Focus on the future: using your positive workplace culture

The previous activity sheets provide exercises, activities and templates to support you to develop a positive workplace culture within your service. This sheet provides a practical activity that can deliver improvements on a large or small scale.

The task is a group exercise to identify your organisation’s ‘hedgehog’, discovering what it is that you do better than anything else. The ‘hedgehog’ concept was devised by Jim Collins, who in his book *Good to Great*, uses the parable of the clever, devious fox and the simple hedgehog. The fox keeps coming up with new ideas to eat the hedgehog, but the hedgehog handily defeats him by doing his one trick: rolling into a thorny ball. It is now a concept used widely as an organisational development tool. For more information on this concept see: [http://www.success.com/article/jim-collins-hedgehog-concept](http://www.success.com/article/jim-collins-hedgehog-concept)

The hedgehog concept highlights the importance of:

- organisations knowing what they’re good at
- keeping strategies simple but effective
- pursuing these strategies with drive and determination.

To identify your workplace ‘hedgehog’, work with your colleagues to identify answers to the following questions from the circles below:

- What do we, the workforce, care passionately about? Most people work best when they believe in and are committed to the service they are providing, so it is important to identify what these things are.
- What do we do well? (And equally important—what we do not do well). This may be small scale or very focused, for example it could relate to how you support people to use assisted living technology, how you ensure mealtimes are a positive and dignified experience for all, or maybe you have a great induction for new staff.
- What are our drivers? How do you measure success? You might include factors such as reputation, financial profit, workforce health and wellbeing, or customer satisfaction.

Once you have the answers to these questions (and you may have several answers for each one) consider the diagram on the next page; focusing on where the circles intersect in the middle. Identify what answer fits in this intersection, it must address all three questions - you must be passionate about it, do it well and it must be one of the factors that drives your business. This is what Jim Collins refers to as the ‘hedgehog’ and it is the activity that you can work on together to deliver
Achieving the ‘hedgehog’ will also support your positive workplace culture. It creates opportunities for people to work together to identify strengths within the service (and possibly each other) and then to jointly plan how to build on this. This encourages people to commit to delivering the ‘thing they do best’, and to have a sense of shared identity and pride in its achievement.

Example: Using ‘Orchard End Services’, the scenario from shared values and assumptions, Mike’s workforce might answer the three questions in this way:

What do we, the workforce, care passionately about?
- delivering innovative care solutions
- recruiting people with the right values.

What do we do well?
- we listen to people to hear their needs and wishes
- we have strong links with the community leaders
- we are supported to learn the skills we need.

What are our drivers?
- having a business that has a strong value base
- delivering personalised care and support
- having a good reputation
- increasing number of people we work with.

Our ‘hedgehog’
- Developing specific community networks around individuals as they develop more independent lives.

To download this activity sheet visit www.skillsforcare.org.uk/culture.