

Mental Health Consultancy Award

Winner

Fortis Therapy & Training

This category recognises consultants, trainers or agencies that can demonstrate their work with their clients has delivered a successful and implementable mental health strategy

Fortis Therapy & Training is a therapeutic mental health and wellbeing service established in 2012. It delivers multi-award-winning, accessible therapeutic services. Built on managing director Alexis' own experience of trauma and the poor therapy that followed, Fortis works with emergency services, businesses, private individuals and schools, matching clients to a therapist, usually within seven days, to best support them and their needs – in-person where possible and online globally.

Supporting the police

Fortis' work with the police service began three years ago and is ongoing. Working with different units UK-wide, its approach has been flexible, working to the specific needs of officers to influence the wider system. Initially Fortis worked with the Police Federation, supporting officers and their families therapeutically. Then it was approached by Humberside Police Service – recently named UK Police Service of the Year 2022 – to implement a better way of supporting officers and staff, particularly teams working in the riskiest and most high-stress roles.

Working with the leadership team at Humberside, Fortis developed Keeping The Peace, a training package that has been the most successful training Humberside Police has ever offered.



Fortis drew on founder Alexis' experience of poor therapy

Fortis then supported the Digital Forensic Unit (DFU), which sees staff dealing with cases involving children and sexual abuse – via critical incident work within smaller teams of 20. The needs of this team were incredibly misunderstood. This training ensured an understanding of the team's role and why support was vital.

The training provided teams with the tools to manage their mental health, wellbeing and trauma responses and opened the door of communication.

Keeping The Peace now forms part of a national resource to support officers across the police service. Alongside Keeping The Peace training, Fortis has delivered “Trauma-informed approaches to Policing” training to over 200 officers working in some of the most stressful units. All of this has also been picked up by South Yorkshire Police, with training starting in September.

Fostering collaboration

Fortis worked with a globally renowned business on one its most complex unionised sites. The project began due to dispute between colleagues. This was the start of a journey towards a collaborative approach across the board, moving away from an authoritarian culture.

Blame was circulating, people were not feeling heard or understood, there was high absenteeism, significant grievances, and risks to behavioural safety because of the internal culture. Dissatisfaction and miscommunication were rife. Fortis began by liaising with HR on the solution – TRIBE, a package of support and training to encourage a whole organisational wellbeing approach. Created specifically for the client, it helped the company deal with managing difficult conversations, understand their unconscious bias, and develop their own coaching skills. Professional coaching is now part of the new site culture – senior management now understand that their team’s personal lives play a significant role in their behaviour at work.

Summary

Relationships are Fortis’ business. The team pride themselves on collaborative partnerships. Their focus is dependent on the individual culture, issues and support required by each client. Most importantly, it’s purposeful, impactful and results-driven. They help to manage change that ripples out from leadership and management, injecting ways of working in the right places, right people – meaning development is well received in each environment. From the police service to the manufacturing industry, every organisation requires a unique approach, which informs every facet of what Fortis Therapy & Training does. ■



✦ This is more than commendable in terms of the way they have tackled their training for organisations - relationship-based, ongoing support and responding to the complex mental health issues faced internally.

✦ This is the sort of training that is needed for the police force, who are at the front line and may deal with complex mental health issues in day-to-day activities, let alone during Covid. This is the sort of training that is easily implemented on a wide-scale basis.

✦ Tailored solutions for teams and also thought about the sustainability and longevity of the content. Impact is clearly seen by how the training has been used across the business and how content has been integrated as part of the client’s core wellbeing service.

✦ Deeply impactful, with both the Keeping The Peace initiative and the trauma offering being scaled – which in itself is testament to its success and being embedded within the police force.

Shortlisted

→ LET’S RESET

→ Mental Health at Work Customised Programmes

MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK CIC

