5 characteristics of a confident, joyful south east London system leader

Co-designed by members of the community of south east London system leaders, May-October 2022

KALEIDOSCOPE
Health and Care

South East London
Integrated Care System

Five characteristics of a confident, joyful SEL system leader

Building trust across boundaries

Effective SEL system leaders **build trust** with colleagues and residents across organisational, professional, geographical and cultural boundaries.

They understand that without trust there can be no effective collaboration. They are curious about and empathetic to the diversity of contexts, perspectives and experiences of colleagues across south-east London health and care. They role model equalities thinking and working with others for the common good.

Embracing difference and challenge

SEL system leaders **embrace difference and challenge** to create sustainable, joyful and effective workplaces and communities.

They find what connects us and revel in our differences in a process that brings people closer. Through supporting everyone to be their whole selves and fostering psychologically safe environments they maximise their ability to respond to the complex needs of our different people and communities.

Driving purposeful collaboration

SEL system leaders **drive purposeful collaboration** to address problems that affect the health and wellbeing of our population and that can only be solved together.

They understand that investing in collaboration has the potential to make their work more fulfilling and impactful. They know that collaboration isn't organic - it takes skill and deliberate effort to build shared purpose, trusting relationships and enabling ways of working.

Catalysing and embedding innovation

SEL system leaders **catalyse and embed innovation** to find new ideas that address the problems that most negatively impact our population.

They move ideas into action and spread and scale those that work across our patch. They understand that innovation starts by creating the conditions where everyone they interact with feels empowered to share ideas and try new things.

Partnering with those we work with and serve

Effective SEL system leaders **build relationships** with those they work with and serve.

They are guided by values and they strive to be authentic across all environments. Through investing time, empathy and curiosity in relationships, they are **health and care partners** who help people and communities to meet their wellbeing priorities and challenges.

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They build trust via a combination of competence and character. Specifically by:

- Working with partners to set clear **boundaries** at the start of any collaboration, making clear what's okay and what's not okay, and why. Acknowledging difference and assuring clarity of scope at the outset of any collaboration is the basis of trust

- Being **reliable and competent** - they do what they say. They stay aware of their competencies and limitations so they don't over promise and so are able to deliver on commitments.

- Demonstrating **accountability** by owning their mistakes, apologising where necessary and making amends

Competence

- Keeping the **confidence** of partners by not sharing information or confidential insights shared in the process of collaboration with parties outside of the relationship without permission

- Acting with **integrity**. This means finding shared purpose and choosing courage over comfort in its pursuit; doing what's right in the common interest over what's fast, or easy; and practicing their values, not just professing them.

- Practising **non-judgement and compassion**. They enable people to ask for what they need or what they are worried about in the collaboration without judgement or fear of embarrassment or censure.

- Being **generous**. They practice active listening - listening with curiosity to understand not respond. They share with colleagues and partners without 'keeping score'. They share successes and they celebrate acts of generosity from others.

Character

Co-designed by the SEL System Leadership Community May 2022. Informed and inspired by the work of: Baroness Onora O'Neill, Stephen Covey, Brene Brown, Adam Kahane and Paul J. Zak

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They drive purposeful collaboration through a combination of building shared purpose, the right culture and the structures and resources to succeed. Specifically by:

Purpose

- Using the **power of stories** to connect diverse groups of people to a shared purpose and to the urgent challenges and choices they face together. They work with partners to establish a clear and compelling 'why' that everyone believes in and that can guide collaboration

- Getting to the **root of a problem** rather than focusing on the symptoms. They avoid the false generosity of focusing on the easiest path at the expense of achieving lasting change

Culture

- **Meeting people where they are at**, and making no assumptions that they share the same vision from the outset. They value the process of alignment as much as the outcome and celebrate collaboration wherever possible

- Promoting **autonomy even over control**. They foster meaningful participation above orderliness, leaving ego at the door. They understand that they don't have all the answers and let go and actively give up power, even where others might do things differently

- Stimulating **positive conflict**, even over speed. They are alert to the risk of groupthink and challenge partners where a desire for cohesion might be affecting good decision-making and problem solving

Resources

- Using **joined up data and evidence** to inform learning and decision making. They measure progress against clear goals and share insights openly, prioritising transparency even over comfort. They put in place **clear and transparent decision** making processes

Catalysing and embedding innovation
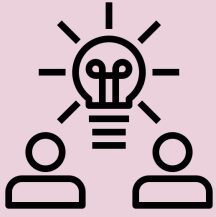
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They catalyse and embed innovations through invention, adoption and diffusion. Specifically by:

- Creating conditions that enable **high levels of psychological safety,** where colleagues, partners and service users are empowered to share ideas, questions, concerns and failures without fear of judgement. They believe that everyone's suggestions and opinions have the potential to improve our understanding of problems and catalyse innovation

- Actively involving **people with diverse identities, perspectives and backgrounds** in problem-solving efforts. They understand that highly innovative teams are ones with high levels of diversity and that siloed thinking limits our potential to find new, more impactful solutions

- **Looking for and analysing patterns** to identify potential solutions from outside their profession and sector, and adapting them to shape the needs of their own context. They actively look outward beyond health and care for inspiration

- Encouraging and modelling **problem-centric** thinking. They dig deep into the root problem and stay aware of the tendency to drift towards getting better at executing a solution rather than at tackling a problem

- Modelling and enabling **experimentation that is highly disciplined**. They 'fail fast and well' by focusing as much on the risks of not doing something as the risks of doing something, creating agile feedback loops to track what's working and what's not working in real time, and drawing out learning at every stage

- Behaving with **humility above all else**, prioritising the needs of those affected by the problem they are seeking to address over their own needs. They are interested in creating impact, not heroes or heroines

- Paying attention to **adoption, adaptation and diffusion of innovation,** engaging in the complexity of this challenge and the importance of local context

Partnering with those we work with and serve

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They partner with those they work with and serve through power and relationships, specifically by:

- acknowledging and enabling the **power that people and communities have** to improve their own wellbeing - they understand that wellness happens in the fabric of families and communities

- **facilitating decisions** that are made by the people who are closer than they are to the lives of families and communities using services

- **telling their own stories**, and encouraging the diverse people and communities they work with and serve to tell theirs; as a way to build long term relationships across traditional boundaries and beyond institutional walls

- listening with compassion, an open mind and heart, in order to be better health and care partners, who understand what wellbeing means to those they serve; they focus on **what matters to people**, not what is the matter with them

- creating and normalising **safe and brave spaces** to have open conversations about improving inclusivity in their contexts, developing collective understanding of the behaviours that positively and negatively affect people's sense of belonging

Power

Relationships

Embracing difference and challenge
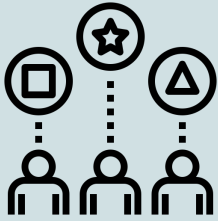
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They embrace difference and challenge through fostering belonging and psychologically safety. Specifically by:

- **Role modelling** being their whole selves and enabling those they work with and serve to be themselves too; they prioritise building connection in every interaction in ways that support everyone to bring their unique identity, experiences and perspectives to the table

- **Searching out complexity,** recognising that as human beings, we hold different truths about how we experience the world; they proactively raise their awareness of how unconscious biases and stereotyping are impacting their understanding of people with different identities and experiences to their own, and avoid prioritising one truth while excluding others

- Noticing and **responding** to signs that systems are prioritising people who hold certain identities or values over others; they call out such instances in ways that create opportunities for mutual learning and growth and reduce inequity

Belonging

- Noticing and **surfacing what isn't said**; recognising and rebalancing explicit and implicit power dynamics that prevent people from speaking up with ideas, asking questions and disagreeing and that cause people to hide parts of themselves

- **Inviting dissenting views** and amplifying quieter voices; they respond to subtle indicators and queues in those around them in ways that enable everyone to fully contribute to the conversation

- Fostering a culture of **constructive and courageous feedback**; they are alert to opportunities to embed the giving and receiving of feedback into their day-to-day and do so in ways that support them and those around them to respond with curiosity and grow

- Asking **who hasn't been included** in decision-making processes; they identify who is least similar to those around the table, in terms of visible or invisible differences, and form active partnerships with people, groups or organisations who can best represent their needs

Psychological safety

Co-designed by the SEL System Leadership Community October 2022. Informed and inspired by the work of Patrick Lencioni, Irving Janis, Susan Michie and bell hooks