writing difficult to read.

Overall anticipation

- The pre-evaluation survey showed that 100% of participants were looking forward to the next 12 weeks of the programme.
- Participants described their feelings about starting the programme as excited, curious, hopeful, motivated, and also, in some cases, as apprehensive, nervous, or anxious.

Additional comments

- Participants expressed excitement about meeting other participants and connecting through shared experiences.
- Some mentioned that they were newly in leadership roles, and grateful that the programme exists.
- Some noted they had specific learning needs (such as dyslexia) and also concerns about balancing work with the demands of the course.

In summary

Overall, the pre-programme evaluation results indicate that participants were highly motivated and enthusiastic about the H.O.P.E VAWG Leadership Programme.

They came with a strong desire to develop their leadership skills, address systemic barriers, and create more inclusive work environments within the VAWG sector. The evaluation also highlights specific areas where participants felt they need further development, which helped inform the delivery of the programme.

“As a woman of colour, this course will help me to navigate the challenges and barriers that exist in the VAWG sector, and equip me with the necessary skills to lead on my work in an intersectional and anti-racist approach.”

Impact: Post-programme assessment of participant knowledge and aspirations

The H.O.P.E VAWG Leadership Programme stands out as a vital initiative designed to uplift racialised professionals within the VAWG sector, addressing systemic barriers that have long hindered diversity and equity. By focusing on empowerment, skill development, and creating safe spaces, the programme catalyses significant personal and professional transformations, fostering a more inclusive and effective sector.

The programme was strategically designed to address critical knowledge and skill gaps among Black and Racialised professionals in the VAWG sector. To accurately measure its effectiveness, a pre-programme evaluation was conducted to establish a baseline understanding of key concepts. This initial evaluation served as a crucial benchmark, allowing for a detailed comparison with post-programme assessments and providing valuable insights into the transformative journey undertaken by the participants.

This section of the report focuses on the programme's impact by presenting a comprehensive analysis of participant knowledge and aspirations **after** completing the course. It examines the results from the post-programme survey and compares them with pre-programme responses, highlighting key areas of growth and development. It also explores the challenges faced by participants, and closes with recommendations and future directions.

Programme experience

Ease of participation:

- 62% agreed and 38% strongly agreed that attending the Leadership Programme had been easy.

Communication:

- 31% agreed and 69% strongly agreed that communication with H.O.P.E had been easy.

“Such an important course and I recommend any leader from Black or Racialised communities within the sector to participate.”

Understanding of key concepts

Figure 1. Participants agreement on understanding (strongly agree/agree)

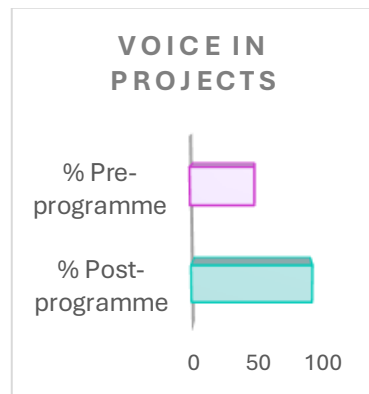
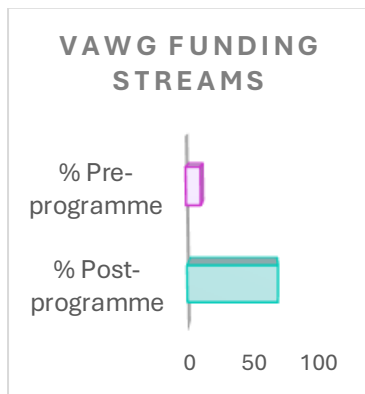
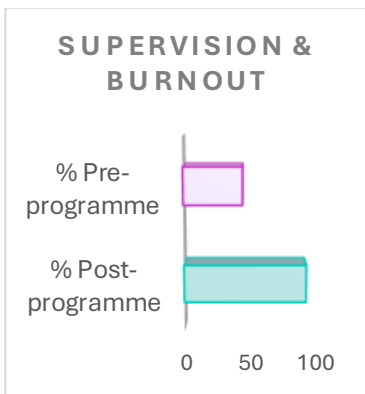
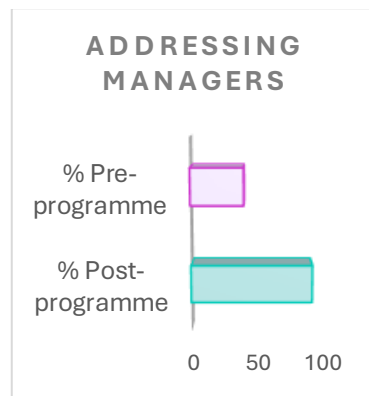
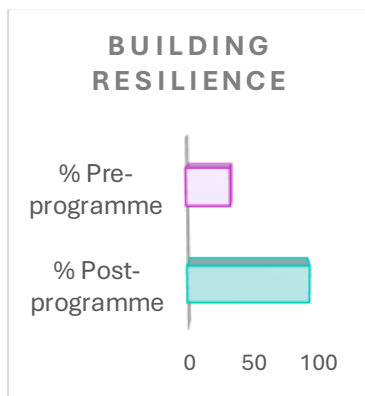
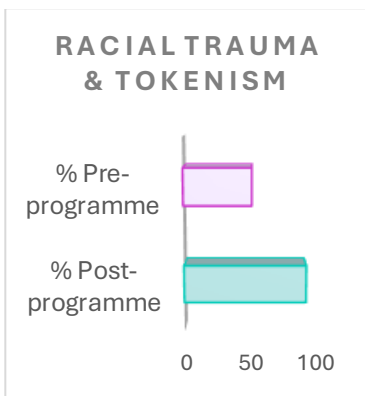
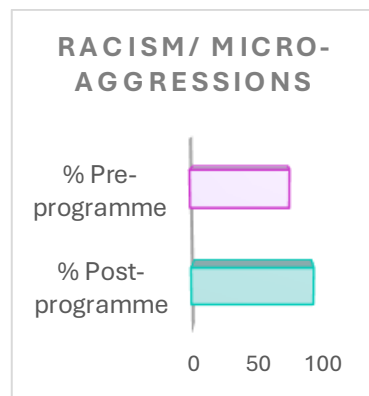
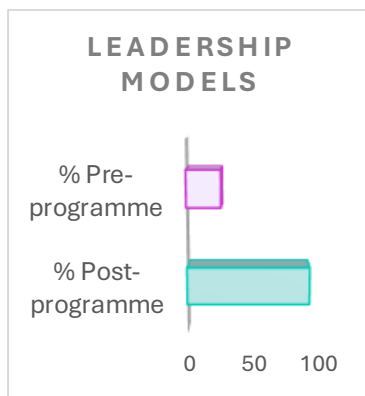
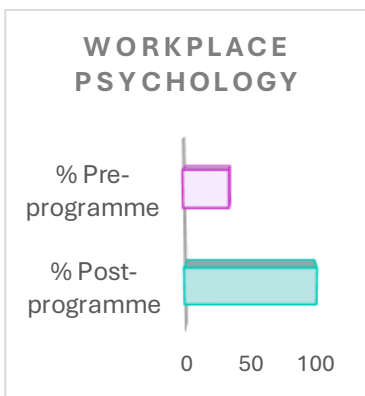
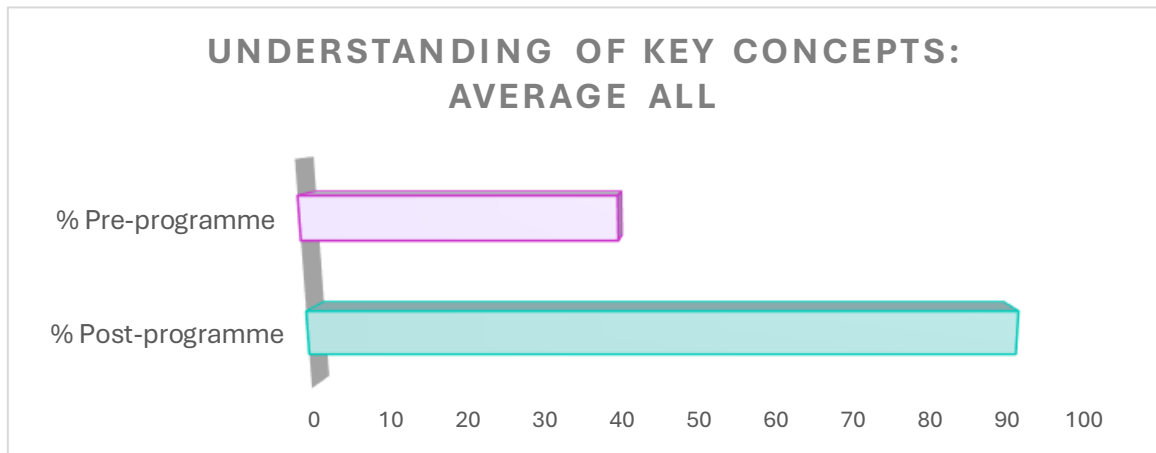


Figure 1 illustrates the significant enhancement in participant knowledge and leadership skills achieved through the H.O.P.E VAWG Leadership Programme. While the data speaks volumes, the true impact is best reflected in the participants' own words. This section highlights their experiences, offering a deeper exploration of key leadership concepts and a comparison of pre- and post-programme scores.

“The course has supported my understanding of the psychology of the workplace, micro aggression, building resilience and much more which has already instilled self- confidence to be an effective leader.”

- **Psychology of the workplace:**

Pre-programme: 30% agreed and 4% strongly agreed that they had a good understanding of the psychology of the workplace. 30% disagreed and 37% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Post-programme: 62% agreed and 38% strongly agreed that they had a good understanding of the psychology of the workplace.

Comparison: The programme saw a dramatic shift in participants' comprehension of workplace psychology. Before the programme, only 34% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they had a good understanding of the psychology of the workplace. Post-programme, this number soared to 100%. This complete transformation underscores the programme's effectiveness in providing participants with a deeper understanding of workplace dynamics.

- **Leadership models and styles:**

Pre-programme: 26% agreed, and 0% strongly agreed that they had a good understanding of different leadership models and styles. 37% disagreed and 37% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Post-programme: 62% agreed, and 38% strongly agreed that they had a good understanding of different leadership models.

Comparison: Comprehension of leadership models and styles also witnessed a substantial improvement. Prior to the programme, only 26% of participants reported a good understanding of leadership models. Following the programme, 100% of participants reported a good understanding. This newly acquired knowledge empowers participants to identify and adopt effective leadership approaches, enhancing their ability to lead and inspire teams.

- **Microaggressions and racial gaslighting:**

Pre-programme: 59% agreed and 15% strongly agreed that they understood what microaggressions and racial gaslighting are. 22% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Post-programme: 38% agreed and 62% strongly agreed that they understood what microaggressions and racial gaslighting are.

Comparison: There was an increase in strong agreement regarding microaggressions and racial gaslighting. The programme enhanced participants' ability to recognise and address subtle forms of discrimination.

- **Racial trauma, tokenism and self-confidence:**

Pre-programme: 44% agreed, and 7% strongly agreed that they had a good understanding. 41% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Post-programme: 54% agreed, and 38% strongly agreed that they had a good understanding.

Comparison: There was a marked increase in those strongly agreeing that they understood racial trauma, tokenism, and self-confidence. The programme provided a safe space for participants to explore these sensitive topics, fostering resilience and promoting a sense of empowerment.

“I have a stronger understanding of strategies for resilience, I have learnt a lot about myself personally and what I need to be a stronger leader...”

- **Personality types, emotional intelligence and resilience:**

Pre-programme: 33% agreed that they had a good understanding. 48% neither agreed nor disagreed, and a combined 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Post-programme: 62% agreed that they had a good understanding, and 31% strongly agreed.

Comparison: A clear improvement; Previously, very few participants strongly agreed with the statement, post programme nearly a third strongly agreed.

“I have really enjoyed learning about leadership skills and more the emotional side of dealing with people, having difficult conversations and i feel more confident to say what i really think.”

- **Difficult conversations:**

Pre-programme: 33% agreed and 7% strongly agreed that they had a good understanding of how to have a difficult conversation with a manager or senior member of staff.

Post-programme: 46% agreed and 46% strongly agreed that they had a good understanding on approaches to having difficult conversations including with a manager or senior member of staff.

Comparison: The ability of participants to have a difficult conversation with a manager or senior member of staff dramatically improved. This indicates that participants felt more empowered to express their views and communicate with senior management.

- **Effective supervision and burnout:**

Pre-programme: 37% agreed and 7% strongly agreed that they had a good understanding of what effective supervision is, burnout, and how to prevent the signs of burnout. 37% neither agreeing nor disagreeing and 15% disagreeing that they had a good understanding.

Post-programme: 54% agreed and 38% strongly agreed that they have a good understanding on what effective supervision is, burnout and how to prevent the signs of burnout.

Comparison: A significant rise in confidence and understanding.

- **Navigating funding streams:**

Pre-programme: 11% agreed and 0% strongly agreed that they had a good understanding of how to navigate funding streams within VAWG. 52% disagreeing that they had a good understanding.

Post-programme: 54% agreed and 15% strongly agreed that they have a good understanding of how to navigate the funding streams within VAWG.

Comparison: Following the programme, most participants agreed and or strongly agreed that they have a good understanding of how to navigate the funding streams within VAWG. This significant shift demonstrates that a clear majority now feel equipped to navigate funding streams.

“I’ve become more confident of my voice. I’ve become less constrained and more vocal but in a healthy measured way.”

- **Using voice in projects:**

Pre-programme: 33% agreed and 15% strongly agreed that they had a good understanding on how to use their voice in projects and I can get information across to senior managers and teams I am involved in.

Post-programme: 38% agreed and 54% strongly agreed that they have a good understanding on how to use their voice in projects, develop presentations and how to convey information across to senior managers and teams.

Comparison: A significant shift towards strong agreement, highlighting increased confidence in expressing their views and communicating with senior management.

Fostering connections: Networking and collaboration

The H.O.P.E VAWG Leadership Programme went beyond individual growth; it also focused on fostering a supportive network of peers and creating opportunities for collaboration among racialised professionals. This networking component addressed a critical need, as these professionals often experience isolation and a lack of support within the VAWG sector.

Feedback from participants highlighted the importance of maintaining connections and continuing the learning journey beyond the formal programme. The high level of interest in joining a H.O.P.E Leadership network group, with 92% of participants expressing interest, underscores this point. This network group aims to provide a platform for ongoing support and collaboration through virtual or face-to-face meetings and a WhatsApp group.

The programme's collaborative elements were designed to foster a sense of belonging and shared purpose among participants. By connecting racialised professionals from across the VAWG sector, H.O.P.E aimed to create a strong and resilient network of leaders who can support each other, share best practices, and drive systemic change within their respective organisations and communities. This focus on networking and collaboration ensured that the impact of the Leadership Programme extended beyond the individual participants, creating a ripple effect that benefits the entire VAWG sector.

Navigating barriers: Challenges faced by participants

While the H.O.P.E VAWG Leadership Programme aims to empower Black and Racialised professionals, the 2024-2025 cohort faced specific challenges that highlight the necessity of such an initiative. These challenges, identified before the programme began, ranged from balancing existing work demands with the requirements of the course, to specific learning needs, and feelings of apprehension.

Several participants in this cohort expressed concerns about balancing work demands alongside completing the leadership course. This indicates the pressure that individuals within the VAWG sector experience, and highlights the importance of workload management skills.

Some participants had specific learning needs, such as dyslexia, requiring adjustments to the programme's delivery to ensure that they could fully engage with the course material. This highlights the importance of inclusive programme design, and providing diverse learning materials.

Although most participants expressed excitement before starting the programme, some also reported feelings of apprehension, nervousness, or anxiety. These feelings may stem from concerns about stepping into leadership roles, or a lack of confidence due to systemic barriers to career progression.

Many participants reported lacking confidence before the programme, with an average self-assessed leadership score of 6.1 out of 10. The cohort also revealed knowledge

gaps in key areas, including workplace psychology, leadership models and styles, and navigating funding streams. These specific challenges highlight the critical role of the Leadership Programme in providing targeted support to help participants overcome barriers and thrive as leaders.

Recommendations and future directions

Based on the outcomes and impact of the H.O.P.E VAWG Leadership Programme, several recommendations can be made to further enhance its effectiveness and expand its reach:

1. **Sustained funding and systemic support:** Highlight the critical need for sustained funding and systemic support to ensure the VAWG sector fully benefits from the skills and talents of racialised professionals. The H.O.P.E VAWG Leadership Programme relies on external funding, and many participants are employed by smaller charities with limited resources.
2. **Continued research and evaluation:** Advocate for ongoing research to monitor the programme's long-term impact. This research should track participants' career progression, contributions to organisational change, and overall well-being over time. The H.O.P.E VAWG Leadership Programme aims to achieve key outcomes related to leadership development and equity within the VAWG sector. These target outcomes are designed to address the systemic barriers faced by Black and Racialised staff. A comprehensive analysis of the Leadership Programme, drawing on evaluation data collected throughout the programme, assesses the programme's effectiveness in meeting its objectives, including increasing diversity in leadership, improving retention of racialised staff, developing leadership skills, and providing networking opportunities.
3. **Expansion and replication:** Explore opportunities to expand the programme's reach and replicate its model in other regions or sectors. This could involve creating partnerships with national organisations or developing a train-the-trainer programme to empower local leaders to deliver the H.O.P.E VAWG Leadership Programme in their communities.

Conclusion

The H.O.P.E VAWG Leadership Programme is innovative in confronting the specific obstacles encountered by Black and Racialised professionals within the VAWG sector.

It is more than a leadership course; it is a direct response to systemic racism and underrepresentation, aiming to level the playing field for those dedicated to serving their communities.

The programme's objectives are strategically interwoven. Increased diversity in leadership naturally leads to improved staff retention, cultivating a more inclusive environment where racialised staff feel valued and supported. Developing skills and fostering networking opportunities are key in empowering individuals to realise their potential and drive change. By equipping participants with the tools to overcome systemic barriers, the programme enables them to advance their careers and champion others.

The significance of addressing workplace psychology, racial trauma, and microaggressions cannot be overstated. It's not solely about skills enhancement but also about acknowledging and rectifying the detrimental effects of racism and discrimination on individuals' professional trajectories and overall well-being. The pre-programme assessment underscored the necessity for growth in these areas, highlighting the programme's important role in fostering understanding and resilience.

The Leadership Programme has transformative potential, aiming to shift the culture within the VAWG sector. Participants are empowered to become advocates for change within their organisations, fostering more equitable and inclusive environments for both staff and the communities they serve. This aligns with broader social justice movements, acknowledging the intersectionality of issues related to violence against women and girls, and race.

Sustained funding is critical to the continuation of this vital work. By investing in leadership development for racialised staff and promoting inclusive workplaces, the VAWG sector can cultivate a more equitable and diverse workforce, ultimately enhancing its ability to serve communities effectively.

Funders and commissioners are urged to champion ongoing support for initiatives like the H.O.P.E VAWG Leadership Programme, ensuring that the skills and talents of racialised professionals are fully realised within the VAWG sector.

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