

Case Study

North East Leadership Academy

Using the NHS Healthcare Leadership Model to Develop Stronger Leaders

Applied Psychology Leadership Profiles were created by mapping leadership behaviours to job grades at Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust.

1. Introduction

The applied psychology team at Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) has a keen interest in developing the leadership skills of its people.

The Trust believes that psychologists working at all levels should develop skills that enable them to lead; previously finding leadership models useful for career progression, recruitment and personal development.

More widely within the Trust, TEWV's Organisation Development team is involved in leadership development projects including coaching – with its own internal coaching network – and has staff trained as Healthcare Leadership Model facilitators. This helps employees undertaking a 360° feedback session to understand and explore their 360° report and develop an action plan for the future.

Continuing its approach of proactive leadership development, the Trust has created Applied Psychology Leadership Profiles by mapping the NHS Healthcare Leadership Model to the job grades of applied psychologists, from trainees to professional leads.

2. The NHS Healthcare Leadership Model

The NHS Leadership Academy produced the Healthcare Leadership Model to help people become better leaders.



It consists of nine dimensions that describe the positive behaviours leaders should demonstrate at work. The nine dimensions include: adapting to different standards/approaches outside my organisation, co-operating to raise the game, creating clear direction, developing

capability, holding to account, influencing results, inspiring shared purpose, providing opportunities for mutual support, and thinking creatively.

Leadership behaviours are shown on a four-point scale for each dimension – essential, proficient, strong and exemplary – and organised in a way that helps everyone see how he or she can develop as a leader.

3. Linking the model to talent development at TEWV

The Trust had already developed talent management profiles and saw a clear link between these and the Academy model which, unlike many other leadership models, is about behaviour rather than competency or technical ability.

Having participated in the Academy's Clinical Fellowship programme, Sarah Dexter-Smith, professional lead for psychology in mental health services for older people, was keen to use the Healthcare Leadership Model at TEWV.

Sarah explains: "I like the Academy's model because of its fit with our ethical, value-driven leadership approach at TEWV, and I wanted to use it to shape the development of our psychologists. Our talent management profiles go hand-in-hand with the model to show what development our psychologists need. Everything fits together so we wanted to be proactive and take hold of it."

A key reason for mapping the leadership model to job grades was to develop a benchmark, clearly demonstrating where each applied psychologist should be in terms of leadership behaviour.

4. Collecting and mapping the data

Jenny Oddy, clinical psychologist in children's services, worked on this as a trainee and took on the task of mapping the relationship between the model and different grades of applied psychologists.

"To begin, I looked at the role profiles for different grades of psychologists and highlighted what changed from one description to another, picking out key words and phrases," says Jenny.

With a clear summary of the differences between each job grade, Jenny went into the field and asked 45 people

– including applied psychologists, trainee clinical psychologists, and course staff from the Teesside University Doctorate in Clinical Psychology Programme – to indicate at which level of each leadership model dimension every different grade of psychologist should be performing. Participants completed the mapping in a number of ways: email, face-to-face, in groups, and individually.



“Participants found mapping the data interesting and useful. It helped make the model real and there were lots of questions about it,” Jenny explains. “Everyone rated all the grades against each dimension, not just their own grade. For example, for each leadership model dimension,

trainee clinical psychologists were asked to say whether professional leads should demonstrate essential, proficient, strong or exemplary behaviours, and vice versa.”

The information from all 45 participants was summarised with the most frequent responses put into an overall grid. The summary grid was taken to local and professional

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Jenny Oddy, Clinical Psychologist

leads for discussion and final approval, which led to professional consensus across specialities.

“There was a lot of consistency around which level participants felt each grade should be performing and there was only one change made before final approval,” states Jenny. “The whole process took around three months to complete and worked because it was owned by the psychologists at every level.”

The end result is an Applied Psychology Leadership Profile for every grade of applied psychologist, which clearly shows the level of each leadership dimension they should demonstrate whilst operating at that grade.

5. Implementing model mapping for leadership development

The team at TEWV wanted to clearly set out the expectations of how applied psychologists should perform in relation to leadership skills and how the organisation should support personal development.

“The process isn’t primarily about holding people to account; we’re using it from the bottom up to ask what people need,” Sarah explains. “If anyone asks whether they’re supposed to stick to the level of each behaviour for their particular grade, we explain that the behaviour levels in higher grades are something to aim for.”

The profiles are developmental and psychologists are expected to have a plan for attaining the levels associated with their grade. Previously, some psychologists knew they needed more help to develop leadership skills but weren’t always sure how to do so. Using their Applied Psychology Leadership Profile as a diagnostic tool, applied psychologists can now see where they should focus and search for appropriate development opportunities, such as those offered by the NHS Leadership Academy.

The Applied Psychology Leadership Profiles rolled out to the team at TEWV from January 2015.

6. Moving forward with Applied Psychology Leadership Profiles

Each applied psychologist received a letter explaining the process and how his or her profile can be used, along with a card showing their own job grade profile. Team members are encouraged to use the profiles in personal development discussions, job planning and talent management conversations.

Sarah explains that there are more plans for the profiles, “We’re arranging to share the profiles nationally through the clinical psychology leadership network, and will write an article for the Clinical Psychology Forum. The project was a great success and people at TEWV not originally involved in the project are keen to get involved. I think this shows an appetite for using the Healthcare Leadership Model to guide personal development and make it real and relevant.”



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Sarah Dexter-Smith, Professional Lead for Psychology

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