Personal Qualities and Self-awareness

Key Message

An effective leader is someone who has drive and a passion for what they do, is competent and professional in all undertakings and has the ability to communicate and bring others along with them on the journey. Leadership skills can be honed over time but one of the first steps in developing leadership skills is to focus on self-awareness as this will affect the way a leader behaves and lead others. It’s also useful to recognise, reflect on and develop preferred leadership styles so that the leader can comfortably switch between styles when needed.

What does this mean for the Effective Practitioner?

It is very likely that during your professional life you will be asked, or see an opportunity to lead on an initiative, such as a service improvement, within the workplace. As a leader you need to be able to step back and reflect on your own internal drivers, what makes you tick as these will affect the way you behave and how you lead. Other key factors for success lie with your ability to communicate with others: service users, carers and family members, colleagues, with the ability to balance and manage your own and others emotions when making decisions and forging relationships. The life of an NMAHP can be challenging at times; as an effective practitioner and a leader it’s also important to build your personal resilience so that you can deal with situations calmly and bounce back when faced with setbacks.
Personal Values

It is useful to step back and consider who you are and your personal values in the context of your role as a leader, whatever level you are at in your organisation.

• Take some time out to describe the following elements:
  o What skills do you have inside and outside work?
  o What do you enjoy doing?
  o What do you dislike doing?
  o What motivates you?
  o What makes you angry?
  o What makes you proud?
  o What prompts you to take action?
  o What do you avoid doing?
  o What are the different roles you play in the workplace?
  o What are the things that are important to you in life - the core values that are behind what you do? These could include elements as diverse as money, power, helping others, honesty, working hard, getting results, competence, excellence, challenge, honesty, empathy, recognition.

• Take 3 of your core values and describe why you think the value is important and the behaviours that you believe demonstrate these values in your working environment.

• Explore the core values of your profession, your team and organisation.

• How do your personal values reflect the core values of your profession? Are they compatible or is there a mismatch?

• How do your personal values reflect the core values of your team and organisation? Are they compatible or is there a mismatch?

• Take each of your 3 core values and think of ways you can more actively demonstrate each value in your daily practice in terms of:
  o where and how you spend your time;
  o how you deal with crises and critical incidents;
  o how you communicate and interact with others;
  o how you recognise the efforts of others and
  o how you facilitate learning with others.

Record your learning in your professional portfolio.

KSF Core Dimensions: Personal and People Development.

Notes

Find more work-based learning activities on the effective practitioner website at [www.effectivepractitioner.nes.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.effectivepractitioner.nes.scot.nhs.uk)
Leadership Styles

A leadership style is the way in which we provide direction, implement plans, and motivate others to follow a shared vision. There are many different types of leadership styles for example autocratic, democratic, transactional and transformational styles. An effective leader should be able to switch between styles as needed. Identify 3 people either inside or outside work who you would describe as a good leader.

- Describe or draw a visual picture of their leadership qualities from a personal and professional perspective, how they demonstrate them and the impact they have on others.
- To what extent do you have similar qualities?

Leadership qualities are demonstrated in a personal style of leadership.

- What is your leadership style? Are you authoritarian, democratic, delegative, do you inspire, motivate, coach others? Have you one dominant leadership style that you are comfortable with or do you comfortably switch between styles when needed?

Access a quick leadership styles questionnaire or login to the Knowledge Network to access a more in-depth leadership styles questionnaire. (You will need an Athens password.)

You could also ask a colleague to complete the questionnaire to find out their thoughts on your leadership style.

- What results did you get? Were you surprised by any of the results?
- Were there significant differences between your results and those of your colleague?
- What are the implications of your findings in your working life?
- Identify 3 ways in which you could improve or vary your leadership style in different situations and put them into practice over the coming month.
- Reflect on their success in terms of achieving your goals and the impact on others.

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Communication Skills

As an Effective Practitioner you need to be open, honest, accessible and credible, demonstrating your competence, commitment and values in everything you do. Effective communication skills allow you to build and maintain relationships with the people you work with and will contribute to providing person-centred, safe and effective care for patients, carers and families. Being a good communicator also ensures that all team members have up-to-date knowledge to support their daily work and are given the opportunity to raise issues and suggest solutions for quality improvement.

Reflect in and on practice and consider how you communicate.

Reflection in practice

- How accessible are you to those around you?
- How are you demonstrating your credibility in terms of your behaviour, your actions, non-verbals, what you are saying and how you are saying it?
- When you are communicating with others, e.g. face to face, during a multidisciplinary team meeting, writing a written report, an email, or a telephone call, consider:
  - Are you communicating in a way that demonstrates your core values?
  - Are you using appropriate language and is the correct tone coming across?
  - Are you being empathetic to those you are communicating with?
  - Are you giving the situation your full attention?
  - Are you blocking or encouraging communication through your actions?
  - Are you encouraging others to make a contribution? Are you being receptive to any contributions that are being or have been made?
  - Are you treating everyone with dignity and respect?

Reflection on practice

- How do you think you can improve your communication skills?
- Ask for feedback from others on your communication skills.
- Itemise 3 things you can do over the next month to improve your communication skills and reflect on their success.
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Negotiating and Influencing

Negotiation and influencing skills are required to ensure common goals are met without unnecessary conflict and in a spirit of mutual respect and collaboration. Depending on the situation you may be called on to influence in a variety of ways, directly or indirectly, through meetings, phone calls, correspondence where you can present your ideas and vision. It is also important to concentrate efforts where you have influence, rather than concentrating on things outside your control.

- Consider a current situation in your work environment that you want to influence.
  - What is the issue? Who is involved?
  - What elements can you directly influence through what you say or do?
  - What elements can you indirectly influence e.g. the behaviour of others?
  - What outcomes do you want to achieve?
  - Identify 3 things you could do or say that could change the situation focusing on the elements that you can directly influence – these will form your action points.

- Put your 3 action points into practice. You may wish to consider some of the following common negotiating and influencing techniques when implementing your action points:
  - Establish rapport and create a friendly environment in which you and others feel able to communicate openly.
  - Make sure you actively listen to the views of others so that you get a deep understanding of their viewpoint.
  - Present your ideas logically, remaining calm and respectful to others contributions and feedback.
  - Be assertive when needed, clearly making your point without being aggressive.
  - Say ‘no’ when required, explaining your reasons and coming up with reasonable alternatives as needed.
  - Get the support you need from others in the organisation.

- Reflect on the success of your action points.
- What influencing techniques worked best?
- If you haven’t achieved your goals following the implementation of your action points, what other things could you do or say that might influence the current situation?

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• What might you do or say differently in a similar situation in the future?

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Personal Resilience

Our daily lives, both inside and outside work, can often require us operating in physically, mentally and emotionally challenging situations. These situations can become overwhelming and can cause anxiety if we are unable to cope with setbacks calmly and bounce back quickly. This ability to cope with adversity and challenging situations is known as Resilience. There are many techniques and tools we can use to become more resilient such as managing our emotions and the emotions of others to control behaviour and improve decision making, goal setting, relationship building and being positive.

- Consider a situation which is currently causing you some anxiety:
  - Separate out what you can do about the situation and what you can’t do about the situation and focus on the things you can influence.
  - Try breaking the situation into a number of different components and put a plan in place to deal with each one in turn. Implement your plan, taking one small step at a time.
  - Keep things in perspective – a small setback does not have to knock you off course.
  - Be clear on what you want to achieve overall and imagine how you will feel when the situation has been resolved – this will help you to remain positive – a key component of resilience.
  - Focus on your strengths – don’t get into the personal blame game accepting the blame for things that don’t have anything to do with you.
  - Seek out and find others who can help you to resolve the current situation – bounce ideas off them, ask them for their trusted opinion.

- Think about how you can build your resilience over time:
  - How do you deal with your emotions and emotions of those around you? Do they affect your resilience levels?
  - Find out your pressure points – what are the major causes of anxiety and stress in your working life? Stress doesn’t always have to be a bad thing – it can often help us to focus on solutions and perform at a higher level when required. However we all need personal ways to deal with stress so that it does not become a negative factor in our daily lives.
  - Discuss causes of anxiety with your line manager and consider your own knowledge and skills – do you need to develop knowledge and skills in an area that is currently causing you difficulty?
  - Develop a network of people who can help you when dealing with adverse situations. Conversely, offer help to others who are facing difficulty – this will expose you to other experiences which you can learn from.

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Consider your own well-being – are you getting enough sleep? Are you eating properly? Are you exercising enough – personal health and wellbeing can have a huge positive effect on your personal resilience and energy levels.

- It’s useful to find out your own limitations and strengths when it comes to being resilient. **Access a Resilience questionnaire.**
- Being able to manage your own emotions and be aware of others’ emotions can affect your personal resilience. Login to the Knowledge Network to carry out an Emotional Intelligence self-assessment. Reflect on the findings and put strategies in place to help you manage your emotions to support decision making and forge strong relationships with those around you.

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**KSF Core Dimensions: Personal and People Development.**
Reflection

It is good practice to reflect and record the learning you undertake in the workplace. Gibbs (http://distributedresearch.net/wiki/index.php/Gibbs_reflective_Cycle) provides a useful model for reflection that you can refer to when recording your learning. You may also access a Reflective Account form and other reflection tools on the Effective Practitioner website.

**Gibbs Model for Reflection**

- **Description**: What happened?
- **Action Plan**: If it arose again what would you do?
- **Feelings**: What were you thinking and feeling?
- **Evaluation**: What was good and bad about the experience?
- **Conclusion**: What else could you have done?
- **Analysis**: What sense can you make of the situation?