



Finding Joy in Work- What we Learnt from the Learn at Lunch Event

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There seems to be a real paradox in saying we should be finding “joy” in work. The idea of it seems a little ridiculous, and surely most of us are just aiming to get through the day? However, within QI there is a strong theoretical background and proven success in using QI to build more joy in work.

Why “joy” in work specifically? There are 3 reasons.



By focusing on joy rather than problems we can leverage a range of assets rather than just trying to fix things. Appreciating and building on the positives is far more powerful than focusing on the removal of problems. Healthcare is also one of the professions where we provide care and healing, and this is a joyful thing to see and be responsible for. This allows us to capitalise on why we are all here, in this trust, doing what we all do.



Whilst health is more than merely the absence of disease, joy is more than the absence of burnout. We don't want to just focus on fixing problems as this may not increase a feeling of wellbeing. By focusing on the joy it can help to reconnect us and our teams to connecting with meaning and purpose.



W. Edwards Deming (one of the godfathers of QI) said that joy in work and pride in workmanship are a fundamental right. He argued it is the role of leaders to ensure that workers can enjoy that right.

So once we are convinced of the need for and importance of joy in work, how do we go about actually achieving it? At a recent Learn at Lunch session, this was the question which we tackled.

The learn at lunch sessions are a series of informal events whereby we look at a piece of work being undertaken within the Trust and have an opportunity to think about how it may apply to our own work. The first event was led by Emma Watts who spoke about a joy in work QI project underway on Adriatic Ward at Ardenleigh. This is part of a national QI collaborative with teams all over the country taking part.

The one key piece of learning that's coming out of this and other projects is the importance of the small things. The significance on putting in place a means for a tray of drinks to be made for staff, in this case asking volunteers. We can't underestimate the benefit of a hot drink and a biscuit. Also, visibility of leaders and regular opportunities to check in. There is also a clear process to submit excellence nominations to recognise a job well done clearly and publicly. The team are reporting that this is indeed having an impact on their well-being and enjoyment in their roles.

We already know that the strength of QI is in bringing in small iterative changes that accumulate to a bigger overall change. Within this QI project we are seeing the difference this makes and how “do-able” it is for all teams. We aim to continue sharing the learning from this project, as well as a few other joy in work project and potentially running a trust programme of joy in work projects which teams will be invited to volunteer for. Please do let us know if you are interested.



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For those who are interested in the Learn at Lunch sessions, the next one will be on the 9th November 2021. This will be led by the research team who have some fascinating pieces of research to share with you. Please do join us.



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