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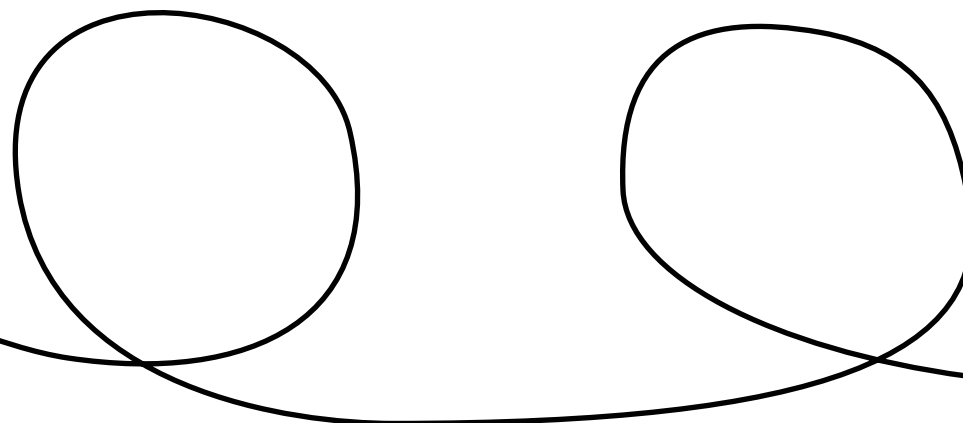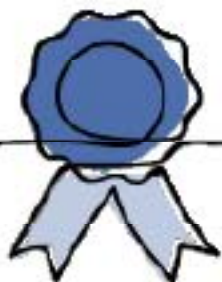
NHS England

How to manage...

To select please hover your cursor over the above circles

We are **compassionate** and **inclusive**

We are **recognised** and **rewarded**

We each have **a voice that counts**

We are **safe** and **healthy**

We are **always learning**

We work **flexibly**

We are **a team**

Foreword: Managing in the NHS

These e-booklets offer clear, practical and vital guidance for those with responsibility for managing others in the NHS. Such good management is fundamental to our ability to offer high quality, continually improving and compassionate care for those in the communities we have the privilege to serve.

What should managers focus on to achieve this? The evidence from NHS data gathered over the last twenty years shows that staff engagement is the most important factor affecting the performance of our healthcare teams and organisations. This is closely followed by the quality of teamworking and cross-boundary working, the extent of fairness and inclusion (versus discrimination) and staff wellbeing (versus staff stress and work overload).

These e-booklets offer clear, simple, powerful and wise guidance supplemented with key practical takeaways for managers on how to ensure staff engagement, good team and inter-teamworking, and how to ensure every individual's knowledge, skills, abilities and commitment are valued – climates of positive inclusion and psychological safety. The booklets present clear guidance on how managers can help staff to be brilliantly effective in their roles in every area of our healthcare services, regardless of profession or function or role. They describe how managers can create environments where their colleagues can thrive and succeed and deliver for the communities we serve. And they also encourage managers to recognise that taking care of themselves as human beings is at the heart of their ability to support the staff they manage.

We need all managers in the challenging context the NHS currently faces to have the courage and wisdom to implement this wise guidance to create the conditions where everyone who works in the NHS can effectively and joyfully contribute. This will ensure we preserve and enhance a national health service that provides high quality, continually improving and compassionate care for the people of our communities. Implementing this guidance will also enable managers to ensure that they are providing the high quality, continually improving and compassionate support for staff that enables our health service to continue to evolve for the benefit of all.

Professor Michael West

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How to manage people

Managing People in the NHS

People are, quite simply, our most important resource in the NHS. There are over 1.3 million people employed by the NHS. They come from all different backgrounds and walks of life and bring a huge range of skills and experience to the organisation. As outlined in the NHS People Promise, together, we achieve something extraordinary, through teamwork, resilience and innovation.

However, like many sectors, the NHS is operating in changing and challenging times. The way we deliver healthcare is evolving and new ways of working are developing all the time. Demand continues to rise for healthcare services, bringing workforce supply challenges. The future of NHS human resources and organisational development report highlights how, for the past decade, workforce growth has not kept up with the increasing demands on the NHS. Managers need to focus their attention on recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce and supporting them to deliver the highest quality of care for their patients.

Good people management is an essential factor in both retention and wellbeing. Managers need to support individuals to stay in their roles, to stay well within those roles, and to contribute at work to the best of their abilities, giving people the best experience possible.

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1. Managing individuals with compassion

The best way to manage any individual is by truly getting to know them, supporting them and ensuring that they feel valued in the workplace. Michael West's work outlines evidence to show that managing people with compassion results in colleagues feeling more engaged and motivated, with higher levels of wellbeing.

People who are managed compassionately deliver more compassionate and higher quality care to their patients. Managers need to listen to, understand and empathise with the individuals that they manage on a day-to-day basis. This will help to make them feel valued and respected, and to enable them to fulfil their potential in the NHS.

So what does compassionate management look like in practice

✓ **Listening to understand, rather than to respond.**

People tend to think that they are much better at listening than they are in reality. Multiple studies of family doctors, who are specifically trained in listening skills, show that they dramatically overestimate the amount of time they spend listening to patients during consultations, by up to 700%. Really showing up, being present and listening takes some practice. However, it will have a huge impact on how people feel about conversations with their manager and bring immense rewards.

✓ **Focus on the individual and their experiences.**

Empathy is a much more active process than simply feeling sorry for someone. If a manager can truly focus on the individual, they can begin to imagine what they are thinking and feeling. They can sense their emotions and really understand the situation from the other person's point of view. This level of understanding is what is needed to truly manage someone with compassion.

There is good evidence that a directive or brusque management style can significantly hinder performance. If people are not managed in a supportive way, they are less able to innovate. They will also be less productive and effective at work. In addition, this type of management style will affect their ability to care for their patients with compassion.

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Compassionate management supports the development of psychological safety within teams. If there is trust, respect and a sense of inclusivity in a team, then people will feel more able to speak up.

Compassionate management in action

Compassionate management requires managers to show some compassion towards themselves. Everyone makes mistakes; everyone is human. Self-compassion is not something that comes naturally to many people. However, there is good evidence that managers who are kind to themselves will be better managers as a result and more able to help individuals to fulfil their potential.

Managers need to take compassionate action to support all colleagues. Most healthcare employees want to do their job to the highest possible standard. Often, though, they will need some practical help from their manager to be able to achieve this.

Managers can help teams to provide compassionate care by ensuring that they have the resources they need to do their jobs. This can involve escalating to senior leaders when appropriate. They can use their influence in other areas of the organisation to support their team to achieve their goals and work towards removing obstacles that get in the way of colleagues being able to deliver optimal patient care.

5 KEY TAKEAWAYS ON COMPASSIONATE MANAGEMENT

1. People who are managed in a compassionate way will be more engaged and motivated and have higher levels of wellbeing.

2. Compassionate management enables compassionate patient care.

3. Listening to seek to understand is a key aspect of compassionate management and the only way to be truly empathetic.

4. Managers are also practising compassion when they work towards removing obstacles that may be preventing their teams from working to the best of their ability.

5. Self-compassion is an important skill for managers to learn; managers who are kind to themselves will be better able to support their teams to achieve their full potential. After all, you cannot pour from an empty cup.

2. Helping people to do their jobs effectively

Managers should set direction for individuals, as well as teams. People need to be clear about what's expected of them and what their priorities should be. Setting a clear direction helps to enable people to deliver effectively and to be held accountable. This also supports individuals to manage their workload more effectively.

People need to understand why the direction their manager sets for them matters and how it aligns with the wider aims of the organisation. When goals are agreed collaboratively, individuals are more likely to be motivated to achieve them.

It is an immense privilege to manage people and support them to do their jobs more effectively. Here are some practical tips on how to do this.

How to lead a successful one-to-one meeting

✓ Regular meetings with direct reports help to foster open communication and trust. Managers should set a regular schedule and stick to it. This will ensure that people feel that they are a priority for their manager.

✓ A good one-to-one should be a conversation. It should not be about the manager telling the employee what to do. Rather, the discussion should be two-way and the manager should actively listen to any concerns raised by the employee.

✓ Managers need to focus on being present and to remove distractions where possible. Meetings should take place in an appropriate space away from patients.

✓ Employee wellbeing should be a feature of all one-to-one meetings and should not only be discussed at the annual health and wellbeing discussion.

✓ Flexible working arrangements should also be reviewed regularly and managers should be responsive to changing needs.

✓ One-to-one meetings can be a good opportunity to discuss an individual's career plans, aspirations and development needs.

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How to Set SMART Objectives

Most people are familiar with the SMART acronym. There are various versions, but the most commonly used one is as follows:

✓ **Specific** – supported by a very clear statement of exactly what needs to be achieved.

✓ **Measurable** – ideally with a numerical target attached, so progress can be measured clearly.

✓ **Achievable** – realistic and possible to achieve within the timeframe agreed, even if it is a stretch target.

✓ **Relevant** – objectives should mainly relate to patient outcomes and also be clearly linked to the strategic aims of the organisation.

✓ **Time-bound** – with a clearly defined timeframe for the objective to be achieved.

Objective-setting should form part of the annual appraisal that managers undertake with their direct reports, but objectives should be reviewed more regularly than once a year. Employees may need support and guidance to achieve their goals, and it's important to ensure that they are still relevant as time passes.

Much of this material will be familiar to more experienced managers, who may have been undertaking appraisals and managing people for a long time. But there is always something to learn and approaching these conversations with an inquisitive nature may bring benefits in unexpected ways.

It is also good practice for managers to obtain regular upward feedback and 360 feedback.

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5 KEY TAKEAWAYS ON HELPING PEOPLE TO DO THEIR JOBS EFFECTIVELY

1. Setting a clear direction for individuals helps them to understand what's expected of them and how to prioritise their workload.

2. Goals should be agreed collaboratively and in line with the overall strategic aims of the organisation.

3. One-to-one meetings can help to build trusting relationships between colleagues and their managers. Managers should stick to a schedule, be present and ensure that the meeting is based on dialogue.

4. SMART objectives are a useful tool to help employees focus their attention. They should form part of everyone's annual appraisal and also be reviewed regularly throughout the year.

5. Even the most experienced leaders always have something to learn. Approaching meetings with employees with an inquisitive nature can lead to positive and sometimes unexpected outcomes.

3. Inclusive management of your people

Most people will have experienced great and not-so great managers throughout their careers. The difference is mainly down to how managers treat individuals and how they make them feel.

Inclusive management isn't a new concept and most people will have had some experience of it within their career. Sitting at the very centre of managing inclusively is respect. People want to be seen, listened to and respected for who they are and to know that their contribution at work is valued and appreciated. However, these seemingly simple expectations can be easily forgotten due to work pressures and in the face of competing deadlines and tasks.

A manager's job is easier when every member of the team is able to contribute their best efforts at work. Managers can adopt the following approaches to motivate and encourage colleagues.

Get to know each team member individually

People generally connect with others who are willing to take the time to get to know them as individuals. Managers should challenge any assumptions they may have made and take the time to find out more about each team member. A good approach is to ask about their families and what they enjoy doing when they're not at work. Some people will be more willing to share information about themselves than others. Respecting how much they are willing to share is critical. These conversations will help to create trust and foster a psychologically safe environment. Individuals will also have differing requirements in terms of flexible working and it is important to accommodate these wherever possible.

Ask for feedback

Part of a manager's role is to give constructive feedback to others, but managers should also actively seek feedback from colleagues about their management style and approach. This is a critical component of managing inclusively. One method to achieve this is for a manager to ask their colleagues the actions that they as a manager can take to get the best from them. Different members of the team may give varying responses, but open questions can help to clarify each person's perspective. This can give a manager an effective insight into the actions they can take to manage each person well in the future.

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Communicate inclusively

Trust and respect can be easily damaged when information is not communicated well. Inclusive communication can be achieved by:

- sharing each message as clearly as possible

- giving people time to ask questions

- checking people's level of understanding

- ensuring that people have the opportunity to discuss the issue further, should they have any questions at any stage.

Managing people with very different views can be a challenge and it does take time and effort to do well. However, remaining open to different perspectives can open up the conversation and introduce new ways of thinking.

Honour commitments

Managers should do everything in their power to stick to agreements they have made and to deliver on promises, or be prepared to share why the promise cannot be fulfilled. When managers honour their commitments in this way, it helps to build trust and foster respect between colleagues.

5 KEY TAKEAWAYS ON INCLUSIVE MANAGEMENT

1. It's important to remember that it's the small actions managers take every day that make a big difference to a colleague feeling seen, listened to and respected.

2. Getting to know people individually helps to build trust and develop an environment of psychological safety for all colleagues.

3. Managers should be open to feedback from colleagues on how they experience their management style. This is critical to help a manager gain insight on the impact their actions have on other people.

4. Communicating inclusively means ensuring that the message is expressed clearly. Managers should check people's understanding of the message and make themselves available to answer questions as appropriate.

5. Diverse voices bring fresh and different perspectives, which may well unlock new solutions to problems and challenges.

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4. Helping people to unblock barriers to success

One of the most important roles of a manager is to help people to have access to the resources that they need to do their jobs properly and to the best of their ability. Managers need to help the people they manage to achieve their full potential and to provide the best possible care to patients.

Barriers to compassion

Often there are significant barriers to compassionate care. These can include complex working environments, the demands of regulation and cultures of fear and blame.

A manager should make every effort to remove these barriers wherever possible. This can sometimes be achieved by seeking to simplify and reduce people's workloads. This ensures that there is sufficient time available to deliver compassionate care.

Building a Just Culture at every level of an organisation helps people to feel secure in speaking up and raising concerns. People involved in patient safety incidents must be treated fairly, constructively and consistently.

Managers can use their contacts and influence within the organisation to remove barriers to success. Sometimes it will be as simple as making a couple of phone calls to solve a system or process problem. Other challenges will be harder to overcome. It's important to be visible and accountable in this work.

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Signposting to resources

Every organisation will have a range of resources available to help individuals facing various challenges. A manager's job is not to reinvent the wheel, instead, managers should signpost colleagues towards other people and information that can help them. Some of these resources might include:

- Human Resources (HR) and Organisational Development (OD) colleagues, who can help with many process issues including understanding policies and processes. HR can also signpost towards training and development opportunities and employee support, including health and wellbeing.

- Occupational Health (OH) services can help to manage risk in the workplace. They can also provide advice on short and long-term health problems which may have an impact on an employee's experience in the workplace.

- Staff Networks and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Network leads can help to identify problems faced by under-represented and disadvantaged groups and individuals, or people who need additional support. These networks give colleagues a space to share their experiences and to help the organisation to make improvements.

- Trade Unions and Staff Side colleagues can provide support regarding terms and conditions of employment and employee relations issues.

- Freedom to Speak Up Guardians support colleagues to speak up if they feel that they are unable to do so by other routes. They ensure that people's concerns are acknowledged and that the person speaking up receives feedback on the actions taken.

- Most organisations have a Learning and Development department. This may include a library or education centre. There is a wealth of information and support available for continuing professional development at every level.

Louise Pramas
Culture Transformation Lead, NHS England

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5 KEY TAKEAWAYS ON UNLOCKING BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

1. Simplifying and reducing people's workloads wherever possible can free up capacity for more compassionate care.

2. Building a Just Culture enables people to feel safe to raise concerns. Managers should empower people to speak up and challenge without fear of repercussions.

3. Managers can use their contacts and influence across the organisation to remove obstacles and barriers that may be preventing employees from achieving their full potential.

4. Helping individuals to resolve problems affecting their daily working lives is key to building a high trust environment.

5. Managers can also support their team by signposting them to relevant resources and other people that can help them within the organisation.

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5. Managing difficult conversations with compassion

All managers have challenging conversations sometimes. These conversations can be daunting, whether the manager in question is at the beginning of their management career, or if they are an established manager with many years of experience. But while a manager has a duty to address performance actions that contravene organisational behaviours and values, these conversations should be carried out with compassion. Indeed, taking a compassionate approach is more likely to lead to a positive outcome for everyone concerned. The harder the conversation, the more important it is to approach the situation with kindness.

Supporting attendance

Conversations around absence can often be challenging and it is not uncommon for people to feel unfairly treated. While managers need to follow their own organisation's policies and procedures, it is always a good idea to take a compassionate and inquisitive approach to these conversations. Managers need to ensure that all colleagues are treated fairly at all times.

It's valuable for managers to be open-minded and supportive about the reason for absence and focus on how they can help the individual return to work. This may involve making some reasonable adjustments and reviewing flexible working arrangements.

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Managing performance

Managers often shy away from addressing performance issues, as they are afraid of causing upset or distress. But if managers are focused on providing the highest quality and most efficient care for patients, then they must not avoid these challenging conversations.

Performance issues will often arise if an individual is not clear on what is expected of them at work, or if they feel overloaded with work or have too many competing priorities. Lack of co-operative working between teams can also cause problems, or it might be the case that the individual has not had the right training to undertake the tasks they are struggling with or does not have sufficient resources to do them efficiently.

A compassionate manager's first task is to identify and explore the root causes of the problem, through active listening. Only then can the manager work collaboratively with the individual to find a solution.

It is important to always draw attention to and recognise good performance and to celebrate individual and team achievements. Many organisations have formal staff awards, but informal recognition can be just as effective in motivating, rewarding and recognising the contribution of our colleagues and the excellent services they provide. Sometimes simply thanking someone for good work done makes all the difference.

5 KEY TAKEAWAYS ON MANAGING CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS WITH COMPASSION

1. Some conversations, although necessary, can be daunting, even to experienced senior managers, but managers must show courage when challenging poor performance, in the interests of the patients we serve.

2. Supporting attendance is not just about following a process, but about supporting people to return to work and to stay healthy in their roles.

3. Attendance conversations should include consideration of any reasonable adjustments and reviewing flexible working arrangements.

4. The root cause of poor performance may be complex and it is a manager's job to identify what is really going on and to support people in finding solutions collaboratively to resolve the issue.

5. It is just as important to recognise and celebrate good performance, both through formal processes and informally on a regular basis.

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How to manage teams

Team management in the NHS

Managers in the NHS come from a wide range of backgrounds and professions, with varying ranges of experience. Many people in management roles may be supervisors or team leaders. Many will have clinical, technical, or administrative roles alongside their management responsibilities.

Managers work across all areas of healthcare settings. There are over 290 professions across the NHS, encapsulating clinical services as well as professional services such as estates, facilities, hospitality, human resources, finance, learning and development, and administration and clerical. They all play a vital role in running services efficiently for patients, whether those services are delivered in a clinical or hospital setting, or within the wider community, mental health or primary care setting.

Good managers enable their teams to flourish. They help set direction, ensure that safety is paramount and create a context where every person in that team has a valuable part to play. Patient care is a team activity. NHS managers support their colleagues to innovate and improve the services they provide. There is evidence that good management practice improves efficiency and clinical outcomes for patients.

The NHS is facing exceptionally challenging times. Demand for NHS services has been increasing, alongside an ageing population with complex needs. Patients are often dealing with more than one diagnosis. Some services are facing backlogs following the COVID-19 pandemic. But critically, the NHS is also facing a retention crisis, at a time when more people are needed to provide care and meet increasing demand.

Research undertaken by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) shows that poor leadership is a factor for many job moves. When asked why they left their last organisation, 21% of people said that they were unhappy with the leadership of senior management. This rose to 30% for those who had changed jobs in the last twelve months. Alongside this, a major global workforce survey has also shown that low engagement is detrimental to employee wellbeing and leads to reduced productivity[v].

The challenge for NHS managers is clear. Teams need to be managed well and with compassion. This will support people to deliver the best possible care to patients.

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1. Compassionate management

For managers, being compassionate means having an awareness of the impact their actions and behaviours on the people around them.

Compassion is an important competence for all managers at every level in healthcare. Compassionate management promotes open communication between colleagues and within teams. This enables people to work together to resolve any issues that may arise during their working day.

There is good evidence that compassionate management makes people feel more engaged and motivated. This leads to higher levels of wellbeing, which results in high-quality care.

But what does compassionate management look like on a daily basis within a team

✓ When managers display compassion towards their employees, they show empathy and really seek to understand their experiences at work. This means that employees feel heard and valued.

✓ When managers actively listen to employees, without judgement, this promotes a culture of openness and honesty. A focus on developing relationships through careful listening means that people feel respected and cared for. This helps them to reach their full potential and to do their best at work.

✓ Compassionate managers might not have the solution to every problem at their fingertips, but they go beyond simply giving out orders. Instead, they work collaboratively with their teams to find shared solutions to problems as they arise.

✓ Compassionate management must also be inclusive, providing a safe environment for everyone, regardless of their background or beliefs. A team that is managed compassionately will consist of members who can all contribute equally to the performance of that team. Everyone can be enthusiastic, creative and have the opportunity to flourish.

✓ Managers should also consider requests for flexible working with compassion and endeavour to facilitate individuals' requirements wherever possible, while taking patient and team needs into account.

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An example of compassionate management in action is thinking about the best approach to take if a member of the team is having a tough time. Perhaps they seem distracted or upset. Maybe they're struggling with their workload, or there's an issue that they are facing in their personal life.

Hopefully, a manager will know their team well enough to support colleagues on an individual basis. Some people will want to talk about their problems. Others might prefer to be sign-posted towards practical solutions such as Occupational Health or employee assistance programmes.

Taking a compassionate approach is not always about trying to fix the problem. The focus should be more about taking relevant and appropriate action, bearing in mind the individual and their own personal circumstances.

5 KEY TAKEAWAYS ON COMPASSIONATE MANAGEMENT

1. Active listening is key to really understanding people's experiences at work.

2. When managed with compassion, employees feel more valued and engaged in the workplace.

3. Better engagement and higher levels of employee wellbeing result in improved quality of care for patients.

4. Compassionate management means treating everyone as an individual.

5. Inclusivity is a critical part of compassionate management.

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2. Team direction, alignment and commitment

A team can be defined as a group of people who are working through collective endeavour towards a common goal. This could also include matrix or multi-disciplinary teams. Teams work best when each member is aligned to work towards that shared goal. For this to happen, each member of the team needs to understand the overall objectives of the organisation and feel engaged and committed to the collective goals of the team.

Every person in the team needs to know the role they play in achieving team success, delivering care to patients. This will lead to a sense of empowerment, when people can clearly see the positive outcome of their own efforts.

One of the most critical elements of team development is the trust between individual team members. Without trust, people will not feel supported or able to challenge the status quo and there will be no room for innovation.

How can managers help to build this trust within their teams

✓ Ensure that communication between the manager and the team is clear, open and consistent.

✓ Support team members to get to know each other as individuals. This might be achieved through team-building activities or away days, but when this is not possible it can be as simple as having lunch together and ensuring that break times are protected.

✓ Encourage people to collaborate on different tasks. This helps people to get used to each other's way of working and can also foster innovation, as people can learn from different approaches to the same task.

✓ Ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear. When people know what is expected of them, they are better able to fulfil their own roles and support others to do the same.

Not all teams work together physically. Some colleagues work across the community, while some will work to a hybrid model or exclusively from home. However, bringing teams together supports alignment and managers need to consider the best way of doing this, taking team preferences into account. This might include days when everyone is at the same site working together, or moving the team meeting venue around so that more people are able to attend. Managers should also consider how information is shared and how teams are supported to develop and build trust across these different ways of working.

When there is trust within teams, this also creates an environment where team meetings can be run in an inclusive and supportive way. People will feel more able to speak up, contribute, ask questions and raise concerns.

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How to run a successful team meeting

- If possible, begin the meeting with a check-in, so that each colleague can share how they are doing, both professionally and personally, if they wish.

- Consider rotating the Chair and share the responsibility for team meeting agendas.

- Make sure the objectives of the meeting are clear – what is the purpose and focus of the meeting?

- Have a clear agenda and try to stick to it, respecting that people will have other demands on their time during the course of their shift.

- Share praise and positive feedback, for both individuals and the whole team, as well as discussing problems.

- Share any relevant information about what is going on in other parts of the organisation, so that team members can see how their work and objectives fit in with the bigger picture and across systems.

- Allow time for discussion and questions.

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5 KEY TAKEAWAYS ON TEAM DIRECTION, ALIGNMENT AND COMMITMENT

1. Teams work best when everyone is aligned towards a common goal.

2. Team objectives should support organisational objectives, and each team member should understand their individual responsibilities towards the achievement of team goals.

3. Successes should be celebrated, both at a team and an individual level.

4. Building trust within teams is critical part to ensure that colleagues feel safe, valued and able to speak up.

5. Team meetings that are effectively run will help to achieve team alignment and bring people together.

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3. Inclusive management of your team

Inclusive management means being able to manage a group of people from many different backgrounds, respecting those differences and removing any bias or barriers. Working in an inclusive team increases the feelings of belonging, engagement and commitment. As a result, people want to perform better for their team members to collectively deliver better patient care.

It is a manager's role to set the tone about how people are expected to work together. Managers should guide people in the right direction when they are not behaving in an appropriate way.

Creating inclusive ways of working will enable teams to access that higher performance. Managers can adopt the following approaches to manage their teams inclusively.

Admit when you're wrong

Everyone is human and everyone makes mistakes. Managers need to be open and honest, and to admit if they have got something wrong. This is a crucial element of creating an inclusive team. Being upfront and sharing examples of mistakes will encourage others to be more open and proactive when they have made mistakes. Sharing experiences encourages everyone to learn from it when things go wrong. Don't forget to apologise!

Enable everyone to speak up

People are more likely to speak up and share their views if they know that there is not a culture of blame within the team. Some team members will speak up more than others. Managers should continue to encourage them to share their ideas, but also ask those who don't usually contribute what their thoughts are. It's important that people who are naturally more reluctant to speak up also know that what they have to say is valuable.

Press pause

Often, trying to do things too quickly will mean that the task takes longer in the end. Dealing with the consequences of an important decision that is not well thought through can take longer than taking a little more time to make a more effective decision in the first place. Managers should take the opportunity to reflect and consider their options before making key decisions. Where possible, teams should be encouraged to share their views. The manager may be responsible for the final decision, but this doesn't mean that they have to consider the different options alone.

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Seek multiple points of view

At times, decisions have to be made quickly, sometimes with limited information. A manager does not have to know all the answers. It's important to gain the views of other people, especially those who may have very different experiences or opinions. Managers should ask questions to ensure that they fully understand their perspective and discuss how the new information could influence and shape the outcome.

Having supportive conversations

There will be times when managers need to talk to individuals about their behaviour. Depending on the situation, this may be difficult. But negative behaviours must be challenged; if not, positive team culture can be eroded.

When preparing to speak to a colleague about their behaviour, managers should outline the reason for the conversation and then focus on the facts – what has been seen and heard that has caused concern. Following this, it is helpful to outline the impact of the behaviour in question and explain what other more preferable approaches could be taken in future. Outlining expectations is critical at this point.

It's also important to give the individual the opportunity to share their perspective and ensure that the conversation ends with an agreement of next steps.

Creating an inclusive team culture and enabling every colleague to thrive is an important part of a manager's role. It is also a privilege to encourage people to develop in their roles and progress throughout their careers.

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5 KEY TAKEAWAYS ON INCLUSIVE MANAGEMENT OF YOUR TEAM

1. Inclusive management means recognising difference and removing any barriers and bias.

2. Managers set the tone in a team. It is their role to guide people and help them to improve.

3. Managers need to be willing to admit when they're wrong; this fosters a culture of trust and openness.

4. It's also important to encourage everyone to speak up, even those team members who might not naturally be vocal with their opinions.

5. Having the courage to step into challenging conversations is another key skill for managers.

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4. Team engagement

Encouraging dialogue is key to team engagement. A sense of ownership in the workplace makes people more likely to take individual and collective responsibility for their work. This improves the quality, safety and efficiency of the care that is provided to patients.

Data from the NHS England National Staff Survey has shown that high levels of employee engagement in NHS organisations are linked to various important outcome measures. These include patient safety and satisfaction measures, mortality and infection rates, employee absenteeism and turnover.

Highly engaged colleagues are more likely to stay in work, and more likely to deliver excellent care to patients.

So how can managers create the conditions for high levels of employee engagement and promote a culture of collective management

✓ Have a clear understanding of all the tools available within the organisation which enable employees' voices to be heard. These will include the Staff Survey but also various employee networks and forums, as well as more informal platforms for gaining employee feedback.

✓ Ensure that feedback from staff is promptly followed up on, in a visible and tangible way.

✓ Understand the principles of a Just Culture. This means a culture of fairness, openness and learning, which enables colleagues to speak up when things go wrong, rather than fearing blame. Colleagues involved in patient safety incidents should be treated in a constructive way, and with consistency, fairness and compassion.

✓ Recognise and celebrate individual and team performance.

✓ Involve people in all decisions that have an impact on them and their place of work.

✓ Everyone's voice should be heard, especially from under-represented groups. Key decisions might benefit from an Equality and Health Inequalities Impact Assessment.

Louise Pramas
Culture Transformation Lead, NHS England

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Many organisations undertake director and non-executive director walkabouts. These give colleagues regular opportunities to speak to senior leaders. These conversations can help to improve communication between board-level leaders and people working on the wards and in other frontline areas. Frontline teams can share what is working well, what needs to improve and what the barriers are to improvement. These direct conversations have a measurable impact on employee engagement, as people feel that their voices are being heard and their opinions valued.

Managers should lead by example and be prepared to address unacceptable behaviour. Managing underperformance of an individual or a team can sometimes be challenging, but if it is done confidently, kindly and with compassion, then often a positive outcome can be achieved. This promotes accountability within the whole team.

A coaching approach can support team development. This approach can help teams to become more aligned in their purpose, beliefs and values and also to identify collective team goals. Teams supported through a coaching approach also develop higher levels of psychological safety. This means that everyone feels safe to speak up, give robust feedback and show vulnerability. Team learning also enables people to share knowledge and best practice within their team, which can improve quality outcomes.

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5 KEY TAKEAWAYS ON COLLECTIVE MANAGEMENT

1. A collective management environment is achieved when people feel engaged, valued and empowered to take responsibility for their work.

2. High levels of employee engagement results in positive outcomes for patients and colleagues alike.

3. Feedback should be acted on promptly and visibly and managers must ensure that the voices of under-represented groups are heard and involved in all discussions.

4. In an organisation where there is a Just Culture, employees involved in patient safety incidents are treated fairly and compassionately. This encourages people to have the courage to speak up and raise concerns.

5. A coaching approach can support team development and create an environment of psychological safety.

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5. Working across organisational boundaries

Working across organisational boundaries is a key priority for leaders in health, social care and the voluntary sector. This is becoming more common as a result of the implementation of Integrated Care Boards (ICB) and Integrated Care Systems (ICS), which seek to make patient care more integrated and joined up. This is also important at an individual and a team level.

There is a lot of evidence which shows that human beings have a natural instinct towards categorising others on the basis of difference. This can lead to challenging dynamics within and between organisations. People have a strong sense of belonging within their own team, but this often does not reach as far as the wider organisation, or the healthcare sector as a whole.

When there are shared values across organisations, people work together to innovate and solve some of the most difficult challenges in healthcare. And within organisations, a shared identity can build pride and also improve efficiency when groups and teams work effectively together.

How can managers support their teams to work well

✓ Ensure that all members of the team understand their contribution towards the wider goals of the organisation and how their work contributes to the organisational values.

✓ Help the team to understand the contribution of other staff groups; the whole multi-disciplinary team, including support staff, administrators and colleagues in estates, facilities and hospitality. Everyone working in healthcare contributes in some way towards patient care and the focus should always be on working together to improve the quality of care for patients.

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✓ There should be no division between clinical and non-clinical colleagues. Referring to colleagues as non-clinical is problematic in itself, as it defines huge groups of people by what they don't do, rather than what they do contribute. Often patients will see a receptionist before they see a nurse, doctor or colleague from the allied health professions. Everyone makes a contribution and everyone's work makes a difference to the communities that we serve.

✓ All professions should be equally valued. This is best achieved by ensuring that everyone understand the roles of other individuals and teams across the organisation.

Promoting a shared vision is central to enabling teams to work across boundaries. This vision should always relate to improving the quality of care to patients and service users and ensuring that care is underpinned by compassion.

Teams and groups need to connect, get to know each other and spend time together. This can help to build shared values and enable people to feel confident to raise issues, so that they can be resolved quickly and creatively. When people understand each other's work and priorities, they are better able to behave authentically.

5 TAKEAWAYS ON WORKING ACROSS BOUNDARIES

1. Each and every member of the organisation is valuable and contributes towards good patient care.

2. Managers should help their teams to understand their role in the organisation and how their work contributes to the overall objectives and shared values.

3. Shared vision should always be focused on improving the quality of care to patients and service users and ensuring that care is always provided with compassion.

4. A positive, inclusive culture helps people to feel confident to speak up and raise concerns.

5. When teams work together well, they are better able to solve problems and to be innovative and authentic.

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