



Creating the right environment

Supporting Workbook





Respect across every role

Insight one



“I respect my staff no matter the banding, no matter their job, no matter their experience.”

“From my healthcare assistants that do the breakfast every day and wash all those patients, who answer those buzzers day in, day out, to my band 5s who work night shifts and can quite literally save a life at 3 o’clock in the morning [...] all my staff are really amazing.”



People notice very quickly whether respect is real or just something a leader says. When every role is valued, staff are more likely to value each other and work together well. That has a direct effect on how patients are treated, especially on busy shifts when teamwork matters most.



Try this in practice

- Thank people for specific parts of their work, not just general effort
- Notice contributions across all roles during handover or safety huddles
- Speak about support staff and registered staff with the same level of respect
- Show that standards apply to everyone, including you
- Step in early if one role is being dismissed or overlooked



Quick reflection

Who on your team might need to feel more seen today?



Plan feedback before you speak

Insight two



“When I deliver feedback I don’t want it to come across in a blame way, I want it to come across in a constructive way [...] so that we can improve.”

“I don’t ever deliver anything just off the cuff [...] I really think about what I’m going to say, I really think about how I’m going to deliver the message.”



Poorly timed feedback can land as criticism, even when the point is valid. Taking time to think it through helps people hear the message without feeling attacked. That makes it easier to improve practice and keeps trust intact.



Try this in practice

- Pause before raising a difficult issue, especially if you are frustrated
- Write down the key point you need people to understand
- Check your wording with a trusted colleague if the message is sensitive
- Explain why the issue matters, not just what went wrong
- Choose a calm moment rather than saying it in passing



Quick reflection

Would your message feel constructive if you heard it yourself?



Share more than the good news

Insight three



“I felt there was a lot of stuff that went on behind the sidelines and I don’t want to keep my staff out of it.”

“I think it’s important that my staff know all of the good things, all of the bad things, all of the in between [...] and I think that creates a good environment where people really feel like part of the team.”



When information is held back, people can feel disconnected from decisions that affect their work. Sharing what is going well, what is difficult, and what is changing helps staff feel included rather than managed from a distance. That sense of involvement can strengthen trust and team identity.



Try this in practice

- Give brief updates on changes, pressures, and positives during routine team touchpoints
- Be honest about challenges without making people feel helpless
- Explain what is known and what is still unclear
- Make space for questions when sharing difficult news
- Keep communication regular so updates do not only happen when something has gone wrong



Quick reflection

Does your team know enough to feel involved?



Kindness needs adapting

Insight four



“I think you have to be kind [...] I don’t think there’s a one size fits all model.”

“I think you need to embrace everybody individually [...] manage people differently depending on where they’re from or their personalities or how long they’ve been here.”



Kind leadership is not about treating everyone exactly the same. People need different levels of support, direction, and understanding depending on their experience and circumstances. Adapting your approach helps staff feel understood without lowering expectations.



Try this in practice

- Set clear standards, then adjust how you support people to meet them
- Check what each person needs rather than assuming one approach works for all
- Tailor your communication for new starters, experienced staff, and those under pressure
- Stay alert to differences in confidence, personality, and background
- Keep kindness visible in tone, timing, and follow-up



Quick reflection

Who on your team needs a different approach from you right now?



Build a team that can stand without you

Insight five



“I like to think that I’ve created a team that is independent without me as well.”

“I don’t think I’m a micromanager, I like to think that I trust my staff to work autonomously and independently without me.”



A strong ward does not rely on one person being present at all times. When staff are trusted to use their skills and judgement, they grow in confidence and the team becomes more resilient. That matters on every shift, especially when leaders are away or the ward is under pressure.



Try this in practice

- Let capable staff lead parts of the shift without stepping in too quickly
- Back autonomous decision-making when it is safe and within role
- Use deputies well so leadership is visible even when you are away
- Avoid checking every detail if the person has already shown they can manage it
- Recognise expertise openly so confidence keeps building



Quick reflection

Where could you step back slightly and let someone else lead?

■ If you try one thing

Be deliberate with how you speak to your team.

Show them you respect them, and let them see that you've thought about what you're saying.

That's what builds trust, and everything else follows from there.

