**Employee Autonomy**

**What is Autonomy?**
There are many definitions of autonomy, but here’s one that explains it nicely;
"Autonomy is the power to shape your work environment in ways that allow you to perform at your best."

Research shows that when employees are given the freedom associated with autonomy, job satisfaction rises. It's theorised that this increased level of job satisfaction in employees stems from a feeling of greater responsibility for the quality of their work. Autonomy has also been shown to increase **staff engagement, motivation** and **happiness**, along with increasing staff retention. It shows that you have **trust** and **belief** in your staff.

**5 ways to encourage autonomy with your employees:**

1. **Mistakes will be made. Calm down!**

   Management that is destructively critical when mistakes are made reduce staffs initiative and, consequently, employee engagement. It’s essential that your staff are engaged with initiative. Having engaged staff leads to happy staff working as a high performance team with more productive outcomes. This also means patients are more likely to be happy with the level of care they are receiving, **Safe and Compassionate Care every time.**

2. **Build trust.**

   Without trust, autonomy is impossible. However, when trust is present, it sends employees the message that they are in command of their time, effort and reward.

   It’s a two-way process. As an employee, your team should also trust you as their manager. At the same time, your team must feel that their manager trusts them. Yet many managers feel the need to constantly “run the machine.”
   It’s about **setting the task and not the method** but ensuring that your team have a clear understanding of your expectation and you have a clear understanding of their needs and expectations for them to carry out their job role.
3. Create choice within boundaries.

The freedom of choice is a key element to autonomy, but too much choice can be detrimental. That’s why those who think autonomy means there are no boundaries are in error. In fact, firm boundaries -- and a system to hold people accountable for results -- are essential for autonomy to flourish. Within clear boundaries, people are empowered to determine how they will accomplish the tasks they are given.

4. Grant employees ownership.

Ownership occurs when what I am doing is mine, not just yours. Effective autonomy empowers employees to tap into the meaning that underlies their work.

5. Provide tools to reach goals.

Give your team the tools and resources they need to reach your goals -- and theirs. Training, technology, new faces... whatever it takes. Again, this is about trust, saying, “I’m willing to invest in you and your ideas because I believe you’ll make it worthwhile.”