



21/12/2017

Today, a little missive on... eek.... Joy in the workplace!! Ok ok, clearly the word joy is not massively British-friendly, but getting over the initial gag reflex, the holidays are probably the only time of the year that the EQUIP team will be forgiven for writing a mass email on joy. And we wouldn't want to miss the chance. ;-)

Why focus on joy? Easy peasy. Stealing words from IHI (Institute for Healthcare Improvement):

- Healthcare is one of the few professions that regularly provides the opportunity for its workforce to profoundly improve lives. Caring and healing should be naturally joyful activities.
- Joy is about connections to meaning and purpose. By focusing on joy through this lens, we can reduce burnout while simultaneously building our own resilience.
- Deming (remember Deming?? Last week's email!) says that ensuring joy is a crucial component of the "psychology of change," one of the cornerstones of his scientific approach to improvement. And joy in work, to Deming, is also a fundamental right. Love this bit. That **joy is a fundamental right.**

We also know what drives joy – mainly engagement, fairness, and equity. And the ways to foster joy in the workplace are well documented. In four basic steps, one for each day remaining in your advent calendars:

1. Ask staff, "What matters to you?"

And once you ask, really listen. Joe Bloggs, what makes for a good day for you? What makes you proud to work here? When we are at our best, what does that look like?

This appreciative enquiry taps into strengths and bright spots, and offers real energy for change.

2. Identify unique impediments to joy in work in your local context

This can happen in the same chat as "what matters to you". And it can sound something like "what are the pebbles in your shoes"? And then, don't fear the answer. Usually, expensive answers are only expensive because we haven't understood the problem. Otherwise, finding barriers offers everyone a chance to give input around what to address and work on, and builds camaraderie, teamwork, and that precious sense of equity when this is something teams talk about together. If you have people who whinge (maybe you are even the one that whinges!), deep, profound listening, free of defence, leads to positive engagement. Offering hope and empathy rather than defence.

3. Commit to a systems approach to making joy in work a shared responsibility at all levels of the organization

We ALL have a role to play to making the workplace joyful. Even and ESPECIALLY leaders.

Responsibility for joy cannot be delegated. With real buy in at all levels of the practice, first address the five fundamental human needs at work..:

- physical and psychological safety: I cannot come to physical harm; I am secure, capable of change, respected, able to question and seek feedback, admit mistakes, and propose idea. Discussing Significant Events feels like an opportunity for growth, and not fear.

- meaning and purpose: agree, and record, why you all come to work. Link your work to this, and make it a live statement. Most of you have already done this, by the way. It's on your data walls...
- choice and autonomy: within reason, this means NOT telling people, including receptionists, "what to do"!
- camaraderie and teamwork: quality, not quantity... this is all about relationships. Love (eek – another allergy word!) at work. Friendship. Trust. Expressed appreciation.
- participative management: where decisions are the output of co-creation and involvement.

And then move on the other four building blocks:

- Recognition and rewards: this is more about celebration than money. It's not the "thing" (the cake, the party, the bonus) but the recognition itself that matters. Cake by itself does not bring joy. Except to me, maybe.
- Daily improvement: this is the QI ramp, and your PSDA (Plan Do Study Act) cycles...
- Wellness and resilience: acknowledge and manage stress, show gratitude, consider training a widely trusted member of staff to become a mental health support officer for the whole practice...
- Real-time measurement: Edenbridge! With stuff you share daily, weekly and monthly to fuel your improvement.

4. **Use improvement science to test approaches to improving joy in work in your organization**

Ohhhh, that's participating in EQUIP, I hear you say?? Indeed. Many of you are already involved in this, but maybe it's time to start stepping things up a bit... Perhaps by:

- Kicking off new microteams led by your practice QI heroes, in addition to those you hold with the coaches each week. So: spread QI!
- Peppering your day with little huddles, to connect and keep track of whatever you are measuring and working on, in real time.
- Sharing food or tea. Daily, if possible, weekly, otherwise. Though daily tea does not sound like an unachievable ambition. Unless you need to pick your tea from the fields.
- Celebrate small wins. And big ones. Celebrate lessons learned. Heck, celebrate failure! Maybe appoint a happiness officer – someone whose job it is to think creatively about ways of making the day feel better. Tiny budgets go a long way toward cake, thank you flowers, and little cards for everyone, a cinema voucher, etc...



On this note, here is our little EQUIP family gift to you, hoping it will crack a few smiles to contribute to these feelings of growing joy. 'Cause lots of stuff we haven't included here, such as sense of humour and a good appreciation for ridiculousness, still matter and work just as much. Have a lovely, happy, fun and restful holiday. A very merry Christmas to all those of us that celebrate this, and a very merry break to everyone else. It's a wrap, for 2017.

The EQUIP Team

PS – where was Tom in this picture? Busy saving his dignity.