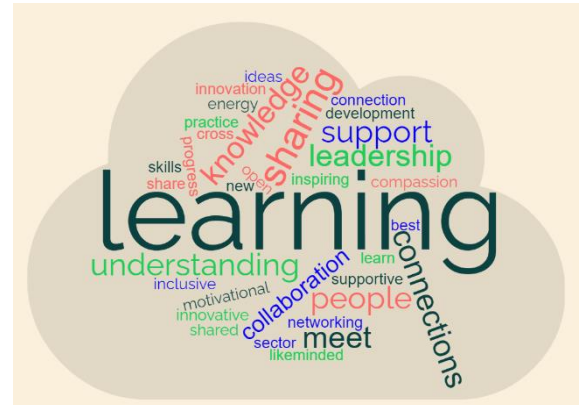


Reflections and Learning - The East of England Senior Leaders System Learning Network Autumn Sessions

Commissioned by the East of England NHS Leadership Academy, the System Learning Network was set up to support leaders across 'Place' and Integrated Care Systems in the region.

The aim is to develop a network where members can be inspired, have honest and open conversations, and share emergent system leadership practice. The sessions were structured to support leaders across the regional to share learning, ideas and innovations and build on existing strengths.



Our members' hopes for the network

The Launch Sessions

A series of three virtual sessions were held to launch the network. For these sessions, we were joined by Hayley Lever, Executive Lead of Greater Manchester Moving and CEO of Greater Sport. Hayley shared her experiences as a system leader, reflecting on the challenges and opportunities of system leadership, especially in the new collaborative landscape of integrated, place-based delivery.

You can watch Hayley's inspirational talk again here: <https://vimeo.com/791924563>

Community of Practice

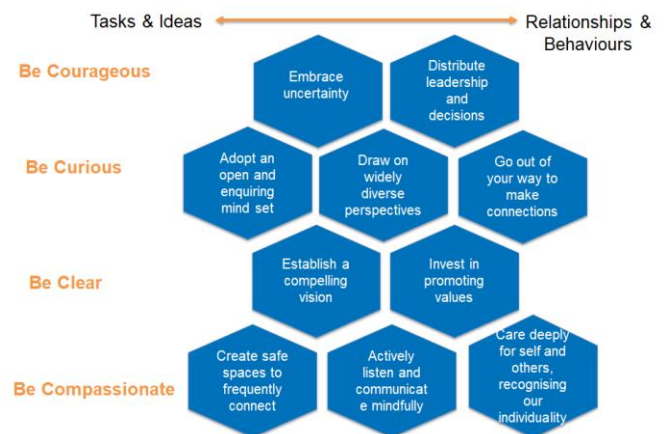
Senior leaders from across the region were then invited to share their experiences and reflections on the areas that resonated for them from Hayley's talk above. The 4C model of leadership was also introduced to aid this. Some key themes arose from these conversations:

Collaboration

It was highlighted, how many of the organisations now working together in systems were previously in competition. For system working to be successful we will need to break down these historical barriers to enable collaborative working.

Courage

Courage was an important theme from discussions, with many agreeing the importance of having the courage to be authentic as a leader, as well as giving your staff the courage to be authentic. It was also discussed how important it is that leaders and staff have the courage to innovate, with members suggesting that the NHS has become more risk averse and that we need to be braver with our decision making. Some of the work during the pandemic is a good example of where being brave with decision making has had a huge impact.



The 4C Model of Leadership

A participant shared how external pressures were impacting on a project. Having the courage to push back and having confidence in yourself to make that call was something to be proud of.

Culture

Participants discussed the importance of having a culture of psychological safety within a team, creating safe spaces where people feel comfortable having open conversations and putting forward ideas. It was also suggested that systems need to become an engine for change, enabling change to happen at a local level. The importance of having system-wide values was also raised, and the difficulties of having many organisations with different values working together. There was, however, agreement that whilst there may be difficulties with working across a system, persevering is worth the time and effort for the resulting benefits.

One delegate described a project where they were working with GPs to divert patients to leisure centres as part of their treatment plan. There is much evidence to support this approach but changing patients and staff mindsets was essential to ensure the project's success.

Curiosity

Another theme that was brought forward was curiosity, and the importance of staying curious as a leader. This can take the form of being able to see a situation from different viewpoints. Hayley used the term “move from the dancefloor to the balcony”, throughout the three sessions, to demonstrate that leaders need to take time to step out of the day-to-day and look at the work from the outside. The network agreed that this is a vital skill for leaders to have.

Impact

Following the sessions, we asked participants for feedback. The participants who completed the survey felt confident that they would be able to apply what they had taken from the session back to their practice as leaders.

What next?

Thank you to everyone who joined one of the launch sessions for the East of England Senior Leaders System Learning Network. We want the network to be a way for leaders across organisational boundaries to connect with each other and learn. Please look out for more sessions in the new year.

We welcome our members to share their own thoughts of the network's opening session by continuing the discussions on the FutureNHS platform. We'd love to hear about your own experiences and practices inspired by Hayley's presentation and the subsequent conversations.

“I felt it was a safe space to talk, everyone was supportive”

‘More sessions please!’

‘The presentation and ensuing discussion were excellent, there was a real warmth from participants’