Exploring the CARE values to improve team engagement

Exercise time: 45 mins

Background

There is a wealth of research which demonstrates that teamwork is essential in the provision of safe and compassionate patient care. There are a number of qualities which high performance teams have which make them so successful. These include:

- Shared vision, goals and purpose
- Constantly striving to improve performance
- Collaborative culture
- Clear roles and responsibilities
- Excellent communication
- Collective leadership
- Efficient processes
- The right skills mix

Shared values

Shared values are essential to nearly all of these characteristics, and doing some work within your team around the values can help to create some of the components of high performing teams. For instance, the England Women’s Hockey Team which won gold medals at the Rio 2016 Olympics have attributed their success to their values of ‘being the difference’ (turning up 10 minutes early for training, never missing a gym session, committing to the programme and schedules) ‘creating history’ and ‘inspiring the future’. They describe building a team culture around these values which was central to their success.

Intrinsic motivation

High performing teams are also intrinsically motivated. The majority of people do not come to work purely for a pay cheque but for personal fulfilment, development and connection. Figure 1 is a model of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs which demonstrates the areas which intrinsically motivate staff and lead to higher levels of staff engagement.
Research has shown that employees want to feel a sense of purpose from their roles and that the work they do matters. They want to feel connected with others around them, be recognised for their achievements and strengths, and empowered to make improvements where possible.

Figure 1: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs applied to employee engagement

How does this apply to Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust (BHT)?

In order to provide the highest levels of safe and compassionate care and engage our staff, the following characteristics must be created within our teams:

- A shared vision, way of working, and purpose
- Collaborative decision-making
- Empowerment to influence change
- Excellent communication

Within the NHS, we have multi-disciplinary teams and teams which are constantly changing, developing and evaporating depending on the task they are working towards. We have different training and ways of working in each profession. Furthermore, we work in a busy, challenging and demanding environment in which team work is essential to our success.

BHT leaders need to be able to bring teams together and create a shared identity for teams to sustain high performance. The organisation’s CARE values create a common language for staff regarding their ways of working. Discussion around the values can engage staff in this process and create a sense of team cohesion.

What you will need:

- A meeting room with sufficient wall space for flipcharts
- 1 flipchart labelled ‘individual values’
- 2 pieces of flipchart per CARE value, labelled with the value name and ‘good practice’ or ‘bad practice’
- Flipchart pens
How do we do it?

So how do we use the CARE values to increase employee engagement and the conditions of high performance teams?

We recommend a four step process (figure 2):

- Engaging staff in conversations about what is important to them as individuals (their values)
- Exploring how individual values align with the CARE values
- Reflecting as a group on current team performance/behaviours against each of the values
- Empowering team members to decide how to make improvements

Conversations of this nature will increase communication, awareness, cohesion and empowerment within teams. If delivered effectively, they will provide a higher sense of purpose and belonging which are incredibly important for engagement and wellbeing in the workplace.

Figure 2: A model for exploring values within teams

Exploring individual values – 5 mins

Divide your team into pairs and ask them to spend 5 minutes discussing the below questions:

1. Why did you go into healthcare?
2. What is important to you in the way you live and work?
3. What has influenced your values?
4. How do your values align with the CARE values?

After the discussion, each team member should share one thing which they have discussed with the group. Write these on a flip chart – these are the team’s individual values.

Group reflection on current approach – 25 mins

For the next part of the exercise, break your team into 4 small groups. Each group should stand next to the flipcharts for one of the values. Explain to the groups that they will have 5 minutes to discuss the below questions within their groups and record their ideas on the flipcharts. After this they will be rotated to another value, until they have visited each of the CARE values (N.B. this encourages different discussions and reduces group think).
Questions to answer for each value:

1. What does this value mean to you?
2. What would it look like if someone was doing this well? What are we doing well within our team?
3. What would it look like if someone was not demonstrating this value? What do we need to develop within our team?

Points to note –

Within these discussions, consider what the values look like in the context of your work, as there are likely to be some differences across areas. What do these values mean personally to you? Build some context into the discussion and a sense of shared vision.

As a team, spend some time identifying the strengths that your team have in these areas, and where you see improvements being made. What would be the benefits of these improvements?

The outcome of this discussion should be a common understanding as a group of what is important to each individual as well as the group as a collective. There should also be a common understanding of each of the values, how these play out in your working context, and a list of behaviours which are deemed acceptable and unacceptable by the group.

Empower team to develop collectively – 15 mins

After exploring each of the values, the entire group should identify which improvements to focus on, and discuss ways in which these can be achieved. This is a great opportunity for the whole team to contribute innovative ideas and make suggestions regarding what they believe could be improved.

Create an action plan with the team regarding what you will collectively improve, who will be accountable, and how you will measure these improvements. This engages the team in action planning which is critical for empowerment.

Consider:

- **What** areas will our team work on? How will this help us as a team?
- **How** will we achieve this? What actions are required?
- **Who** is accountable? Who needs to be involved?
- **When** will we achieve this by? How will we know we have been successful?

Further information

For more information, please contact the leadership and management development team on: 01494 734019.

---

1. [http://www.telegraph.co.uk/olympics/2016/08/25/team-gbs-victorious-hockey-stars-our-mantra-was-simple-create-hi/](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/olympics/2016/08/25/team-gbs-victorious-hockey-stars-our-mantra-was-simple-create-hi/)