



Building healthier teams




A Difficult Message

Supporting Workbook


**“It might be a five year or even a ten-year
issue, but what we can do is improve it.”**



Calling out the problem, not apportioning blame

 **“It’s all brilliant what you’ve done but actually, you’re carrying the highest deficit. It’s a really a tough message for clinicians and operational leaders who actually work so, so hard just to keep the lights on.”**

Martin joined the NHS from a corporate role with Vodafone. He quickly assimilated what issues he was presented with and was very clear about what the problems were. He didn’t shy away from calling out these problems, but his approach is not one of “I’m right and you’re all wrong”. Instead, he helps people understand what the issues are, and what can and can’t be done. Martin acknowledges that messages can be tough, because clinicians and operational managers work extremely hard to deliver services for patients. That said, some things must change, and Martin takes care to focus people on what can be controlled, changed and influenced. He doesn’t apportion blame but identifies what can be improved with everyone contributing.

-  Think about difficult messages you may have to deliver as a leader.
- Don’t point the finger of blame. It doesn’t achieve anything.
- Research why things are as they are. Identify what can be controlled and focus on what can be done.
- It’s important that people feel part of the solution, not the problem.

 Notes and reflections: _____
