EQUIP

ENABLING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN PRACTICE

Tower Hamlets

LATEST NEWS 25/06/2018

The must-haves that teams need to be EQUIPed with

Awesome teams are well more than the sum of awesome people. Whatever your teams – and you will have lots of these (**project teams** with special and temporary focus, **ongoing teams** that share work and responsibilities, **virtual teams** that meet through technology – a new way of doing MDTs, anyone?) – they will all share the same must-haves to be productive. So whip our you pad (or the note function on your phone), and check it out... have you got the list ticked off?

Access to people in the know

That is your coaches, and the people that you are developing as your own internal QI ninjas – indeed, this may even be you. Someone who can plan, collect and analyse data, solve problems, make decisions, run effective meetings, communicate, document, manage conflict. To pick up some of the more technical skills, make sure that at least two people from your team – other than your coach – have ninja training: book one of the places at EQUIP In Action (11th July/12th Sept/3rd Oct), dropping clemence.cohen@nhs.net an email.

Clearly defined purpose and goals

This is easily the most important and most overlooked point. Purpose it awesome. Purpose is the breakfast of champions (feedback is lunch). Purpose links to mission, goals and strategies, stuff that should define our day to day work. It gives teams direction and offers a sense of value and commitment. The is nothing – nothing – without a compelling *why*. Soon followed by *how*. How will work proceed, how will the team accomplish its tasks? And then *what*: what is the team doing, what are its measures? No measures, no way to know if improvement is taking place. All this soft stuff matters, it matters hugely: it's what often makes the unexplained difference between success and demoralisation.

Value + Ethics = Trust = the ability to take risks and improve performance.

Clearly defined boundaries

Team goals need to be laser-focused. Problems that are too broad can easily lead to confusion, loss of enthusiasm, and the sense that stuff is "too big to change". **No, it's not**. It's really not. Break it down. Eat it like an elephant, one bite at a time. (Feels slightly weird writing that, with the porpoise picture right above this.) Also, what are the team's limits, in terms of money and decision making power?

Resources

A team with no resources is like a cook with no ingredients (again with the food analogies!!). Data and technology are key to well-functioning teams, as are quick responses from the wider practice. Requests for approval or help are the stuff you want to respond to the same morning or afternoon; access for staff, as much as for patients. None of this "I check my emails every three days" stuff. J

Four key components, not too many to check or think about (I hope). And if you happen to check your emails every two or three days (just the thought of this makes my hands clammy), and find yourself reading this now, see if any of your teams need support or help – and if you don't know, drop them, and your coach, a line to ask. Give a bit of oomph to your microsystems, and you'll be reaping the benefits in spades.

Have a wonderful, warm, sun-drenched week!

Virginia