

## Using research: Tools to support evidence-informed practice

---

# How evidence-informed are you? (managers)

How can you foster and lead an evidence-informed environment in your team? This tool will help you assess your own attitude to evidence-informed practice, talk to your team about research use and plan a sustainable approach.

**1. What do you think 'good looks like' in terms of research use in social work practice?**

**2. Do you feel you give clear expectations for research use in your team?**

1 (not at all) – 5 (very clear)

1      2      3      4      5

**3. Do you protect or generate space, time, resources or opportunities for your team to become more research-minded? What are these?**

## How evidence-informed are you? (managers)

---

### 4. Describe the support you give to your team around...

finding research

assessing the quality of research

applying research to a case

### 5. What are the different attitudes to research use within your team (eg enthusiasts, resisters, quiet readers, sharers)?

## How evidence-informed are you? (managers)

---

**6. Are you confident that you set an example by explicitly using research and/or valuing reflection in your own work?** 1 (not at all) – 5 (very confident)

1      2      3      4      5

**7. Are achievements in awareness or use of research recognised, rewarded and shared with colleagues and strategic managers?** 1 (not at all) – 5 (very frequently)

1      2      3      4      5

**8. How often do you examine your own practice (eg where your knowledge comes from, what you believe and why, what factors influence your decisions)?** 1 (never) – 5 (very frequently)

1      2      3      4      5

**9. Do you introduce research discussion into supervision...**

**around a specific case?** 1 (not at all) – 5 (very frequently)

1      2      3      4      5

**in terms of continuing professional development?** 1 (not at all) – 5 (very frequently)

1      2      3      4      5

**in terms of keeping up-to-date with latest developments?** 1 (not at all) – 5 (very frequently)

1      2      3      4      5

## How evidence-informed are you? (managers)

---

**10. What...  
stops my team being more research-minded?**

***helps my team to be more research-minded?***

### **Notes**

1. Compare your answers with those in your team. Are there any differences? Why?
2. The crucial role of managers in setting expectations for a research-minded culture is recognised in research literature. As a leader, a clear vision is important to:
  - > inspire and enthuse those who need to make it happen
  - > make sure collective effort is channeled in the same direction
  - > guide decisions about what to do.
3. There are many opportunities for research use, but they need to be accepted and promoted by managers. Spending some time listing everything that is available both within your organisation and outside of it will help you recommend these resources to others and tailor your recommendations to individual learning styles (eg training courses, web-based resources, discursive sessions).
4. Compare your answer to the answers your team give with regards to the help they think they need around these areas. Are there any points of difference?
5. Being aware of the 'doers' in your team is important. Consider whether a research-confident team member can support someone whose skills are still developing, or is yet to be convinced about the value of research.

## How evidence-informed are you? (managers)

---

**6.** Your visibility as an evidence-informed manager is critical. Research by Daniel Goleman (2002), which scrutinised leaders in group situations, reported that:

- > those in the leadership role are watched more closely than anyone else in the group (even subtle reactions are spotted)
- > the leader is listened to more carefully than anyone else
- > how the leader sees things is given more weight than other people's perspectives
- > how the leader responds is considered the most valid response.

These behaviours are heightened at times of particular difficulty for the group. Practising what you preach is so important because:

- > it's the only way to authentically show your passion and commitment to the initiative you are leading
- > personally living the values, attitudes and behaviours you are promoting will win you the trust and support of followers
- > research-mindedness can be a complicated concept and this is a way of demonstrating what you mean by it
- > you can provide living proof that working in this way is achievable and give others the confidence to adopt the approach in their own practice.

So, effectively championing the use of research requires you to have a 'personal manifesto' – ie that you model research-mindedness in your own work.

If you feel you are not modelling evidence-informed practice as effectively as you might, fill in **Tool 4**.

- 7.** Sharing results more widely will both sustain your own approach and inspire others outside your team.
- 8.** Consider what formal structures there are for your own self-reflection, such as supervision and appraisals. Your own reflective spaces will help you to provide conducive structures for your team.
- 9.** For more information on supervision, including tools to aid reflection and research use, see
  - > **Reflective Supervision Resource Pack**
  - > **Supervision Change Project**
- 10.** Again, compare your answers with those in your team. Are there any differences? Why?