Royal College of Nursing
Inclusive Leadership Conference, Experiential Session
July 2016

Report of Delegate Feedback
Background

On the 13 July 2016, Enact Solutions was delighted to deliver an hour-long drama-based, experiential session as part of the Royal College of Nursing’s conference on Inclusive Leadership for directors of nursing and very senior level nurses.

Aim

The aim of the session was to dramatically bring to life the kinds of challenges facing leaders aspiring to create a more inclusive workplace and to reflect on how they relate to the Care Quality Commission’s well-led domain. As a result, delegates would be able to identify specific challenges and think about options for their own inclusive leadership action plan.

Evaluation

Electronic polling was used throughout the session, including several evaluation questions at the end. This report summarises all of the polling results from the 85 individuals who took part in the session.
An Inclusive Workplace

Early on in the session, having briefly outlined what is meant by ‘inclusion’ and its benefits, delegates were polled on how inclusive, or otherwise, they thought their own workplace was (Fig. 1). They were invited to give it a score anywhere between 1, ‘not at all’, and 5, ‘extremely’.

The largest number of delegates (38%) rated their organisation in the middle of the scale, presumably believing it was about average. Either side of this, two out of five delegates in total gave their workplace a higher inclusion score of 4 (32%) or 5 (8%), while around half that number of delegates gave it a lower score of 2 (20%) or 1 (1%).

Fig. 1 How inclusive, or otherwise, is your workplace?
Individual Bias

When asked about their own level of inclusiveness as a leader, very few delegates (5%) reckoned they were less inclusive than most of their colleagues (Fig. 2). In fact, three quarters of delegates believed they were either slightly more inclusive (32%) or a lot more inclusive (44%) than most of their colleagues.

Of course, it might well be true that a majority of delegates were in fact more inclusive than their colleagues, but it’s also the case that this pattern of response has been found in many studies, examining a wide range of abilities. Illusory superiority, as it is called, is a recognised psychological phenomenon whereby many of us overestimate our own abilities.
Leadership Strengths

Delegates were polled on a variety of inclusive leadership capabilities to find out which ones, if any, are strengths within their organisations, and which are strengths of their own.

Encouraging ideas, creativity and challenge was the only capability that a majority of delegates felt was a strength in their own organisations (65%).

In contrast, a majority of delegates themselves thought they were strong when it comes to encouraging ideas, creativity and challenge (78%), encouraging others to grow and progress (72%), providing positive feedback (67%), appreciating perspectives (54%), truly listening (53%), and leading for all, rather than self-gain (51%).
Barriers

Following the first of two dramatised scenes set in a fictional NHS organisation, Allswell NHS Trust, delegates briefly explored the underlying assumptions and other pressures they recognised that potentially impact on inclusive leadership. They were then presented with a list of potential barriers and polled on which ones are likely to be the main barriers within their own organisation (Fig. 4).

The top four barriers, highlighted by a majority of delegates, were the prevailing style of management (65%), senior staff recruiting in their ‘own image’ (62%), perceived higher priorities (61%), and time and resource pressures (52%).
Impact

Following a second dramatised scene, the session was drawn to a close with a brief recap and the polling of two evaluation statements.

More than nine out of ten delegates said that the session had helped them think about the challenges facing leaders aspiring to create an inclusive workplace (Fig. 5). Just over two out of five delegates strongly agreed (41%) that this was the case, while more than half agreed (55%).

Finally, well over nine out of ten delegates also found the session worthwhile (Fig. 6). Just under half strongly agreed (46%) that this was how they felt about it, while over half agreed (51%).