



COMPASSIONATE LEADERSHIP *Compassionate Care*

COMPASSION MATTERS

Compassion is a word often used in services today. This is a welcome development. The problem is often it is assumed that people will just create compassionate cultures or that we even know how to. The truth is we usually need a vision, a strategy and a lot of hard work to create cultures where compassion, kindness and empathy flow. We also fundamentally need people who hold and live out these elements.

The work of Carl Rogers the psychologist is very relevant to this question. Rogers spoke of core conditions for the growth and actualisation of a person. These core conditions include listening, empathy, genuineness (congruence) and unconditional positive regard for other people. This latter condition doesn't mean we have to necessarily like everyone. It does mean we accept people with all their gifts and gaps. We accept people and work with them with respect.

If we apply this organisationally this is a call to all - from cleaner to consultant. To listen - really listen. To treat others with kindness and understanding. To be ourselves - to be authentic. To accept people and find the best ways to work together. Rogers believed if we practiced these core elements amazing change and growth can occur. If we applied them as organisational practices and touches then we might be surprised what would happen. Good cultures grow from our conversations, actions and relationships. Culture comes from the Latin word 'cultura' meaning to cultivating as in agriculture.

There is a tremendous possibility here. We can all be the conduits of caring culture or destructive culture. We can daily sow the seeds of compassion and connection in all we do. Our staff and those who use our services deserve the best cultures we can possibly make. This isn't an add-on or luxury. Rather it is the very fabric of our work and services.

The future of our work we believe is in systems approaches - seeing beyond the silos to wider pictures and participation. How we are as humans will determine the humanity of our systems.

John Walsh, OD Lead, and Steve Keyes, Head of OD, Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust