



Bespoke Leadership and Team Development

Prospectus 2021

The Staff College: Leadership in Healthcare

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Registered charity: 1169166

Registered company: 10316815

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There's something about the personalities of team members, the ethos and the overt openness and honesty that runs through Staff College and the focus on awareness raising that really makes it different to anyone else. Their focus on process and behaviours, and how behaviours can have a positive or negative impact on how we work together forms the basis of development.

When we're stuck in the discussion it's hard to see the bird's eye view. I loved the provocation and the way Staff College helped pull us back to think about what was really at the heart of what we're trying to achieve.

People began to feel more confident to be honest about how they felt and what they thought. We paid more attention to what was going on in the room for people. Meetings became more focussed and open with greater trust between members.

Clinical Chair, Sustainability and Transformation Partnership and Clinical Commissioning Group

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Who we are and what we do

The Staff College: Leadership in Healthcare (Staff College) is a national charity dedicated to promoting great leadership for the public good. We focus on developing very senior leaders and high potential emerging leaders by raising their awareness of self, others and the wider system. We enable leaders to become [aware](#) of '[the difference that makes a difference](#)' through a [provocative](#) and [experiential](#) approach and encourage them to [do something about it](#).

Our [faculty](#) of experienced leaders have led large, complex organisations in the NHS, Defence, Business and Education. Together they have a rich, collective wisdom on developing leaders and are a loyal and dedicated team.

We offer a range of programmes and regularly co-develop programmes for organisations to meet a particular development need or staff group. Since we started back in 2010, we have worked with over 4,000 leaders to develop their leadership.

We deliver three key forms of leadership development programmes:

1) Senior Leadership Development: our [flagship programme](#) open to senior leaders from across the health and care community.

2) Commissioned programmes: where an organisation commissions us to deliver a particular type of programme for a specific audience.

3) Bespoke programmes: designed around the specific needs of a team or Executive Board. Programmes build on each team's diverse skills and experiences to generate a mutually supportive framework that produces a team ethos, whilst enabling them to work on the real issues they face.



Barts Health and East of London Colorectal Clinical Network

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Working with Senior Leadership Teams and Boards

We work with senior leadership teams and our initial engagement is often due to a team wishing to 'improve' in some way. This includes elements that are:

Generative

A new team wishing to get off to a good start by developing good practices in both the content and process of their work.

Developmental

An existing team that wishes to go from 'good to great' or feels it needs to 'shift into a higher gear' to meet new/increased demands.

Reparative

A team that is not functioning the way it wants or needs to due to one or more historical/current issues.

Senior leaders are often engaged in wicked problems. We define these as highly complex problems to which there is no obvious or neat solution. Therefore, our focus is on the processes of leadership and how people find a way through persistent, and often stubborn, areas of concern.

We believe that the 'process' or 'the way that people go about doing a task' needs to be understood and led so that the actual task itself can be accomplished to the best of a groups' ability.

The aspect of the programme that participants universally found compelling was the opportunity to reflect on their group dynamics and own behaviours. Observing how the groups moved from wary, closed or sometimes defensive stances to ones where people spend up about their organisational struggles and sometimes personal vulnerabilities and sought and received the support of the group was powerful. As were the examples of where this new-found collaboration then continued after the sessions, with colleagues supporting each other with difficult decisions across organisations.

Programme Director, Sustainability and Transformation Partnership

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Bespoke team leadership and development programmes

Aim

To develop team leadership and team cohesiveness

In order to improve

Team performance/delivery of mission/purpose
Team resilience and capability to manage change

Format

We deliver bespoke leadership interventions for teams. While the length and nature of these events will vary, dependent on the needs of the team, all events will have three distinct phases, a 'diagnostic phase, a 'development phase' and a 'support phase.' Each of these phases is vital to the success of a programme in bringing about longer-term sustainable change.

A key element of the course is that the team works on real issues and not case study material. However, unlike management consultancies, we are not here to provide the solutions to the challenges the team faces. Our role is to provide the environment, support and challenge necessary for the team to be able to decide and agree their own processes and work towards solutions to their problems. The team are the subject matter experts, and for there to be longer term change, they must own their solutions.

The work will involve a series of exercises and challenges with 'straight talking' feedback that develops self-awareness, an appreciation of the impact on others and the ability to differentiate helpful and unhelpful patterns of behaviour.



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Our approach

We raise awareness of group dynamic issues and group structural issues, including but not exclusively:

- patterns of contribution
- who gets listened to/ignored?
- how decisions get made or avoided
- how people prioritise their attention i.e. sticking to the primary task vs. drifting into other areas
- how conflict is dealt with or suppressed
- the structure of the agenda – does 'form follow function'?
- the nature of different roles in the group
- the use of time and space

Programmes normally consist of a mixture of:

- Process observations (as above)
- Process interventions (commenting on the groups work in the 'here and now')
- Taught material (useful ideas and techniques to improve group functioning).
- Generative sessions:
 - group members getting to know each other better
 - working on mission/purpose
 - working on strategy and planning
- Reparative sessions (where necessary):
 - resolving conflict
 - learning from difficult experiences
 - improving poor behaviour patterns

By helping a group gain better insight into how they currently work together, we can then provide the necessary support and challenge to help them work better together.

We value straight-talking and have a great deal of respect for the difficult work people are engaged in. This way of working often leads to highly energised discussions sometimes bordering on the uncomfortable but nearly always engaging and productive. It is worth noting that this way of working can involve high levels of self-disclosure and emotionally stirring material so if this could be an issue for members of the team it is important to discuss this at the diagnostic phase.

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Our 'difference that makes a difference'

The people who attend our programmes often mention that they like the fact that 'we do things differently'. It is often difficult to pin down the 'difference that makes a difference' but includes:

Members discover the truth about themselves as leaders and followers by:

- Extensively giving and receiving feedback often using video playback, which not only connects at an emotional level, but prevents them denying behaviours. People believe their own data.
- Being encouraged to challenge each other, as a way of assisting in learning and also giving support.
- Receiving feedback from faculty, their group peers and their own senses, the power of which combination ensures the learning occurs at an experiential level.

Programmes are highly engaging, through:

- Low power-point per hour ratio. Experiencing and engaging in dialogue is encouraged over lecturing.
- Involving real tasks, with no case studies or role play.
- Keeping members in the here and now.
- Creating a challenging as well as supportive learning environment.

Faculty are unusual, in that they:

- Initiate and sustain a generous relationship.
- Lead by example during the course and bring extensive leadership experience to it.
- Come from diverse careers and organisations - the healthcare community, the military and the commercial sector.
- Are mutually rigorous in their testing of material for inclusion and examination of all approaches.
- Are committed learners, who are full participants in the unfolding of the courses.
- Are always open to change.

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- Do not pathologise cynicism and resistance but work with it, understanding that this is what leaders are contending with daily.
 - Are immune to much of the 'fashion and gimmick' nature prevalent in the field of leadership development. The test is 'usefulness' not 'newness'

Please describe the impact the programme has had on the way you work together as a team.

- We have moved forward in some areas and seen what wasn't working in others.
- Very positive - open discussions - reached a conclusion which although not radical - certainly a step forward
- enough to make positive change.
- Helpful.
- It will improve the way we communicate with each other enabling all of us to develop.
- Agreed model going forward. Joint ways of working. Better shared responsibility and pressure.
- Has started to move the team forward in a new direction.

Post bespoke programme for the Integrated Discharge Team, Surrey and Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust, Sussex Community Foundation Trust and First Community Health Care

Testimonials and Impact

You can find out more about the impact our bespoke development programmes have had from those who've been part of them, and those who have commissioned them in our [library of case studies](#).

Find out more

You can find out more [here](#) about the bespoke programmes we've been delivering for teams and Boards along with programmes we've co-developed with organisations to meet their local development needs.

If you want to find out more about our approach and whether it might be right for you, please get in touch with the team:

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