

Taking risks – a self-assessment tool for analysing team culture

Introduction

Teams vary in their response to risk, even when they are following the same policies and supporting similar people. If people using services are shielded from positive risks, they are unable to develop independence or establish a safe and satisfying life in the community. Poor risk climates lead to resources being wasted and people become dependent or are recklessly neglected. This project helps teams to assess their climate, understand ways to make improvements and track progress over time.

A self-assessment tool

Visitors to the team can often intuitively discern whether the risk climate promotes opportunity and responsibility or not. Unfortunately, when such visitors raise the issue, team members often assert that they have the balance right, and that their climate is a direct consequence of the characteristics of the people they support and the policy of their organisation. Your teams may need help to explore other drivers.

NDTi has developed CAIRO – the Climate Assessment Inventory for Risk and Opportunity¹ - that comprises four sections covering a total of 27 dimensions. Each dimension offers a 5-point scale between two extreme positions. Each team member completes the questionnaire privately and this takes less than 15 minutes.

Co-production of climate-management resources

We are now inviting teams to join us in the next development stage of CAIRO. The questionnaire is issued to participating teams for individual completion and the forms returned to NDTi for aggregation and analysis. A fortnight later, a Team Development Day with an NDTi facilitator reviews the findings, including team averages compared to the full dataset (n=413 at present). CAIRO enables the team to analyse the climate, celebrate the successful areas of team life, make an action plan and set a date to repeat the self-assessment. Through this process, NDTi will gather and share climate-improvement strategies with participating teams.

Statistical analysis has confirmed the robustness of this approach. As the store of effective climate-improvement strategies grows, NDTi will be able to offer a longer programme of facilitation to assist teams in making sustainable change.

Contact Peter Bates to book your Team Development Day (peter.bates@ndti.org.uk). The cost is £700 plus expenses and VAT.

¹ See Bates P and Lymbery M (2011) Managing risk in a risk averse society, chapter 3 in Taylor R, Hill M & McNeill F (Editors) *Early Professional Development for Social Workers*. Birmingham: Venture Press