Turning the microscope the other way: How healthy is the health system?

Introducing the ‘Gathering of Kindness’ — transforming healthcare cultures

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Objectives:

• Healthy culture = safety and quality
• Positive and strengths-focussed language such as kindness = a successful social and organisational change methodology to tackle complex problems.

Kindness does four vital things:

Kindness makes the best use of your team — improving communication, teamwork and encouraging supportive work cultures which are key factors affecting quality and safety.

Kindness creates unexpected wonderful moments of joy — it restores purpose, hope and meaning to the work of clinicians.

Kindness facilitates safety — by fostering a culture where people aren’t afraid to speak up.

Kindness promotes healing — reduces pain and stress, enhances surgical outcomes and quality of life.

Understanding how cultural change happens

Positive and strengths-focussed language such as kindness = a successful social and organisational change methodology to tackle complex problems.

Healthy culture = safety and quality

• Leading research around the world is revealing healthcare culture as a key component in quality and safety.

• Evidence clearly shows where kind and empathic communication are prevalent, clinical teams are more effective, staff morale is higher, patient complaints are fewer and quality and safety improves.

Key factors in achieving meaningful improvement in healthcare system safety

Facilitating difficult conversations

The Gathering of Kindness addresses concerning international trends amongst healthcare professionals:

- Poor communication
- Bullying
- Emotional distress
- Disengagement
- Burnout
- Suicide

These issues lead to worse patient outcomes

Problematic responses

- More policies and procedures
- Zero tolerance
- ‘Weeding out the bad apples’

These responses are negative, reactive, ineffective and counter productive.

We need to change the conversation and talk instead about a kind health system, and how we may get there.

For more information and inspiration visit: www.gatheringofkindness.org and www.hush.org.au

The book Beyond the stethoscope: Doctors’ stories of reclaiming hope, heart & healing in medicine is available at www.lucymayes.com.au and Book Depository/Kindle/Amazon.