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The Safety Culture Series

Communication about safety issues

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Let's talk about the Manchester Patient Safety Framework...

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What is ‘communication about safety issues’?

What communication systems are in place?

What are their features?

What is the quality of record keeping to communicate about safety like?

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Levels of Culture

1. Pathological

. Communication is poor- It's top down and staff are not able to speak up
. Events are kept in-house
. Organisation is closed.
. Communication is negative and focuses on blame
. Patients are given information to meet legal requirements only, which is provided only after significant pressure

2. Reactive

. Communication is directive: Managers issuing instructions
. Staff are only able to speak with managers after something went wrong
. Communication is ad-hoc and only with those directly involved in events.
. Patients are spoken at, not with, and are told only what the organisation want them to know

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Levels of Culture

3. Bureaucratic

. There is a communications strategy. Policies and procedures are in place and records are kept.
. A lot of information is collected but not effectively utilised resulting in information overloads.
. A risk communication system exists but its efficacy has never been tested

4. Proactive

. The communication system and record keeping are fully audited.
. Communication happens across the organisation and supports bench marking
. Staff of all levels are involved and robust mechanisms for feedback exist
. Information is shared through regular briefings. Staff help shape the agenda
. The organisation communicates with patient and public involvement groups.

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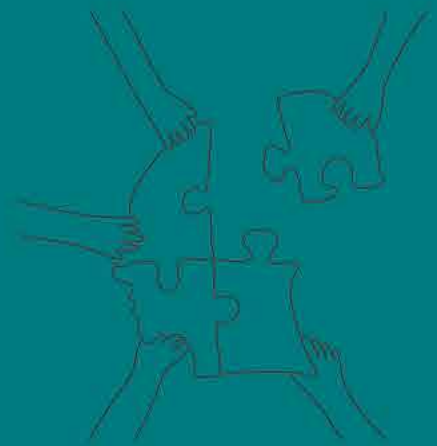
Levels of Culture

5. Generative

. Everyone communicates safety issues and learns from the experiences of others (both good and bad)
. The organisation is transparent and focuses on patient participation in risk management policy development
. Innovate ideas are encouraged and staff are empowered to implement them
. The organisation communicates about both good and bad practice externally.



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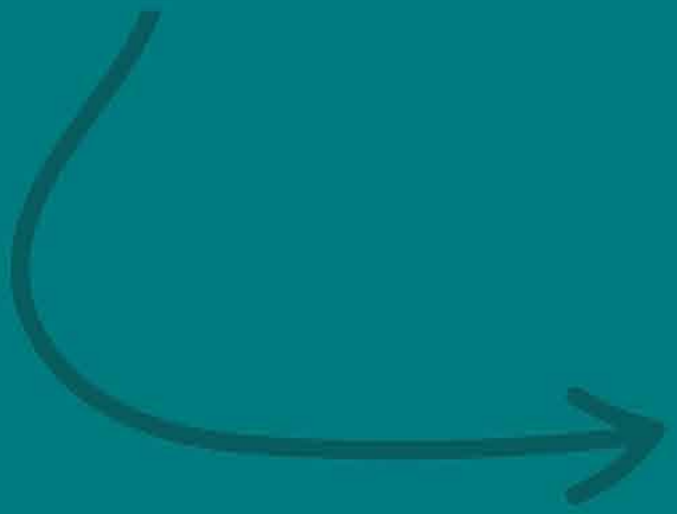
How does your team and organisation fare?

Use these characteristics to reflect on:

. What's your team's local culture (or climate) like?
. What's the organisation's culture like?
. How is it changing over time?

As a service user:

. What evidence of these do you see in the services you use?



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Culture is critical!

Building a strong culture is critical, but can take a long time.

If you would like advice and support on improving your culture, comment below and we'll be in touch

References

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