

Counselling first hand – understanding the customer and yourself through mentalising

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Developing an education for pharmacy workforce to support patient-centred care

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Background

An education programme to enhance the pharmacy workforce's mentalising skills to support patient-centred care, developed together with patients, pharmacy staff and owners and researchers from The University of Copenhagen and Pharmakon has been tested in Denmark and the Netherlands. The programme is based on three topics: the mentalising mindset, mentalising communication and pharmacy practice (figure 1). The education programme lasts four months, comprises six modules distributed on 20 hours of physical attendance and 16 hours of online modules and corresponds to 3.5 ECTS (table 1).

Purpose

To evaluate the education programme from the perspective of the participants.

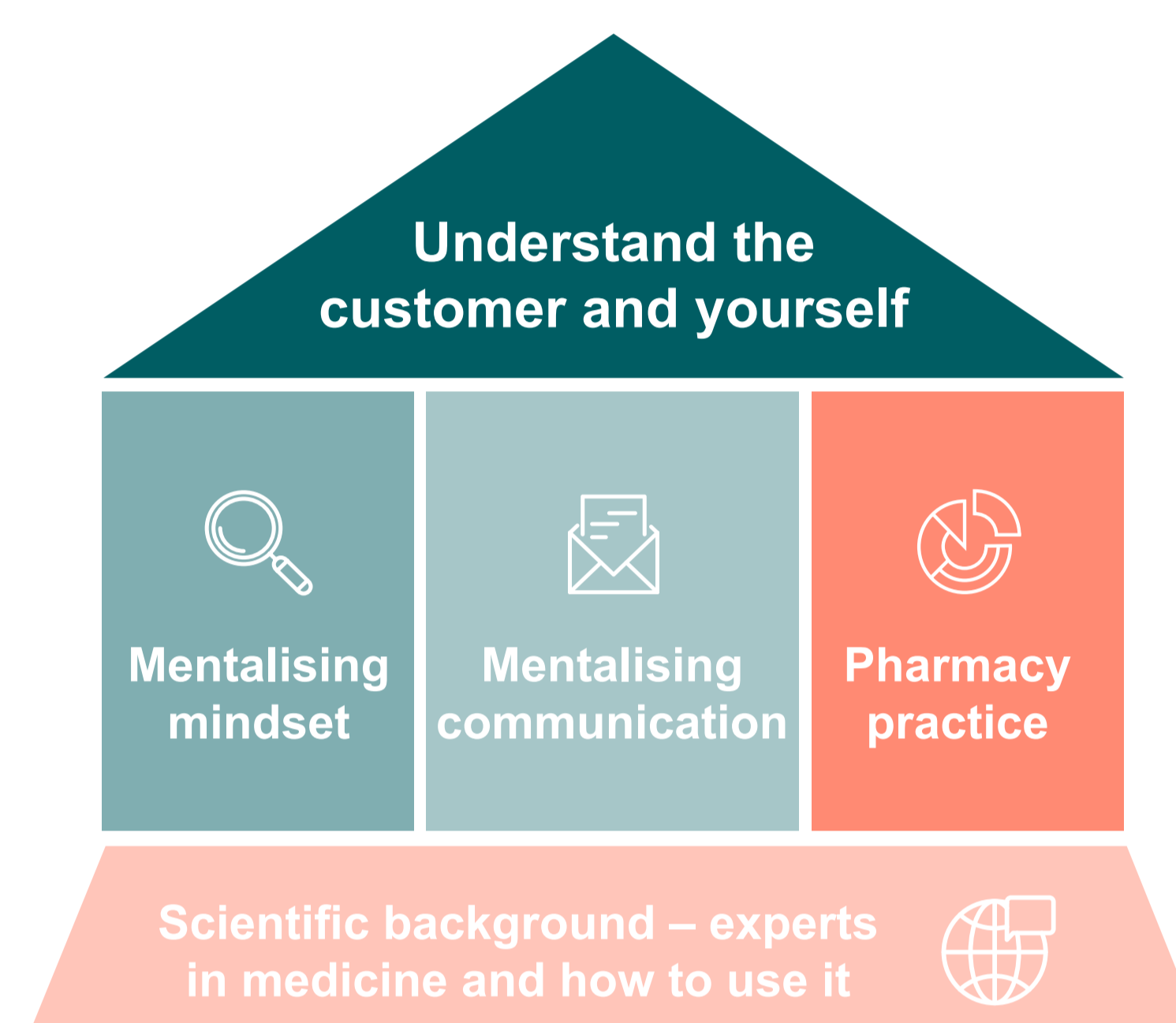


Figure 1: The mentalising mindset, mentalising communication and pharmacy practice.

Methods

A mixed-method evaluation took place during and after the programme. After modules 1-5, a scale of 1-10 points was used, with 1 point illustrating a very low outcome and 10 points illustrating a very high outcome. Participant's encounter with real customers were videorecorded before start and at the end of the program. Individual feed-back took place at module 2 and module 6. Four weeks after ending the programme, participants handed in an individually written report to demonstrate knowledge, skills and competences in mentalising and mentalising communication.

Fact box

- Mentalising refers to the capacity of engaging curiously with one's own and others' mental states and seeking to explore and understand these.
- Learning to understand, recognise and regulate emotions is decisive to engage, relate and interact with other people.
- We have eight basic emotions. In a professional relation you must meet the customer in three emotions: accept, joy and interest.
- Mentalising communication skills are essential to act with a mentalising mindset.
- Mentalising communication includes, among other things, mirroring, active listening, open-ended questions and value-clarification responses.

(Fosgerau, CF et al. Pharmacy Education, 2022)

Results from Denmark

Qualitative results

I'm more focused on what the customer has to say, rather than being focused on what I'd like to tell them. I listen actively for small words and expressions and check for nonverbal cues that could be negative. Things that, before, I would have missed, or that I was perhaps afraid to follow up on because I didn't want to make the situation worse.

I use it every day at the counter to have good dialogues with customers and to find out whether there could be a medicine-related problem. Not all day, but every day. It's a success when customers leave the pharmacy knowing more about themselves and their medicine.

I really spend a lot of time mirroring the customers to get them to elaborate on their issues and to create room for mentalising communication.

I've become much better at really listening to what customers say and follow their cues, whether it's verbal or nonverbal, and then provide the counselling that they need right now. I feel that my counselling has become better because it's individual and person-centered.

Quantitative results

Modules	Content	Average (range)
1 Physical 1½ day	Introduction to mentalising Affective-cognitive dimension Counselling at the pharmacy	7.94 (7.26-8.63)
2 Online 4 hours	The self-other dimension Mentalising communication Video feedback	6.65 (5.29-7.86)
3 Online 4 hours	Epistemic trust Implicit-explicit dimension Mentalising communication	7.76 (7.04-8.19)
4 Online 4 hours	Mentalising communication Stressors and heartsink patients	8.48 (8.35-8.72)
5 Physical 1 day	Practical training Mentalising mindset Mentalising communication	7.57 (6.88-8.17)
6 Online 4 hours	Repetition and video feedback Introduction to the final report	Not measured

Table 1: Illustrates each module, score in average and range.

Conclusion

28 (male=1) participants (14 pharmacy technicians, 13 pharmacists and 1 pharmacy owner) from 11 community pharmacies attended and completed the education programme in Denmark. Together with the results from the written reports, the videos demonstrate the participants' new skills and competences after they started their journey towards a mentalising mindset, using mentalising communication.

The education programme can enhance the pharmacy workforce's mentalising skills to support patient-centred care. All participants demonstrated knowledge, skills and competences in practicing mentalising and mentalising communication both on a theoretical and practical level but varied in their levels of competence.

The education programme will be offered to the Danish community pharmacy workforce from the summer of 2022.

