The Courage To Care

How you can use Compassion Leadership to Drive Civility and Unity

Who...

Jo Roberts is Lead Oncology Nurse at The Christie NHS Foundation Trust, Manchester, overseeing governance across the network services division and managing ten advanced clinical practitioners. As part of her MSc in Healthcare Leadership, she researched how compassionate leadership promotes civility within oncology nursing teams. Her findings highlighted the power of compassion in fostering respect, unity, and positive team cultures in cancer care.

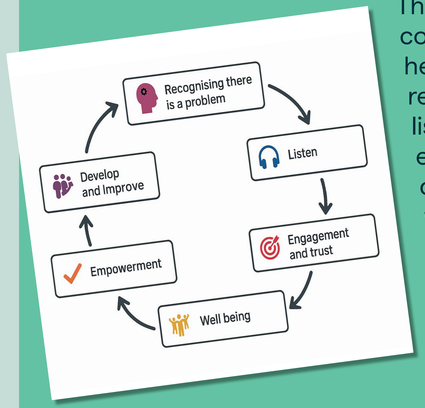
Why...

Why is compassionate leadership Important?

- Compassionate leadership is key to improving NHS culture, as highlighted by West (2021) and reinforced by the Francis (2013) and Darzi (2018) inquiries.
- These findings underpin national strategies such as the NHS Long Term Plan (2019) and the NHS People Plan (2020), which prioritise civility, respect, and reducing poor behaviours.
- In oncology teams, incivility has been linked to stress, burnout, and increased staff absence.
- Research shows compassionate leadership enhances wellbeing and resilience (Trzeciak et al., 2017).
- Conversely, a lack of civility lowers performance, morale, retention, and patient safety (Tate & Chalhoub, 2024).

3 THINGS YOU CAN DO

#1 Reinforce a culture



This framework illustrates a continuous cycle for effective healthcare leadership. By recognising problems, listening actively, and fostering engagement and trust, leaders create a foundation for staff well-being. Empowerment and ongoing development ensure sustainable improvement, reinforcing a culture of resilience and excellence.

3 THINGS YOU CAN DO

#2 Assess your leadership

Assess your leadership, compassionate leadership can be measured using the 4 dimensions of compassion- attending, understanding, empathising and helping. These can be used by team members to assess your compassionate leadership style alongside a 360 feedback tool.

Diagram: Michael West (2021) The 4 dimensions to measure compassionate leadership

3 THINGS YOU CAN DO

#3 Assess team values

- Plan a big conversation to get people talking about values
- Involve a diverse range of people
- Talk about the things people care about to 'frame' the values
- Use the NHS Values as a stimulus for conversation
- Don't get stuck on language
- **Ask 5 questions**

1. What do you really care about in your job?
2. What makes you come to work in the morning?
3. What does getting it right look like from the patients perspective?
4. What makes you proud of the work you do?
5. What values are important to you?

Here's a poster one of my teams made with their own values and commitments

Some outcomes

- Respected and supported workforce equals higher performing teams
- Engaged teams equals improved care, quality improvement and staff retention
- Role modelling positive behaviour and appreciating others, creates psychologically safe environments which increases patient safety and experience