



Our behaviours

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Building a
Better Health
Service

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#weareourvalues

INTRODUCTION

The health service is committed to building a positive culture where there is a common sense of purpose and pride in the team and where all our people are treated with dignity and respect. Every day thousands of health service staff around Ireland live our values of care, compassion, trust and learning. Sometimes this is very visible, sometimes it is not. Values in Action is about building the culture of the health service around these values, so that they are evident every day in every workplace.

By translating our values of care, compassion trust and learning into clear behaviours, and connecting staff together in a shared effort to improve our culture, Values in Action is mobilising staff and empowering them to lead the change. Values in Action works with peer-nominated staff, drawn from all grades and disciplines, to create a bottom-up movement to spread the behaviours that reflect our values.

Values in Action has been underway in the Health Service since 2016; and in the areas where it is already live, has shown very promising results. We have learned that there is a significant appetite amongst staff to support and lead this movement throughout the health service.

It's a new approach to building the kind of health service we all want - from the inside out, making the health services a better place for staff, patients and service users. And it's going to take all of us - from all grades, roles, disciplines and backgrounds - working together to improve our culture in the present, and meet the challenges in our future.

VALUES IN ACTION CHAMPIONS

Real cultural change is shaped by the behaviours of small groups of influential individuals from all levels across the organisation. These well-connected individuals are creating a grassroots social movement that makes our values and behaviours recognisable, visible and a normal part of our everyday conversations in the health service. These highly-influential and highly-connected people are the driving force behind this organisational change. We call them our Champions.

As leaders of this social movement, our Champions are spreading the behaviours that underpin Values in Action amongst their colleagues. They are also looking for people to join in the movement and to be a part of creating this change; and you can be a part of it too.

OVERVIEW OF THE KEY BEHAVIOURS

Nine behaviours were identified that bring the values to life. These behaviours were informed by a comprehensive review of feedback from staff, patient and service user surveys, strategies and policies, direct engagements and complaints. This information provided insights into staff, patient and service users' experiences of the health service. The nine behaviours have been designed in response to the common themes identified, and have been tested with staff and patients, all of whom agreed that living the behaviours would improve the experience of staff and service users.

BEHAVIOURS REFLECT 3 DIMENSIONS:



THE PERSONAL DIMENSION

3 things we ask ourselves:

Am I putting myself in other people's shoes?

Can I see the challenges that others have and would I change my attitude or what I do as a result? Am I being fair?

Seeing things from other people's perspectives is crucial in working effectively with others. Understanding another person's role can also help us to see how we can work together to solve problems and demonstrate our care and compassion.

Am I aware of my actions and their impact on other people?

Am I a good role model? Am I aware of how my actions affect others? Am I seeing the needs of others?

People never forget how they are treated. We need to be aware of the impact of our actions and that our conduct affects others. Tensions between people's morale and people's expectations can be managed through service.

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Am I aware of my
own stress and
how I deal with it?

Am I dealing with stress appropriately,
for myself and others? Should I ask for
help or support? Am I doing things that
can help relieve stress at work?

*Recognising when you are under stress is
important as it can have an effect on your health
and wellbeing and on others around you. Getting
support or doing things to relieve stress can
help.*

THE COLLEAGUE DIMENSION

3 things we do with our colleagues:

Acknowledge the work of your colleagues

Treat everybody as equal, regardless of hierarchy or role within the organisation.

Say thank you and acknowledge the efforts of team members and colleagues.

Be supportive of colleagues and tell them when they are doing a good job. Say thank you. Don't be judgemental, a 'blame culture' has no place here. We are all here to make patient and service user experiences better, with humanity and professionalism.

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Ask how you can
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*Who is under pressure.
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or do something today
olleague?'*

Challenge toxic
attitudes
and behaviours

Challenge toxic negativity, defeatism
and cynicism. Do not accept that we
can never change, improve or intervene.
Address unacceptable behaviour where
a person is not being treated with
respect.

*Don't be a bystander when you encounter
unacceptable attitudes and behaviours.
Acknowledge difficulties and bring balance to
discussions and situations.*

THE PATIENT AND SERVICE USER DIMENSION

3 things we do with patients and service users:

WITH PATIENTS AND SERVICE USERS

Use my name
and your name

Introduce yourself and outline your role – similar to #hellomynameis. Turn towards the person, make eye contact and use a compassionate tone of voice.

People remember how you make them feel. The first few seconds of interaction between a person and a staff member sets the tone of the whole interaction, so make every contact count.

Keep people informed
explain things
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Share information with you are doing now step with Reduce uncertainty and

Sharing information with reduce their uncertainty of control. Use language and encourage them to provide a dignified conversation

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Do an
 extra, kind
 thing

Provide small acts of kindness.
 A kind gesture is very human and
 powerful.

A small, unexpected gesture helps to create a sense of caring and compassion. Small acts of kindness build trust with staff. We are proud to work for an organisation that demonstrates such kindness.

PERSONAL

Am I putting myself
in other
people's shoes?

Am I aware that my
actions can impact
on how other
people feel?

Am I aware of my
own stress and
how I deal with it?

WITH COLLEAGUES

Acknowledge
the value
of your colleagues

Ask your colleagues
how you can
help

Challenge
toxic attitudes
and behaviours

COLLEAGUES

Knowledge
work
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colleagues
you can
them

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WITH PATIENTS AND SERVICE USERS

Use my name
and your name

Keep people informed
– explain the now
and the next

Do an extra,
kind thing

THE PERSONAL DIMENSION

Am I putting myself in other people's shoes?

- Can I see the challenges that others have and would I change my attitude or what I do as a result?
- Am I being fair?

Seeing things from other people's perspectives is crucial to working effectively with others. Understanding another person's role can also help us to see how we can work together to solve problems and demonstrates care and compassion.

The key to working together effectively is to listen and to try to see things from other perspectives. It can also reduce conflict and help solve issues that arise. Can you see where the other person is coming from? Would you react in the same way if you were in a similar situation?

To be empathetic, you have to think beyond yourself and your own concerns. Taking a moment to see the challenges that others face can help you understand and empathise with their situation. It may also change your attitude towards that person or what you do as a result. As an employee of the health service we all have a role to play in supporting patients and service users.

THE PERSONAL DIMENSION

Am I aware that my actions can impact on how other people feel?

- Am I a good example?
- Am I aware of how I am heard and seen?

People never forget how you make them feel. We need to be aware that people observe our actions and that our conversations can be heard by others. Tensions between staff can affect morale and people's experience of the health service.

How people feel about their interactions with staff can often be a lasting memory. Take a moment to understand how your actions impact on how people feel. Would you be happy if your interaction was replayed back to you?

How would it make you, or one of your loved ones, feel?

When staff engage in a positive, respectful and friendly way it can help to reduce anxiety and create a positive experience for all concerned.

THE PERSONAL DIMENSION

Am I aware of my own stress and how I deal with it?

- Am I dealing with stress appropriately, for myself and others?
- Should I ask for help or support? Am I doing things that can help relieve stress at work?

Recognising when you are under stress is important as it can have an effect on your health and wellbeing and on others around you. Getting support or doing things to relieve stress can help.

We all experience stress in our lives. It's important to recognise when you are under too much stress as it can affect your health and wellbeing. It's vital to acknowledge that how we behave and act, particularly when we are under stress, impacts on both ourselves and those around us.

This behaviour is about self-reflection and checking in with ourselves to see if we are dealing with stress appropriately. By doing this we become aware of how we are coping. It may result in us taking action such as talking to someone, asking for help or support or looking at ways to relieve stress. We need to recognise and manage our own stress before we can help others.

WITH COLLEAGUES

Acknowledge the work of your colleagues

- Treat everybody as equal, regardless of hierarchy or role within the organisation.
- Say thank you and acknowledge the efforts of team members and colleagues.

Be supportive of colleagues and tell them when they are doing a good job. Say thank you. Don't be judgemental, a 'blame culture' has no place here. We are all here to make patient and service user experiences better, with humanity and professionalism.

Openly acknowledge the work and efforts of colleagues. Saying thank you or congratulations for a job well done can have a very positive impact on people. Use opportunities like team meetings to share examples of good work, to mark a success or reaching a key milestone.

Nobody sets out to do a bad job, everyone comes to work to try to do their best but mistakes can happen. It's important not to blame individuals or teams when things do go wrong but to try to learn where systems or processes could be changed or improved and to identify how we can work better together to improve the outcome next time.

WITH COLLEAGUES



**Ask your
colleagues how
you can help
them**

- Ask how you can help or offer advice to try to guide the way.
- Share your knowledge and experience with others.

Support a colleague who is under pressure. We trust each other to do the right thing, offer advice or a helping hand. Work together as a team and trust each other to do the right thing. Ask yourself: 'Did I say or do something today to help a colleague?'

Support can take many forms such as listening, offering a cup of tea or sharing your skills. Offering advice or sharing knowledge is another way we can offer help. Have you worked on a similar project? Do you have experience in a particular area that would help your colleague solve a problem? Share information, research or reports with colleagues where it can support them in their learning on a particular subject or project.

Simple and thoughtful acts among colleagues demonstrate that we care and look out for each other. It helps to create better workplaces for all of us.

WITH COLLEAGUES

Challenge toxic attitudes and behaviours

- Address unacceptable behaviours where a person is not being treated with respect.
- Do not accept that we can never change, improve or intervene.

Don't be a bystander when you encounter unacceptable attitudes and behaviours. Acknowledge difficulties and bring balance to discussions and situations.

Everyone who uses and who works in the health service deserves to be treated with respect and dignity. Don't stand by and watch a colleague, patient or service user being treated disrespectfully. Don't be a bystander when you encounter unacceptable behaviours. Instead acknowledge difficulties and bring balance to discussions and situations.

Relentless negativity, cynicism and criticism about a person, a team, a service or the HSE should not be accepted. We are all doing our best to build a better health service and while some services need improvement, and people may experience difficulties at work, it does not mean that everything about the health service is bad, wrong or dysfunctional. Acknowledge difficulties but try to bring balance to discussions and act when needed.

WITH PATIENTS AND SERVICE USERS

Use my name and your name

- Introduce yourself and outline your role – similar to #hellomynameis.
- Turn towards the person, make eye contact and use a compassionate tone of voice.

People remember how you make them feel. The first few seconds of interaction between a person and a staff member sets the tone of the whole interaction. Try to make every contact count.

70% of all of our communication is delivered by body language. This is why making eye contact, smiling and turning towards a person is so important. This behaviour will help people to feel that they matter and demonstrates to the person that they have your full attention.

WITH PATIENTS AND SERVICE USERS

**Keep people
informed –
explain the now
and the next**

- Share information with people on what you are doing now and what the next step will be.
- Reduce uncertainty as much as you can.

Sharing information with people can help to reduce their uncertainty and give them a sense of control. Use language that they understand and encourage them to ask questions. Try to provide a dignified, safe space for your conversation.

People can sometimes feel vulnerable when they are using health services. Explaining what you are doing now and what the next step will be can help to reduce uncertainty for them.

“Research has shown that there are fewer errors and better treatment outcomes when there is good communication between patients and their health-care providers, and when patients are fully informed and educated about their treatment and medication”.

(World Health Organization, 2012)

This behaviour can be applied when communicating with people in person, by phone or in writing.

WITH PATIENTS AND SERVICE USERS

**Do an
extra, kind
thing**

- Embrace unexpected acts of kindness.
- A kind gesture is very human and powerful.

A small, unexpected gesture helps to create a sense of caring and compassion. Small acts of kindness build trust with staff. We are proud to work for an organisation that demonstrates such kindness.

This behaviour can be interpreted by each staff member in their own way and it may be as simple as saying a kind word, showing the way if someone gets lost or rings the wrong Department, or holding a hand in a time of need.

Take time to recognise when a patient or service user might appreciate a thoughtful or meaningful gesture. This can have a hugely positive impact, because sometimes it's the small things that can make a big difference to people.

For more information see
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