

**6th Annual North West Medical Leadership Conference
4th March 2016**

Workshop G – Exploring Leadership in the Workplace

The Workshop Aim:

The aim of the session was three fold:

1. To explore the key characteristics of an effective leader.
2. Recognition of the important role of leadership in the workplace.
3. Explore the role of a leader within a team context.

The Workshop Outcomes:

For the workshop we broke the group down into 4 sub-groups of 4-5 people each.

The characteristics of an effective leader:

We began by exploring ‘the characteristics of an effective leader.’ Each sub-group was invited to share their agreed top four characteristics. Below is the complete list with the number in brackets indicating the number of groups who listed this characteristic in their top four:

- Communication (3)
- Engagement (2)
- Decisive (2)
- Vision (1)
- Empathy (1)
- Credibility (1)
- Trust (1)
- Optimistic (1)
- Knowledge (1)
- Decisive (1)
- Recognise Weaknesses (1)
- Role Model (1)
- Charisma (1)

Why leadership is important in the workplace:

The next exercise was for the sub-groups to discuss ‘why leadership is important in their workplace.’ Below is the complete list of their answers:

- A leader provides a collective vision and direction.
- A leader leads on decision making.
- Without a leader an organisation would not change and may stagnate.
- A leader must empower the team efficiently to deliver the purpose and strategy.
- A leader sets the direction of travel.
- A leader must make time to value and empower the team.
- Leaders should put patient care at the centre of everything.

Team Challenge:

As part of the workshop we introduced a team challenge. The purpose of this was for the workshop participants to witness the behaviours of 6 randomly selected people who had to complete a task under pressure. The task set required them to work together to evaluate the task, discuss and agree a strategy and then complete the task under time pressure.

Apart from the enjoyment factor, for both participants and observers, a number of lessons came out of the exercise; none more so than this was as much about good followership as it was about good leadership. The key was that the whole team had to work together to successfully complete the task. In hindsight the team recognised that they became more focused and worked better as a team once they had nominated a leader.

Summary:

At the end of the workshop I shared my thoughts with the group based on my experience of 35 years' military service.

Characteristics for an effective leader:

- Credibility - know the business, know your people
- Caring - genuine interest in others
- Trust - both ways
- Confident - in yourself and in others
- Communicator - talk to and listen to others
- Empathetic - make effort to understand others
- Humility - listen to and take advice
- Grace - praise and thank others
- Light touch - not always serious
- Time - make time for others
- Decisive - make decisions having considered all the facts and other opinions
- Lead by example - behave as you would expect others
- Believe there is good in everyone

Essential criteria for successful leadership:

- **Communication** - 2 way: listening and being listened to.
- **Trust** - 2 way: trust those who work for you and earn their trust in you.
- **Confidence** - 2 way: have confidence in those who work for you and give them confidence in you.

Why is leadership important in the workplace?

- We all work in teams - and teams need leaders.
- Most of us prefer being part of a team - human nature – and teams need leaders.
- We respond well to being given a sense of belonging and for our contribution to be valued.

A final thought:

'Your people are your most important asset. No people, no team.'

Greville Bibby
Director of Faculty
NHS Staff College