

Re-connecting the team to inspire change

The challenge

Described by the CQC as ‘inadequate’ and rated average on the Medical Engagement Scale, one East Midlands hospital was clearly in need of support to take it out of special measures. Not only was there a disconnection between the board and doctors, there was a belief among staff that the board would soon be replaced.

The hospital’s medical director, who had been recently appointed, approached FMLM to help resolve a “very specific problem with medical leaders and medical disengagement.”

The solution

Working with a healthy mixture of younger and more established doctors in leadership roles, FMLM created a “binding space”, exploring the group’s values, mindset and interactions “with an emphasis on personal behaviours and interactions”. One early activity invited participants to share their “personal story” which encouraged them to connect with their colleagues ‘at a human level’.

With no Powerpoint slides in sight, the programme facilitators used a conversational approach to challenge the group to question why the hospital was in its current state. FMLM’s senior medical professional focused on setting the scene, exploring medical leadership’s impact, while FMLM’s leadership development expert introduced a range of psychological and management tools, such as neuro-linguistic programming and influencing techniques.

As well as helping individuals to understand their role in driving change, FMLM challenged the group ‘to think about the hospital not as a corporation but as a living thing, with a purpose that connected everyone on the programme’.

The results

An independent evaluation of the programme found:

- Increased confidence to use feelings when planning patient care
- Improved collaboration, networking and communication to support common objectives
- Regular in-house medical leadership training days, bringing in outside speakers to gain a better perspective on real issues
- Less leadership jargon, more personal and patient-focused language, e.g. “it’s us who have to make the change”
- Greater participation in hospital and national programmes and courage to take on senior roles
- More engaged staff, with mean scores above industry average
- Better mortality and sepsis results
- Reduced medical vacancies (down from 22% to 9%) and less issues filling governance roles.

“They engaged the group, brought a real patient focus, stimulated us to think differently and together, and got us to agree on next steps. In the last 2-3 years, it is now a happy environment, where I want to go to work and work with the team...”