

The Whole Picture Programme: Training+ White Paper October 2021

From the Training+ Working Group:

BBC, Bectu, BIFA, Bectu, Channel 4,
Film and TV Charity, ITV, Mama Youth,
Production Guild of Great Britain,
ScreenSkills, Sky

Response to research report 'Mapping
mental health training in the Film and TV
Industry' by Dr Peter L. Block, August 2021



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Background

Training with ongoing learning and development is crucial to build capability to support one's own wellbeing and to support those we manage and work with.

Feedback from extensive consultation with people in the Film and TV industry suggests that there is not enough mental health training available or accessible to workers in our industry, and that there is a lack of support for workers or managers when identifying what training is needed or where to find it.

In May 2021 the Film and TV Charity commissioned some independent research to explore these gaps, to understand what training and ongoing development provisions are available for the UK film and TV industry to support good mental health and wellbeing. The research also looked at training which addresses industry-specific factors that contribute to poor mental health.

The research brief was developed by the **Whole Picture Programme's Training+** industry Working Group, which includes: BBC, Bectu, BIFA, Channel 4, Film and TV Charity, ITV, Mama Youth, Production Guild of Great Britain, ScreenSkills and Sky.

Following a competitive external tender process, Dr Peter Block was commissioned to carry out research to understand:

- **What training is available?**
- **What continuous professional development (CPD) is available?**
- **What are the benchmarks?**
- **What are the barriers to access for freelancers?**

Dr Block has carried out similar research projects across various areas of broadcast, diversity and training for the Sir Lenny Henry Centre and Ofcom, amongst others. He has a background in broadcast and production and subsequently moved into academia, following up on the BFI longitudinal study (2000) that examined television careers in a changing work environment; he researched the attributes needed to get into the broadcast industry and the barriers to access.

The methodology for this research involved desk research, interviews with training providers and funders, discussion with freelancers, and consultation with industry stakeholders and mental health experts. Dr Block's report is available to read in full.

This paper outlines the most relevant key findings from the independent report, including how it paints a picture of the current provisions available. The paper suggests opportunities and recommendations to industry leaders, on how to develop industry capability and support workers.

¹In the **Looking Glass Report** and through subsequent consultations with industry via Whole Picture Programme's extensive co-production network of stakeholders and working groups and via open house and roundtable events.

Relevant key findings

1. **There is no industry-specific mental health training framework**

There is currently no agreed minimum accreditation level in the industry for mental health trainers. The vast majority of current provisions are based on three frameworks: **MHFA**, **i-act** or **NUCO**, which are based on building awareness but not bespoke to the TV and film industry, or to managers. Limited industry-specific adaptations have been introduced by independent training providers with experience in the industry. Currently, not all providers offering mental health training have a background in one of these accredited mental health frameworks, or in health and safety or psychotherapy/psychology or related disciplines.

2. **Mental health training raises awareness but offers limited tools for practical development**

Mental health training raises awareness of mental health as an issue, which is important for everyone to understand on a personal level as well as across a team. There is little evidence that current training equips those who have been trained with practical tools to benefit themselves and others with better mental health.

3. **Management training often lacks specific mental health awareness and development**

There is a lack of reference to mental health in management training programmes even though it is recognised that specific training is required for line managers to understand how to support the overall mental health of their workers. Mental health training is often treated as an 'add on'.

4. **Industry-specific factors which contribute to poor mental health are not fully signposted**

Mental health training doesn't tend to identify or address industry-specific factors which contribute to poor mental health in film and TV. And training courses which do address these (eg anti-bullying and harassment, and unconscious bias) are not always clearly signposted as mental health training, which means they are not always included in training plans.

5. **There is a lack of CPD in the industry**

There is no structured strategy or CPD for this training in the industry and very little support or follow-on after a training course ends.

6. **Freelancers face significant barriers to engaging with mental health training**

While freelancers generally have some access to training, there isn't always positive HR support and there is still a stigma attached to accessing mental health training. There is low confidence amongst some freelancers that managers are invested in creating mentally healthy working environments.

Conclusions

The current climate and broad support for culture change present a clear opportunity to develop an *industry-specific mental health training structure*, led by industry senior leaders.

There is a desire and need for accountability and clarity on training paths for people with different requirements: senior leaders, managers, freelancers and under-represented groups, and for mental health training to become an industry norm.

The report suggests that overall there is a strong commitment and desire across the industry to invest in training to improve the mental health of individuals and wider teams. It also highlights that there are many highly motivated and knowledgeable people with specific TV and film industry experience that have set up independent businesses dedicated to this. While there is appetite from employers, employees and freelancers to access and invest in training, there is currently a lack of an industry-recommended way to put together a training plan for better mental health.

The approach to mental health training across the industry is piecemeal and unsupported.

This picture of the industry presents an opportunity: to draw on the learned experience of those in the industry with the relevant expertise and develop **a new strategy for mental health training in the film and TV industry.**

Developing and implementing such a strategy would require building awareness, addressing industry-specific factors which contribute to poor mental health, specific training for managers, better understanding of how mental health and related training works and its benefits, including the need for follow-on support and the integration of mental health training into other existing training and development programmes.

For it to succeed the new strategy would include an agreed framework for accrediting mental health trainers, space for peer support, and a commitment to culture change in working environments.

Recommendations to industry:

1. Develop an industry-wide strategy for mental health training and development.
2. Advocate for integration of specific mental health awareness into wider industry training programmes – especially management training programmes.
3. Ensure training is accessible to all, including freelancers.
4. Agree and share minimum standards for mental health training.
5. Contribute to peer support networks after training for further development and increased confidence.

Next Steps

The Training+ Working Group will work towards co-designing and producing an industry framework for employers in the Film and TV industry to deliver mental health training programmes for their workers.

Through a partnership between the Film and TV Charity and ScreenSkills, the industry-led skills body for the screen industries, the framework will be launched on the ScreenSkills website in early 2022.

The guidance will include:

- Information about existing mental health training accreditation.
- Topics which address industry-specific factors which contribute to poor mental health.
- Advice and resources on how to put together a blended approach to training.

The Training+ Working Group welcomes input from industry for the development of the framework.

To contribute, please email: mentalhealth@filmtvcharity.org.uk

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