

Michael West (S3 Ep1)

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SPEAKERS

Michael West, Pia Rathje-Burton, Wendy Adams

- P** Pia Rathje-Burton 00:07
Welcome to the care exchange the Skills for Care podcast for managers in social care. I'm Pia Rathje-Burton.
- W** Wendy Adams 00:13
And I'm Wendy Adams.
- P** Pia Rathje-Burton 00:15
So Wendy, you're the new co host for the care exchange. Welcome.
- W** Wendy Adams 00:19
Thank you very much. How does it feel? Fantastic. I'm really looking forward to today.
- P** Pia Rathje-Burton 00:25
Yeah, I'm so pleased you're joining me as co host for the series three. I'm really excited. We always start each series with a bit of a special guest and today the first episode of series three, we have got a special guest. Today we're talking to Professor Michael West. Michael is the visiting senior visiting fellow at the king's fund. He's also professor of organisational psychology at Lancaster University as well as other professional roles at University College Dublin, and Aston University. He's also the co founder of Athena organisation development so also AOD, that's part of the Skills for Care group. In 2020. Michael was appointed a CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for services to compassion, innovation in health care,

W

Wendy Adams 01:15

He is currently supporting health education and improvement Wales's 10 year strategy for ensuring Compassionate Leadership across all of health and social care. Michaels authored, edited and CO edited 20 books, and has published more than 200 articles on teamwork, innovation, leadership and on culture. He's recently published his latest book called Compassionate Leadership, sustaining wisdom, humanity and presence in health and social care.

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Pia Rathje-Burton 01:48

So really looking forward to chatting to Michael, if you've not heard about Professor Michael West before, I really hope you enjoy listening to everything that he's got to tell us about his book and about how you can really use that in social care. So hope you enjoy the episode. Welcome, Michael, to the care exchange.

M

Michael West 02:14

Pleasure to be with you, Pia. Thank you.

P

Pia Rathje-Burton 02:16

brilliant to have you joining us today. Really, really pleased. How are you today?

M

Michael West 02:20

Yeah, really good. I've had a lovely day. So far. I went for a cycle this morning. That was wonderful. And I've got a stack of emails to do now. But you know, that will be softened by a nice cup of tea and a doughnut, I think.

P

Pia Rathje-Burton 02:36

It always helps, I think. So Wendy and I are really intrigued to talk to you. So I got lots of questions, too. So let's get going. So, first of all, you've written this book called Compassionate Leadership. Tell us what is Compassionate Leadership?

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Michael West 02:52

Well, it's maybe worth beginning by saying what compassion is, you know, it's a word we use a lot. It's something that we understand, I think, implicitly or intuitively, but it's also the most important intervention there is in health and social care. We know from so much research evidence that the compassion of carers is the most important if you like tool they have in their caring, and what it basically involves, if I'm, for example, if you all Wendy was in pain or

distress, then to be compassionate, I have to do four things I have to attend. Understand, empathise and help. And attending means being present with you. Nancy Klein talks about listening with fascination. Understanding means having a conversation with you to try to understand the causes of your pain or distress. empathising, of course, is feeling with you without making it my drama. And that gives me the motivation for the fourth really important element of compassion, which is helping or serving the other person. So Compassionate Leadership is really the same behaviours, it's attending to those really being present with them listening with fascination, understanding the challenges they face, empathising, with them, particularly given the level of stress and work demands in social care, and then helping them and in the context of leadership, Compassionate Leadership, helping means helping those we lead, to do their jobs more effectively, by helping to remove the obstacles that get in the way, and by helping to ensure that they have the resources that they need the right numbers of staff, the right equipment, the right training, and so on.

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Pia Rathje-Burton 04:35

What you're saying is that by I suppose by being kind, and being really present with with your with your workforce, then you are leading compassionately, is that if I kind of rephrase it? Is that how

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Michael West 04:49

it is? Yeah, I mean, kindness, I would say is a bit of a bland word. I mean, it's those four behaviours. You know, we can fool ourselves into thinking we're being kind when we not really listening to what staff are telling us, or we can fool ourselves in thinking that we're understanding, when we don't take the time to really listen to what they have to say about the challenges they face. So we understand it from their perspective. And, and, you know, we can, you know, we can say, Well, I'm a kind person, because I'm always nice to people. But empathising means putting yourself in the other person's shoes, you know, understanding what it's like to be on your third night shift in a row, you're exhausted, you've got to drive home, you've got worries about finances at home, it's, you know, really having the courage to put ourselves in the other person's shoes. And helping means you know that that's the critical element of compassion. It's not just being sympathetic, there are two completely different things. It's the commitment to help those we lead by helping to remove the obstacles that get in the way of them doing their jobs, and helping to ensure they've got the resources they need to do their jobs effectively. So it's, it takes, it takes courage to lead compassionately. It's not some soft cushion scented candles approach to leadership far from it.

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Wendy Adams 06:12

That's really interesting. And I suppose one of the things I'd like to ask is, we know how much registered managers have to do. And it's such a pressure job, and people often don't have a lot of time. What would you say to a manager who says to you, I haven't got time for Compassionate Leadership?

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06:33

I would first say I understand how you feel you've got a really pressured job. I think, Wendy, you know, again, it's about listening, understanding, empathising, and helping and having that conversation with registered managers and recognising that they are under enormous pressure, as you say. But it's also important to say that what the research evidence tells us is that compassion doesn't take more time. You know, contrary to what most people say, carers say, oh, compassion, it's will be retained. It's not about doing something extra. It's about changing the way we do what we already do. And listening, understanding, empathising and helping, which is, which is, after all, what service users want, that's what they say they want from the people who care for them that they listen, that they, you know, that they understand that they empathise and they help, and that's what staff say they want from their, from their managers as well. So, so it's not about it, this is this is something which is going to be just another task on top of what we already do. It's about changing the way we do what we already do, without it taking more time, and thereby being much more effective.

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Pia Rathje-Burton 07:49

And does that. So when you're, you know, if you're sort of kind of thinking yourself, so if you've got managers listening to this or thinking, I think I do that, but But do I really, you know, is it something that I, you know, how do I embed this, you know, is it something that I need to do you say it's nothing to do extra, but it might be something that somebody's thinking, oh, I need to think about what, what do I do next? What is the thing that they might think, right? I'm gonna start today, what are the things I'm going to do today? It's change, changing, changing their, their way, I suppose?



08:21

Well, I think the basis of, of Compassionate Leadership is being present. So when we're having a conversation, you know, I'm having a conversation with both of you. And it's about us being present with each other, being here. And now if you like, yeah. And rather than, you know, us thinking, Oh, what's, what's coming next or what happened this morning. It's about truly being present here. And now what we know about great leadership and good management is, you know, these are people who have presence. In other words, they're present in the interactions. And they're really therefore available to listen and to understand and to empathise, and help so, and I think that's about something that we can practice, not in a not in a, oh, I've got to be present, I've got to be present, I've got to be present kind of, here's something else to beat myself up for. It's it's, it's the the idea of relaxing into being present in the moment with the other people that were leading and listening openly and deeply. You know, so you asking the question of one of your staff, for example, you know, when the how are things going today, and being really present while the person answers you, and then being able to follow up with any questions that are stimulated or sparked by what that person has to say. So it's, it's really practising gently being present with staff and listening so that we understand the challenges that they face in order that we can lead and manage more effectively.

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Wendy Adams 10:04

And I think he described that almost as listening with fascination. And I think that's a really lovely term and a lovely way to describe it. But it's not just about listening. But it's about listening with fascination, and there's a difference between those two things isn't there? I mean?

listening with fascination, and there's a difference between those two things isn't there I guess?

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Michael West 10:21

Yeah. And that applies to all our interactions, doesn't it? In life, when we're truly present, and we're listening with fascination to each other, we know that that makes the other person feel good, they feel valued and respected. What the research evidence tells us is, it also makes a difference to to us. So for example, two very sophisticated research studies, one with general practitioners and one with nurses, asked them to be extra compassionate in their interactions with patients and service users over a two week period, that had a significant impact on their own well being with lower levels of anxiety, stress and depression. So so it there's a there's a mutual benefit, if you like, from being present, and listening deeply, and having the intention to help.

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Pia Rathje-Burton 11:13

And I suppose if if you as a manager, listen with fascination, and you really create that culture where that's what you're doing, then the workforce is going to start to do that a with each other, but also with the people they are supporting. And as you say, the quality of care will will improve.

M

Michael West 11:33

Yeah, absolutely. So so what we see is where in health and social care where leaders attend, understand empathise and help, we see higher levels of service, user patient satisfaction, and better outcomes as well. So because as you say, it creates a culture of people listening to each other valuing what each other has to say. And also having that commitment to asking the question, well, how can I help. And that then radiates out into the interactions between staff, and, and interactions with service users. In particular, we know, you know that these things radiate out. So when you ask people to, for example, go into work every day and do some random acts of kindness every day for a couple of weeks. They feel much better, as I've said, but also we know that the people who are the, if you like, on the receiving end of those random acts of kindness, don't just reciprocate them, they go on and are kind and helpful to other people around them as well. So, you know, this is how we create, if you like, more compassionate cultures,

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Pia Rathje-Burton 12:49

it's like a ripple effect, isn't it? Yeah,

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Michael West 12:51

exactly. A ripple effect.



12:54

So how, what

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Pia Rathje-Burton 12:55

happens then, if you are us, you said earlier that, you know, Compassionate Leadership, it's not some soft cushioning, you know, like, you know, way of managing what happens? How, how do you lead compassionately with somebody who, you know, where some you've got some performance management issues, or there's some sort of conflict? How do you do that?

M

Michael West 13:19

So I think what's important to say is that, you know, our compassion in social care is for the people who were providing services for the people we lead. And so that implies for me a really strong focus on performance management, you know, it's not about being wishy washy, we're there to make sure that we provide care for the people who we serve. And so it means a much stronger focus on performance management. Now, what often happens, I think, in teams and organisations in social care is you have somebody who's not performing well, or somebody who is, you know, a bit aggressive or discriminatory. And sometimes people don't deal with that, because it's just too difficult. But I think Compassionate Leadership is very much about saying, Well, the first thing I have to do is understand the situation of this person. So give them some feedback, because very often people don't get clear feedback, giving feedback I just saw, you know, what happened on that shift. And I think that there was a real problem with your performance on that, because, you know, this was a consequence in terms of how this service user was treated, this resident was treated, this person was treated. So giving feedback is the first step and also understanding from the other person's perspective what the difficulties are, they're experiencing in their work. So taking the time to listen, understand, empathise and say, Well, is there something I can do to help so that we can address this so giving feedback is the first step I think. And then using coaching, to coach people's performance, that's about setting, you know, two or three really clear objectives for the, for the person's performance, and monitoring that and providing them with ongoing feedback. And, and also, really, in some way, encouraging people through saying, Look, you know, it was much better during that shift, I know, you did this, and that was much better. So that you're, in some sense motivating people more. But ultimately, if you have people whose, whose performance is continually putting residents or service users at risk, or who is behaving in aggressive, aggressive and or discriminatory ways with colleagues, then we ultimately have to have the courage to performance management them out of the team or the organisation, because those behaviours will affect the culture, new people coming in seeing those, that poor performance or bad behaviour. Oh, that's the way they do things around here. Okay. And, you know, whether voluntarily or not, we tend to pick up on those behaviours and duplicate them.

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Wendy Adams 16:16

So I'm assuming that a new sort of compassionate conscious that you're talking about people within those teams might be more likely to raise their own concerns or to admit when things haven't gone. So well. Is that something that you would you'd agree with?

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Michael West 16:33

Yeah, absolutely. So it's about creating, it's about creating teams where everyone feels they have responsibility for the functioning of the team. After all, that's what good teamwork is about where everybody takes responsibility. So people raising issues, having the courage to raise issues compassionately, where there are toxic politics or, you know, chronic, chronically poor interpersonal relationships or, you know, legalistic approaches to dealing with problems rather than having open, honest, authentic conversations. And people being genuinely cute, genuinely curious in teams, about each other's well being and offering to help. So, absolutely. So every every team member having responsibility for helping to create more, more compassionate team working? Yeah.

 P

Pia Rathje-Burton 17:29

And is that how managers create good teamwork?



17:35

It's a component appear. I think, also, I mean, I've been studying teams in health and social care now for I don't know, gosh, 30 odd years. And we know, some of the key things that you need to have in place. I think one of the dangers about teamwork is team working is people think a team working is, you know, we work together? Well, no, it's more than that. It's first of all, having in our teams a clear understanding of what our purpose is, who were the other team members, and having three or four or four or five clear agreed goals. mean, in all of the research we've done, that's the most important factor determining team effectiveness. Have you made clear? Have you agreed what the team's goals are three or four, not 44? Not 34. You know, it's it's about having the discipline to have three or four clear goals, making sure everyone's clear about their roles in the team, that there isn't interpersonal conflict going on all the time, because that's a disaster for team working. And it's making sure that we have regular team meetings that we get together regularly in team meetings, positive engaging team meetings, where we talk about how we can improve the way we work, what, you know, what are the obstacles that are getting in the way? What are some of the difficulties people are experiencing, and it's making sure that, you know, we, we, when we have disagreements which we should have, about how to do the job better, how to improve how to find new and improved ways of doing things, that those disagreements are constructive, they're respectful, that we value diversity, we value differences of opinion, we value differences of in people's backgrounds, because diverse teams we know are much more innovative and productive. And that we we also make sure that teams are committed to improving working relationships with other teams that they need to work with. So those are the key issues. I think those are the key factors we need to get right for effective team working and when those are in place. Teams are dramatically more effective and productive and stress levels are much lower.

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Wendy Adams 19:52

Yeah, one of the interesting things in social care is organisation some organisations are very small and might have three or four or five staff members and others are very large and could have hundreds of staff members, you have any thoughts on whether the size of teams matter?



20:10

Yeah, so the evidence we have, again, is pretty clear from many studies around the world. But certainly of the work I've been involved in, in social care and health care, that a team of around kind of 6-8-9 people is, you know, can function really well, as they start to get bigger, it becomes more problematic. There's more relationships, there's more communication needed. And so, six to eight, nine is about, right. And generally, you need teams need to have the smallest number of people to be able to do the job. Well, I think probably in social care, something under eight or nine is probably right. And you know, where you have 100 people working in an organisation when they then that's not a single team, it's a single culture, or organisation or community. But we need to then define all of the teams within the organisation, how do we define the teams that make up those 100 people, we define them by the tasks that teams need to do. So it's not about saying, Oh, we're going to put you in this team. And in this team, and you and this team, it's what the top, what's that? What are the tasks we need to get done. And then we find people with the skills to work together as a team to do those tasks. So maybe rather clumsily saying it's tasks that define teams, not people that define teams.



Pia Rathje-Burton 21:46

So I suppose if you're managing a care home, and you, you know, you might have, you know, reflecting on my own experience, as a registered manager, you know, I had a team of, I don't know, there's probably about 30 members of staff, part of that that care care staff. But each shift was sort of kind of six or seven on each shift. So if you almost say, Okay, well, I know it's going to be different team every day, every day, but you know, you are in the early shift, you are a team. So therefore your your clear goals are, you know, you're almost kind of getting people together as a team during that, for that shift. And then together, all those teams need to work together, because you were saying that as well, that it's really important that a team work together with other other teams, that you get that team meeting together, regularly to talk about how the different teams working. And also that if you have a have a shift, and then the end of that shift, you just, you know, spend five minutes just going well, how was today? You know, your understanding? I'll think that I didn't go well, what can we improve? That you're sort of listening, listening to the team as a fascination to each other? You know, helping to say, well, what are the things that we could have done? You know, what can we what can we improve? What went well, what didn't go so? Well? So you're kind of using as a shift? Because I think it's difficult for managers to to kind of think, well, my team is 20, I can't reduce them, because that's how many they are. But if you kind of kind of group them almost in ways.



23:18

Exact. Exactly. Yeah. And, you know, your point about taking time to debrief at the end of a shift or, you know, to prepare for the beginning of the shift is really important, and taking the time to have regular meetings is important. So we know from a huge amount of research internationally that teams that do that have debriefs, you know, preparing for a shift meetings, they're between 35 and 40%, more productive on average. I mean, that's an astonishing figure. So you people often say, Well, we haven't got time to stop and have these reviews and reflect and all of this, but but that's how you really gain enormous amount. And if you just keep

spinning the hamster wheel ever faster. You don't you don't have the time, then to stop and say, How can I you know, what are we trying to achieve? How are we going about it? What do we need to change? How can we do things more efficiently, more effectively, more compassionately? So yeah, it's time massive amounts of time gained through having those sorts of meetings in a team.

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Wendy Adams 24:26

And what you seem to be describing as the importance of involving the workforce, in making those decisions about service and about how they can be more productive, I'm guessing that could either be in a sort of informal way or in a more formal way.

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Michael West 24:46

Yeah, because, you know, given the limited resources we have in social care, we've got to make the most of all of the resources we've got and our most valuable resources are our people. And so drawing on their knowledge, their skill as their life experiences, to help them, to act to help involve them in helping us to make good decisions about how we achieve our purpose in the work that we're doing is absolutely critical. And, you know, we know that the most important predictor of, you know, what's the factor that makes most difference to the performance of an organisation or a team is the level of engagement of staff, the extent to which they're contributing to decision making, you know, they feel they've got influence, they're proud of their team, their organisation, and so on. So it is absolutely about through listening with fascination, getting everybody to contribute to improving the way that we do what we do for the people we serve.

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Pia Rathje-Burton 25:51

It's interesting to read that you were involved with designing the NHS staff survey, we don't have an overall social care staff survey. But so if managers were looking to create their own or, you know, trying to develop something to capture views, and in another way, what sort of things they might think about when if they're creating a surveys from your experience? Well, I

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Michael West 26:15

think it's really important to, it's really important to think carefully about how you would design a survey like that. I mean, what's been fantastic about the national staff survey in the health service is it's run for every year for 18 years, 650,000 people completed every year. And what it's taught, what we've learned from it is that when leaders in NHS Trusts lead compassionately, those trusts subsequently have much higher levels of patient satisfaction, better care quality, better financial performance, better staff retention, lower levels of avoidable patient mortality, you know, that's what the data has shown us. So I think it is important, I would love to see a national survey for social care, I think it's really important that we have that. And I've argued for that for some years, and I hope the day will come soon. But if if you want to design surveys at local level in the book, there are lots of open source questionnaires. At the at the end of each chapter that you can use, I think it's important to look at the extent to which your staff believe

that they are being led compassionately, it's important to look at the quality of teamworking. It's important to measure engagement. And it's important to look at levels of staff stress, as well, I think those are some of the critical issues. And the national staff survey in the NHS, the questionnaire is available open source online. So you can just lift questions from there, you know, if you wish to

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Pia Rathje-Burton 27:57

you talked a little bit about stress there. So how would managers, compassionately support teams who are really stressed overwhelmed, we know that over the last two and a half years, and particularly the moment it's a really stressful time, what are the things that managers can do to support this their workforce?

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Michael West 28:06

Well, we've talked about some of them already, I think PSO you know, taking the time to listen, show you care, time to meet together to discuss keep working together to find solutions. But at a deeper level, we know that staff stress is a result of our failure to meet the core work needs of staff, we all have these three core needs and need for autonomy and control. For a feeling of belonging, and for and feeling competent, you know that we're doing a good job basically. So autonomy and control and things like am I listened to? Do I have influence over decisions that are made around here? Do I work in a culture that feels like it's just where we're learning from when things go wrong? Rather than fear and blame? You know, do I have control to have some influence over my shifts? And what some flexibility? Can I get access to nutritious food on night shifts? Can I have my respirator when I need it? Those are the things that give us a sense of autonomy and control belonging, which is so important is I want to feel valued and respected and cared for in the teams and the organisations I work in. And that makes a huge difference. And you know, we know that people who work in teams that are supportive, have 50% lower stress levels and the feeling of competences in the single factor that gets in the way of that is chronic work overload. So I it's so important is that you know people feeling are not supported and I'm overloaded in work. That's what really grinds people down. So I think we do need to keep talking about workload for people in social care as in health care, having good managerial, one to one conversations on a regular basis improves the feeling of competence that people have, and making sure that people get the training they need, I would love to see national programmes that support social care staff to get professional qualifications. You know, that's absolutely what I think we should be doing. This is such an important area of our society. And it is, you know, I think government needs to do much more in supporting the growth and the development of staff in social care

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Pia Rathje-Burton 30:37

was interesting, you're talking about workload, and if workload is overwhelming. So that can be really difficult for managers, because they may or may not be able to do anything about that, you know, they may be for whatever reason that there may just be where they you know, that the staff, you know, that are really overworked. The manager knows it. They, for whatever reason, they're unable to do something about it. Maybe now, or maybe sort of kind of long term. How would a manager deal with that situation?

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Michael West 31:13

Yeah. So you know, I this is a this is a question. Certainly I'm asked a lot in health and social care and in public, the public sector, generally, because people are under such pressure. The problem is that I think leaders very often don't want to talk about workload, because they don't have solutions. But it's not the role of the leader or manager, necessarily to have solutions to problems, it is their role to make sure that we're talking about the most difficult issues and the most difficult problems we face. Because the problem is that if we don't talk about workload, then we're not talking about the most significant factor, which is affecting the performance of our teams and organisations in social care. It's the number one factor that predicts staff stress, it's the number one reason why staff quit. So we can't just say, well, we're not going to talk about it, or we're going to avoid it, because it's too difficult. It's the most serious problem that we face. And so we have to talk about it. And the more that staff see that managers are concerned about that, that they they want to do something about it, even if they haven't got the capacity to do something about it, that they continue to talk about it and recognise the difficulties that in itself, is helpful to staff, and making sure that those other things are in place that I talked about, like people having voice, you know, control over shift work in well functioning teams, those things help to compensate for some of the high levels of work demands. And it's also I think, we've got to look up and out, we've got to go to other organisations that have found some of this some solutions to these problems. There are places both in health and social care, that are finding solutions to the problems of work overload, there are places we know where staff stress levels are much lower than they are on average in social care. So we've got to have the courage and make the time to get commitment to go and learn from these places. So we can steal with pride and adapt these new ways of doing things in our own teams and organisations.

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Wendy Adams 33:34

Absolutely. And so,

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Pia Rathje-Burton 33:38

you talk about compassion for the people that were supporting compassion for the workforce, but about self compassion. What should managers think about that, too?



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Yeah, well, I think the most important thing managers should do is be self compassionate. And I know that that will, that will kind of rebound off many people's ears as though this is irrelevant to me. But actually, what we know is that leaders and managers who are self compassionate, how that seems to as you describe, radiate out and encourages their staff to be more self compassionate, to look after themselves better. And it's, you know, if we don't care for ourselves as leaders, then we to get burned out in the process. And what it means in practice is putting into practice what we know about how we recover from stressful work. So the research tells us that, you know, we need to do outside work activities that give us a sense of detachment, I don't know detachment from work, you know, things like watching a Netflix

series or reading a book or having, you know, a dinner with the family or whatever. And activities that also challenge us a little bit. So cooking a nice meal, or baking fancy cake learning new language I don't know, you know, things that stretch us a little bit help us recover. And outside of work, we need to make sure we don't just have another long list of tasks to get through. We've got choice about what we do in non work time. And exercise, of course, is important and things like meditation or yoga, those help. Vacations, having proper rest breaks at work are important because we know that's important not just for recovery, but also for safe care for residents, service users. And you know, what's extraordinary from the research is how powerful spending time as nature in nature is for our recovery. Blue spaces, lakes sea river are the most powerful for recovery, then closely followed by green spaces, then urban green spaces, and even being outside at all. And we know that the people who most need to engage in all of these sorts of activities are the least likely to do so. So they're the ones who say, Oh, I'm here to help other people not to be self compassionate, well, mistake, actually, your ability to help others is founded on your ability to be compassionate towards yourself. Spending good quality time with the people who who we love and who love us, is the most important factor in our well being. Getting enough sleep is vital seven to eight hours sleep a night is vital for repair and maintenance of our bodies in order that we can be good leaders and deliver for others. And it's having the courage to be self aware in the moment and know when I'm feeling bad or emotionally upset or overwhelmed or guilty or angry or irritable. And then having the courage to accept those feelings, and to be nurturing and kind towards ourselves just as we would be to somebody else who was feeling hurt, upset, overwhelmed, inadequate, that turning that that love towards ourselves, is key to ultimately the depth of self compassion that we need to develop. And we know that when people practice this, if you like way of attending, understanding, empathising and helping in relation to themselves, that it enables them to connect more deeply more compassionately more authentically, with all of those that they manage all of those, they interact with all of those, that they actually engage within their lives. So it's critical to wellbeing.

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Wendy Adams 37:46

That is so important, isn't it? I think managers often get so caught up in caring for the people in the services and the people they support and caring for their staff. But actually, they they don't think about themselves and they don't think about themselves until it actually almost becomes a crisis point. So I think that that notion of, you know, that self awareness and thinking about self compassion is is really important. Right from the start.

M

Michael West 38:17

Yeah, Wendy. And I think that's really important. And it's, and again, it's about a way of being not Oh, I've got to remember to be self compassionate.

W

Wendy Adams 38:25

So I just want to we have a question that we ask all of our podcast guests, which is our time to care slot in every episode. And I just wondered whether or not you could share with us, what's your most time saving tip?

M**Michael West 38:43**

Yeah, well, it is. we've chatted about a couple of things already, haven't we? Wendy? Um, and I was saying, you know, getting the team together to stop reflect review that increases productivity by 35 40%. That's pretty big time saving. I think one of you know, I've been really fascinated by some recent research showing that when you when you ask people to improve something like I don't know, an interview system, or a Lego building 95% of the time they add stuff on, rather than simplifying when often the solution is to simplify. So we keep adding stuff and adding stuff and adding stuff. So I think we need to learn to simplify. I recently been thinking about I recently got an electric car. That's simplification on a grand scale, they got rid of the engine, how many how many things go wrong with engines when they got rid of the engine? And all you've got is a battery in a transmission system. It's so much more effective and so much simpler. Um, the other thing I'd say I'd say is, you know, I was reading some other research where people were put in different kinds of situations one where they got some added time unexpectedly Another way, they were asked to waste some time. And another where they were asked to go and help somebody. And the people who helped somebody were the ones who felt they had most time to spare at the end. Because somehow or other when we help others, it gives us a feeling of time richness, perhaps because we feel a greater sense of purpose or meaning in our lives. So helping other people is a great way of saving time.

W**Wendy Adams 40:31**

Fantastic. And we've got one final question. And again, this is a question we ask a lot of our podcast guests. So I'd like you to imagine that you're on a lift in the 10th floor, and you're going down with some a group of registered managers. And before you get out, so you haven't got very long, you want to tell them? What is your most important key message? What's the key message that you'd like to leave them

**40:57**

with? Well, I'd love to have a good chat with them on the way down in the lift, that would be lovely. So we don't all stand there in silence. So thanks for giving me the opportunity to talk to them. I look, I would say, you must practice self compassion. That's really a you know, it's a difficult message, I think for people who are carers to hear, but it is so important and there's lots of good books out there. Tara Brach, radical compassion Kristin Neff is lots of good books on self compassion, practice, self compassion, and a look after yourself. Your happiness and well being is critical to your leadership, and to your ability to be present with those who lead and listen with fascination to them.

P**Pia Rathje-Burton 41:46**

Very much, Michael. Yeah, that's a great message at the end. And I think you're right, you know, the number of managers we talked to who are so busy during the day job looking after everybody, they just forget to do it for themselves. I think you're completely right. That's, that's the start, isn't it? Thank you so much as that got, gosh, we've, we've covered a lot. I knew this would be a really interesting conversation. So thank you so much for your time today. Really, really appreciate this.

M

Michael West 42:14

It's a real pleasure and real, real delight to talk with you both. Thank you.

P

Pia Rathje-Burton 42:18

Thanks a lot. Bye, bye,

W

Wendy Adams 42:20

bye. Wow, that was fantastic, wasn't it having the opportunity to talk to Michael and he had so many interesting things to say. I was really interested in what we have to say around listening with fascination. And what that means because we spend so much time talking about the importance of listening in social care. And often I think we are listening, but it's made me really reflect on how many times do I actually listen with fascination as opposed to just listening? And I think the importance of really hearing what people are saying, whether that's people who use the services, or whether that's members of the staff team, what did you say that was particularly interesting for you?

P

Pia Rathje-Burton 43:16

Yeah, for me, I, I love the way he describes teamwork. You know, and what's really how you create that, that teamwork, you know, first of all this, you know, you have to have this, this fairly small team. And if you read any of the other blogs and things that Michael has written, he talks about the pizza roll, which I quite like, you know, your team shouldn't be any bigger than you can share pizza, which to me, that's practical, I can see that. And I think if you start from that, and you think, Well, how am I going to do that, you know, he's, he's quite right. When you have a massive team, you start having all interpersonal conflicts, you're not everybody's on the same page, all those things starts to go wrong. So finding a way of using your team. So it's, it's, it's no bigger than, than sharing a pizza. So I really like that. And I think the other thing that I really liked was when he was saying about creating some really simple, not many, not 20, but sort of kind of three or four roles, or, or kind of visions or goals for your team that you all agree on. And in the book, he talks about five things we must always do and five things you must never do. To me, that kind of makes sense. Again, I can kind of get my head around. Or you could just have two things you'd want to never do, you know, and it can be you know, if I'm like, if somebody makes a cup of tea, then make one for everybody, but it could be something much, much bigger than that, you know. So I think having having those clear, this is what we what we're all aiming for. I think it's really, you know, really sort of struck me as something that that's really important and I think if you link it then to the getting everybody to, to listen to a fascination to use some of those other other parts. And we talked about the ripple effect. I think that's a really effective listener fascination is a really interesting phrase. It's a he mentioned Nancy Clyde who was written this book was kind of quotes a few times from from that book is about listening really well, you know, how often are we kind of nodding away? Yeah, I'm

listening like, you know, you do it with with probably the people who are close to us, and we're really somewhere else you're thinking about something else. So you know, really being present and listening is think is really, really interesting.

W Wendy Adams 45:38

And listening is such a key leadership quality, as he outlined really right through when we were talking to him. And the issue around leadership is so topical for Skills for Care at the moment, because currently, we're really focusing on developing leaders. And we will be having a whole host of blogs and articles shared via our social media and on our website, looking at all aspects of how to develop leaders in the sector. And part of that will be around focusing on those leadership skills, which will include listening as part of that.

P Pia Rathje-Burton 46:16

Absolutely. So first timers on the podcast, Wendy, how was it?

W Wendy Adams 46:25

Interesting. Yes. So informative and interesting. So yes, I've learned I've learned a lot.

P Pia Rathje-Burton 46:31

Yeah. And what a great guest. So I think we're, obviously is a new series. So we've got serious three, one of the things we're really keen to do in series three as a bit of a new thing is sometimes I have questions from the listeners to ask our guests. So we so if you have got a question, you think, Oh, wait, I never know who to ask that, that, you know, email to us, either to myself or Wendy, you can find all contact details on the Skills for Care website, or to the Skills for Care marketing team, which the details will be in the show notes. So if you've got a question you thought this would be a great question for future guests. Or if there's something you think, God, this would be a great topic, let us know. And absolutely, we'll we'll we'll consider it and have a look at it. The other thing I really want you to do, having listened today, today's podcast is wherever you get your podcast from so whatever podcast platform, you get it from, make sure you notify, press the notifications price to following. So every time we release a new episode, you get a notification and you know, to listen, and hopefully, find a good time to listen. And please do also share. So if you've enjoyed this episode, tell everybody else tell the other managers that you know, oh, you know, I listen to this, and I found out something new. You know, I think it's always great. When I listen to podcasts. I always kind of think at the end of it. You know what, what's the one thing I've learned from this from listening to this episode? And I think if you if you think about that, when you've listened today and you listen to my call, you think there was something I learned one thing and I'm going to take that away and using my service.

W Wendy Adams 48:05

That's a really useful tip

That's a really useful tip.

 Pia Rathje-Burton 48:08

Yeah, absolutely. Hopefully. So that's it for now. So hope you have enjoyed this episode. And you'll continue to listen to the care exchange. Bye for now. Bye