



CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK

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Introduction

Very many thanks for applying for a vacancy with The Mulberry Bush Organisation.

This Candidate Information Pack is designed to give you sufficient information to allow you to make an informed and thorough application. So, you will find a job description and person specification enclosed for the vacancy. In addition, this document will provide you with a background about The Mulberry Bush and our policies as well as provide you with advice and guidance on completing the application form which forms a part of the pack.

If, of course, you believe that something has been omitted which may prejudice your application in some way, please do not hesitate to call our Recruitment Administrator on 01865 300202 (extension 259) who will be pleased to help you.

About Us

The Mulberry Bush Organisation is an Oxfordshire-based not for profit charity. Our goal is to improve the life chances and social inclusion of traumatised children and young people and their families which, in turn, will create a long-term benefit to society by reducing social exclusion and its impact on families, schools and communities. We are a therapeutic community.

In order to attain our aims, we provide two separate but connected services:

The Mulberry Bush School

A therapeutic residential school which provides care, treatment and education to severely emotionally troubled children. The School was started on its current site in 1948. Its founder, Barbara Dockar-Drysdale, had looked after children who had been evacuated from London during the wartime blitz.

Barbara Dockar-Drysdale, who dedicated herself, with Dr. Donald Winnicott, to understanding and finding ways of helping such children, is now recognised as a pioneer of therapeutic childcare. Her books *Therapy and Consultation in Childcare* (1968) and *The Provision of Primary Experience* (1990) still influence childcare professionals in this country and abroad.

The model of work with the children remained very similar until the late 1990's working with a large group of up to 36 children. Between then and today, the School, whilst valuing its roots, has changed to focus on working in smaller groups and physically differentiating professional tasks through an extensive redevelopment of the site.

The site now is world class in terms of quality and provision and rated as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted (2013). The Government focus on the integration of children's services has reinforced the value and importance that the school model has been developing since inception.

MBOX Teaching School

MBOX Teaching School was established to allow us to share our skills and expertise with other organisations seeking to provide outstanding therapeutic services for children and young people.

Our belief is that for children to receive the best care, education and treatment possible the professional staff caring for them require comprehensive professional development and support.

Further information is available on our website which can be found at www.mulberrybush.org.uk

WORKING FOR US

The fact that you have received this information pack means that you are interested in working for The Mulberry Bush Organisation. There are many benefits and opportunities available to every member of our team but we also want you to be aware of the challenges that you will have to confront if you are offered a post with us. It is important that you understand our environment now to allow you to decide whether it is right for you.

We have a worldwide reputation for the nature and quality of the therapeutic care, education and treatment we provide. Your skills, knowledge and expertise will be developed and enhanced by being a part of The Mulberry Bush. The work involved will be fulfilling at times but it could also have a severe emotional and physical impact. We do our utmost to help our staff understand and cope with these circumstances. For example, everybody is trained in Team Teach techniques and all staff are highly trained. We promote a reflective culture where all staff seek support from and offer support to their colleagues.

A reality of our environment is that we work with children who can be impulsive and violent, displaying dangerous/anxiety provoking behaviours. At times, therefore, staff have to deal with highly stressful situations where they may get hurt despite the fact that we have the measures and training in place to keep the risk to a minimum.

It is not our intention to discourage you from working with us. We want our children to understand and adopt new behaviours which will allow them to integrate with mainstream society. You have to be confident that you have the commitment, resilience and dedication to contribute to the achievement of this goal.

GENERAL CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

The conditions of service outlined below are intended as a guide only. You should clarify the specific conditions of employment for the post for which you are applying.

Pay

Salaries are based upon The Mulberry Bush Organisation's pay scales. Your salary will be paid monthly to a Bank or Building Society account and is normally paid on the 28th of each month.

Pension – Non-Teaching Staff

At the start of employment, subject to meeting the qualification criteria, you would be included automatically into our Workplace Pension Scheme which is operated through The People's Pension. Initially, the Company will contribute 1% of your pensionable earnings on your behalf into the Scheme and you will be required to contribute 1% of your pensionable earnings although, with tax relief, the sum actually paid equates to 0.8% if you are a basic rate tax payer. Contributions will increase in line with legislative requirements between now and 2018.

Pension – Teaching Staff

Teaching staff's entitlement to pension is as defined by the regulations set by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

Probationary Period

You must complete successfully a probationary period of 6 months from the date of joining The Mulberry Bush Organisation.

Our Policy Statements

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

To achieve its vision and aims, the Mulberry Bush Organisation has to ensure the recruitment and retention of competent, motivated people who are suited to and fulfilled in the roles they undertake. At the very heart of anybody's suitability for employment with us is that he or she shares the Organisation's total commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Consequently, we have developed professional recruitment policies and practices that provide the necessary measures and controls to enable us to employ a workforce that will fulfil its roles and responsibilities with full regard to this commitment.

The Mulberry Bush Organisation recognises the value of, and seeks to achieve a diverse workforce which includes people from different backgrounds, with different skills and abilities. The recruitment and selection of all who work within the School is conducted in a manner that is systematic, efficient, effective and promotes equality of opportunity. This document provides a good practice framework to ensure a fair and objective process which complies with the principles set down in our Equality and Diversity Policy.

As a therapeutic community we look to appoint people who have the capacity to develop in line with the TCTC Core Competencies (see attached document).

It is our aim to make certain that all candidates are left with a favourable, positive view of the Organisation. So, we will ensure that all applicants are treated courteously and respectfully at all times throughout every recruitment campaign.

Posts within the School are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and, therefore, all applicants will be required to declare spent and unspent convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as spent and have an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The Organisation is committed to ensuring that people who have been convicted are treated fairly and given every opportunity to establish their suitability for positions. Having a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position. This will depend on the background, nature and circumstances of the offence(s). The School's Recruitment Procedure outlines the considerations that will be taken into account when determining the relevance of a criminal record to the post.

The DBS has published a Code of Practice and accompanying explanatory guide. We are committed to ensuring that we meet the requirements of the DBS in relation to the processing, handling and security of Disclosure information. We also require all staff to complete a form regarding their Disqualification by Association status.

SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN

Everyone working in or for The Mulberry Bush Organisation shares an objective to help keep children and young people safe by contributing to:

- providing a safe environment for children and young people to learn and develop in our school setting, and
- identifying children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and in our school setting'

SAFER RECRUITMENT

The Mulberry Bush Organisation is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as its utmost priority and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Mulberry Bush Organisation has established a training function whose primary task is to encourage the development of skills and learning within our team in a way that maximises their ability to attain our objectives within the framework of government and organisational policy and guidance.

Members of staff are expected to attain specified qualifications as well as undergo defined training programmes as integral elements of their job roles. The required qualifications/accreditations and training standards are defined in the Training and Health & Safety Policy. It is important to emphasise that where statutory requirements or government policies stipulate that certain qualifications and/or training are required to perform the tasks involved within a job role, then failure to qualify or to attain the desired standards will preclude a member of staff from continuing in that role.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The management and staff of The Mulberry Bush Organisation are committed to meeting and, whenever possible, exceeding all of the relevant regulatory and legislative requirements relating to equal opportunities in employment.

We all have a legal and moral responsibility to treat all job applicants, fellow employees, suppliers, visitors and clients reasonably and impartially - regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, religion, religious belief or age.

Everybody within the Organisation must remember that attitudes, opinions and beliefs will vary considerably from person to person. So, a joke, a comment, an action or a particular point of view which is completely acceptable to you may be repellent to someone else. Therefore, please do your utmost to ensure that you do not offend your work colleagues and that you encourage your workmates to behave in a similar way.

It must be emphasised that the School is intent on eliminating all discrimination, harassment and bullying from its workplaces. Any unwanted behaviour, whether physical or verbal, which is offensive or humiliating and viewed as unacceptable to the victim will be fully investigated and, where necessary, appropriate disciplinary action taken.

RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS

The Mulberry Bush Organisation undertakes to treat all applicants for vacancies within our school fairly and not to discriminate unfairly against the subject of a disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

The School operates a fair recruitment policy which ensures that individuals have the opportunity to disclose any convictions or conviction information in a way that allows a clear risk assessment to be carried out that will determine whether or not the conviction or conviction information is relevant to the position applied for.

When assessing the relevance of any conviction, the selection panel will look at the following information:

- Whether the conviction is relevant to the vacancy

- The seriousness of the offence revealed
- The length of time since the offence took place
- If the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour
- If the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offence took place
- How the applicant has moved forward since the offence.

If the conviction is deemed to be relevant then the applicant will be considered to be unsuitable for the vacancy and will be advised accordingly.

Making Your Application

INTRODUCTION

All candidates are required to complete the School's application form because it allows assessments to be made on key information provided consistently by all applicants. Curriculum vitae will not be accepted in place of the application form because relevant details can be omitted which prevents a fair assessment being achieved during the short-listing process.

It is essential that you complete all relevant sections of the application form in the way requested. A failure to complete any section which applies to you will automatically disqualify you from consideration for the vacancy.

Please ensure that you read, understand and follow these guidance notes because we do not want to disqualify you because of a simple omission or oversight.

GUIDANCE ON COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

Most elements of the application form are self-explanatory. However, we would like to clarify the following points in each section:

Personal Details

Any Other Names Used Previously – for example, if your name changed when you married or if you have changed your name by deed poll. Please provide all names.

DfE Registration Number – this only applies to teachers.

Are you related to an employee? – you should also complete this section if you are related to one of our Trustees.

Driving

We will check your licence and so please provide accurate information.

Health

You do not have to complete this section if you do not want to do so and it will not affect your application.

Current/Most Recent Employment and Previous Employment

You must include a full history of all employment going back to when you left secondary education. You must include details of any part-time and/or voluntary work you have undertaken. If there is insufficient room on the application form, please provide the details on a separate sheet.

Gaps in Employment

If there has been any gaps in your employment history (e.g. career breaks, unemployment, family obligations, etc.), you must provide the details in this section.

Training and Education

You should list any qualifications you have attained including the dates and college, school or awarding authority. You should also provide details of any training you have undertaken which is relevant to your application for employment with The Mulberry Bush Organisation.

Professional Qualifications

If you are professionally qualified, please provide the details here.

Supporting Statement

Please give careful thought to this section before completing it because this is your opportunity to state why you feel that you have the skills, experience, background, attitudes and/or knowledge to be a success in the role for which you are applying.

References

We will check the references of all candidates who are invited for interview and the references will be requested prior to any interview. You must provide details of referees in accordance with the instructions given on the application form.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act

As stated on the application form, the vacancy for which you are applying is exempt under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and so all convictions, cautions, bind-overs as well as any pending prosecutions must be declared on the application form. If you do have to make such a declaration, you will not be excluded automatically from consideration.

Declaration

Please ensure that you read the Declaration section in its entirety then please check all of the information you have given in the application form to ensure that it is accurate and complete. When you are satisfied that everything is correct, please sign the declaration.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE

We have brought to your attention already that there are times when members of our team have to deal with highly stressful situations where they may get hurt. One of the measures we have in place to keep the risk to a minimum is to ensure that our employees possess the physical, emotional and mental health to deal with the circumstances as they arise. This is why we ask applicants to complete the health questionnaire as well as the health section in the application form. It is important to emphasise that there is no obligation on you to do so and it will not prejudice your application.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY MONITORING QUESTIONNAIRE

It would be greatly appreciated if you could complete and return this questionnaire, the reasons for which are provided in the accompanying 'Questions and Answers' document. However, there is no obligation on you to do so and it will not prejudice your application for employment in any way.

The Selection Process

Once you submit your application form to The Mulberry Bush Organisation, selection will follow this process.

PRE-INTERVIEW SELECTION

Once applications are received for a vacancy, selection for interview will be conducted using each stage of the following process in the order specified. There will be no deviation from this process.

Reviewing Applications and Short-listing

When applications are received for a vacancy, all application forms are reviewed to ensure

- that they are fully and properly completed,
- that the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies
- that any incomplete applications are refused
- that any anomalies, discrepancies or gaps in employment are identified and noted.

A decision is then made on who to select for interview by assessing all candidates against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation. The assessment will also consider the anomalies, discrepancies or gaps in employment noted.

School Visit

For most vacancies, shortlisted applicants are invited for a day's visit to the School as a part of the pre-interview selection process. They spend time with the children in the class and house. There will be a debriefing session at the end of the day. For Group Living vacancies, shortlisted applicants are invited for a day's visit at the weekend 8 am – 7 pm.

References

The purpose of seeking a reference is to obtain objective and factual information which will confirm the details provided in an application form and which will support appointment decisions.

Other Checks before Interview

There may be times when a reference cannot verify a specific qualification or previous experience which is particularly important for effective performance of the role in question. In such cases, we will confirm the details prior to the interview usually by telephoning the relevant employer and arranging for written confirmation of the facts. Any discrepancy will then be explored at interview.

THE SELECTION INTERVIEW

It is policy at The Mulberry Bush Organisation that the selection process for any vacancy will involve a face-to-face interview even in the event that there is only one candidate. The purpose of the interview is to assess the match of each candidate against the competencies, experience and qualifications contained in the person specification.

Our policy is to have an Interview Panel involving a minimum of two interviewers and, in the case of senior or specialist appointments, it may be appropriate to have a larger panel.

We base our interviews on actual experiences rather than theoretical circumstances. Consequently, questions will be related to both:

- competencies defined in the person specification which will require candidates to deal with an actual situation or answer from personal experience; and
- a candidate's attitudes towards and understanding of relevant issues.

PRE-APPOINTMENT CHECKS

When the preferred candidate is selected, an offer of appointment from The Mulberry Bush Organisation will be conditional upon:

- the receipt of at least two satisfactory references;
- verification of the candidate's identity;
- a check of the Children's Barred List, a check of the PoCA List and receipt of a satisfactory DBS Enhanced Disclosure;
- where applicable, satisfactory overseas criminal record checks received (see further details below);
- verification of the candidate's medical fitness;
- verification of qualifications;
- verification of professional status where required e.g. GTC registration, QTS status (unless properly exempted), National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH);
- verification of the right to work in the UK (see further details below);
- for former military service personnel, a check of the 108 (Certificate of Service)
- for teachers, provision of their DfE number;
- (for teaching posts) verification of successful completion of statutory induction period (applies to those who obtained QTS after 7 May 1999); and
- (for non teaching posts) satisfactory completion of the probationary period.

The School will ensure that all checks are confirmed in writing and retained on the individual's personnel file. If the checks prove unsatisfactory or discrepancies are identified, we will undertake further investigations to clarify the matters and, where necessary, take appropriate action.

RIGHT TO WORK IN THE UK

All preferred candidates, irrespective of their nationality or where they are working currently, will be checked to establish that they have the right to work in the United Kingdom.

Entitlement to work in the UK must be verified by checking the original documents of one of the following:

- A valid passport showing that the holder is a British citizen, or a citizen of the UK and Colonies, having the right of abode in the UK;
- A valid passport or national ID card showing that the holder is a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland;

- A permanent residence card issued by the Home Office to a national or the family member of a national from a European Economic Area country or Switzerland;
- A valid passport or other travel documents endorsed to show that the holder can stay indefinitely in the UK, has the right of abode in the UK or has no time limit on their stay in the UK;
- Original, long birth certificate (issued within 6 months of the birth) accompanied by official documentation showing NI number (for example: P45, P60, NI number card or letter from a government agency). **Please Note:** NI cards beginning with TN or ending in E - Z inclusive are temporary numbers and are not acceptable;
- Appropriate UK Residence Permits/Cards.

The above list is not exhaustive and can change. Consequently, there may be other documents which could be equally acceptable. The Mulberry Bush will be pleased to offer guidance.

The documents must be viewed by a responsible person at The Mulberry Bush. That person will take copies of all documents which have been viewed to verify your right to work in the UK, sign them, date them and retain them on a personal file.

Checks to ensure that you have the right to work in the UK will be conducted before employment commences. You will not be able to commence employment until the required checks have been completed.

OVERSEAS CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK

If you live overseas or have worked, studied or lived abroad for a period of three months or more outside of the UK, you must provide evidence of a criminal record check from the relevant country or countries. Normally this will involve providing a 'Certificate of Good Repute/Good Conduct' or something similar from the UK embassy of the country in question. A certificate must be provided for each period of three months or more spent abroad although particular focus will be placed on the five years preceding the date that an offer of employment is made by The Mulberry Bush.

If you need to provide such documentation, it is your responsibility to obtain the certification at your own cost. You will be asked to show the original documents (not copies) at interview. A failure to supply appropriate documentation will mean it is highly unlikely that an offer of employment will be made.

The methods and systems used to undertake the required checks will vary from country to country. If you encounter difficulties obtaining the appropriate documents, The Mulberry Bush will be able to offer guidance but will not be able to make an application on your behalf.



TC Practitioner Competencies Framework

April 2014



Preface

Our core competencies have been developed for therapeutic community organisations as a guide to the knowledge and skills which TC staff members can develop over time and with experience. A manualised approach to care or treatment is incompatible with our philosophy and we therefore adopt a developmental model of staff training.

There can be no fixed blueprint for the therapeutic community worker to adhere to but rather within the context of their community a particular 'attitude of mind' can be nurtured (Wills, 1977). These core competencies are designed to act as a resource and an *aid memoire* in the process of staff development and training.

We believe that *community* itself has the potential to function therapeutically because the experience of belonging to a community and being valued by others - no matter how damaged a person might be - is reparative. In a therapeutic community, rather than focussing on the fulfilment of individuals, the emphasis is on the participation of all community members - staff as well as clients. This includes participating in the everyday running of the community and in discussing, reflecting on and taking into account the unspoken, hidden or unconscious aspects of group living. Each member's difficulties are seen as being open to improvement by drawing upon the total resources available to the community from all of its members and the planned environment.

Working with clients in this way requires the TC Practitioner to acknowledge and pursue their own development. This includes becoming aware of a specific range of therapeutic community approaches, developing from within this tradition, aligned to an increasingly sophisticated awareness and use of self in relation to others in group settings.

The acquisition of these competences is seen as a gradual process that can be continually enhanced and engaged in at deeper levels. Apart from being a resource for staff development and training the core competencies for TC Practitioners can also help to establish a mechanism for the transmission of the community culture over time.

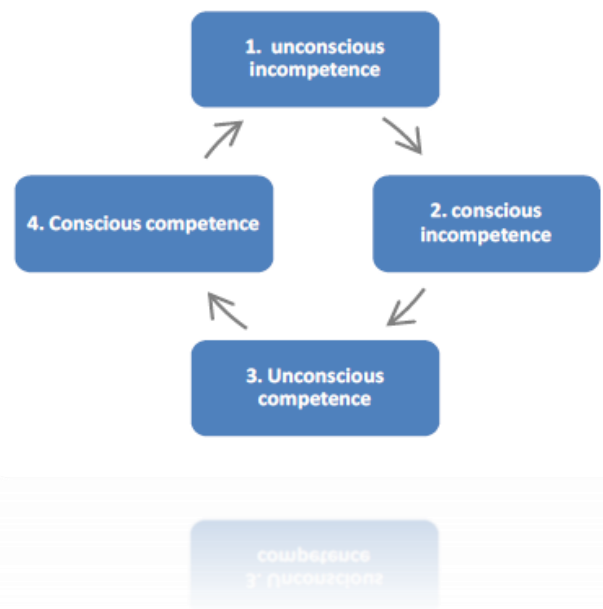
Andrew Collie (cited in Ward *et al* 2000, 234 - 39) discusses the need for actively transmitting the culture of a therapeutic community, an important process initially raised by Tom Main (1990). Collie draws upon a model of evolving competence which emerges experientially through practice and the worker's openness to learning. Here practitioners move from a

limited, novice-like awareness of their ability, known as unconscious incompetence, on a developmental trajectory through several stages towards conscious competence. This model applies particularly well in group and community settings where there is a reliance on the interdependence of the members and where each practitioner's development will be unique to their own circumstances and characteristics.

In the model adopted by the Consortium of Therapeutic Communities (TCTC), however, Collie's stages three and four are reversed (see below). After arriving at stage two, conscious incompetence, where the practitioner becomes more aware of their limitations, they move toward stage three, unconscious competence, by gradual intuitive successes and without a full awareness of why their practice has improved (although this is likely to reflect a process of introjecting aspects of the community culture). They finally arrive at a more conscious awareness of their competence which is the final stage but must be constantly worked for, just as each new area of practice may require working through these stages again.

With the Competencies as a guide and *aid memoire* each TC Practitioner can develop competencies at a deeper and more conscious level while at the same time participating collectively in the 'total culture of enquiry' (Main, 1989). Through the transmission of that culture, its specific theoretical framework and practices, they are also contributing to the self-regulation of their TC.

Dr Chris Nicholson – TCTC Training Group



TC Practitioner Competencies Framework

	COMPETENCY HEADING	DEFINITION - The TC Practitioner tries to...
Role related competencies	1	Understanding of role <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better understand the boundaries of their role, the place this has within the wider organisation and the outcomes it is designed to achieve
	2	Understanding of client group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide responses of understanding to the particularity of the client within the context of the community Shows developing insight into the clinical issues extent within the client group Relates to others as human beings not as diagnoses or labels
	3	Clinical observation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to accept 'not knowing' and allow time for understanding to emerge Capacity to observe behaviour / mood / interactions and notice the internal and external dynamics involved Capacity to formulate a hypothesis
	4	Capacity to acknowledge and use the boundaries of the TC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing awareness and capacity to regulate boundaries Ability to share authority with all members of the community - 'dispersed authority' Capacity to own and use their own authority Recognises the significance of space and time and how therapeutic structures are established Creative / flexible use of TC structures
Therapeutic practice related competencies	5	Understanding of TC methodologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows a willingness to learn and engage with 'methods' Emotionally open within a 'culture of enquiry' Developing knowledge and understanding of psychodynamic ideas Desire to acquire both academic and experiential knowledge in a 'living-learning environment' Desire to be a part of a containing matrix of relationships and use the community to address and solve problems
	6	Communication skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Openness to both conscious and unconscious communication and recognises behaviours and affects are communication Communicates in a clear direct manner and actively listens and engages with others to further their understanding Can adapt the mode of communication appropriate to the audience Avoids telling others what to think but provides/creates opportunities for understanding to grow / develop / emerge
	7	Use of self <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensitivity - attuned and receptive - can takes things in Capacity to use one's interactions with others therapeutically Ability to monitor the thoughts and feelings evoked by others and link these to underlying issues of the client Genuineness - congruence - authenticity - not hiding behind professional status / role
	8	Capacity to work both reflectively and using reflexively <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can think about one's own capacities and deficits in relation to the work Can work by continually being aware of one's responses to others and one's self Self-reflection / awareness - desire to know why one is drawn to this work Has self-knowledge - able to self-talk - adopt a third position
	9	Capacity to contain anxiety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to tolerate 'not knowing' An ability to tolerate stress and recognize personal limits Can notice and sustain feeling difficult feelings long enough to understand where they derive from and to take appropriate action Self-contained - can contain their own anxiety Owens their mistakes Capacity to retain ones one identity - strength of character
Organisational related competencies	10	Recognises importance of the environmental setting & external environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses 'daily living' as opportunities for learning - 'opportunity-led work' Acknowledges the symbolic nature of the environment Understands 'corrective emotional experience', primary care and therapeutic adaptation Political / social awareness - can challenge status quo
	11	Understanding of organisational dynamics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can understand and acknowledge issues of authority, power, leadership Can understand the varied reasons for organisational anxiety, the defences which operate to avoid this and one's own role in managing this Aware of own valency - the tendency to take up a familiar defensive role in a group context
	12	Participant observer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can observe self and others without being compelled to act before reflecting Can wait, think, talk with others before acting Capacity to learn from direct experience - capacity to explore and be vulnerable - not defensive / avoidant
	13	Recognises the primary task <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boundaried - able to acknowledge one's own place in the organizational structure Clarity about one's role - engages directly in the key tasks defined in their job description and its relation with the primary task of the community