

## Through the eyes of...

Observation DVD and card pack



## Why use observation?

When you are immersed within a service or system it can sometimes be impossible to see things that are obvious to someone outside the system.

Observation lets you find out what people really do and how they carry out their work. Observation inspires new ideas and can help to redefine the problem or challenge that you are working on.

When you are trying to design services, you often find that:

- People do not always do what they say they do
- People do not always do what they think they do
- People do not always do what you think they do
- People cannot always tell you what they need
- Things are not always as they seem

*(adapted from IDEO)*

*“if you want to find out about water, don't ask a fish”*

Chinese proverb

## How can you use observation?

- **Observation for understanding** – stand back and observe what is really happening in your area of interest. Look at the area with ‘fresh eyes’ and from different perspectives for example the patient, visitor, porter, clinician
- **Observation for inspiration** – look at other situations or organisations and see what ideas you can adapt from them.

For example, think about how a growing number of organisations have taken ‘lean’ principles from the manufacturing sector and adapted them for healthcare in order to reduce waste and increase efficiency. What can we learn from hotels in relation to hospital bed usage? How can we learn from airports or shopping centres about car parking?

## What is the purpose of this pack?

This pack contains a short exercise that can be used with groups to help them experience the different perspective that observation can bring. The purpose is to help people see and experience the potential value of observation so that teams may consider using it as a technique within their projects.

## What is in this pack?

- This short introduction to the pack
- Clear instructions on how to use this tool
- A 2 minute DVD showing a bustling city street
- Cards illustrating different characters to be used in the exercise

## How to use this pack

This tool can be used equally well with small or large groups. It is useful to first outline why you might consider using observation as a technique (using the text above as a guide)

1. Show participants the DVD.

Ask them to watch and make notes about things they notice

2. After watching the DVD spend a short time (3 or 4 minutes) getting them to discuss what they noticed
3. Distribute the character cards, explain that the cards contain different characters, and when watching the DVD for the second time they should take on the 'persona' of their given character (there can be one card for each person, or for larger groups you can have one card for each table)

4. Ask them to spend 1 minute reading their character cards
5. Play the DVD again and ask participants to make notes about things they notice from the viewpoint of their character
6. Ask participants to discuss what they noticed on watching the DVD for the second time. Ask them to specifically note any differences between what they observed the first and second time. Participants will usually notice very different things, noticing much more detail the second time. They may have a more 'emotional' reaction the second time. The main learning point is that having a focus and reason for observation is key, and that you can even see familiar environments in a different way if you have a specific focus.

