



**ORGANISATION
DEVELOPMENT**

A Guide to Do OD:

**Who we are and
what we do**



Contents

01	Introduction	16	Connect with the Do OD community
02	What is Do OD?	17	Resources
03	The story so far	19	Our COVID-19 response
04	Priorities and activity	21	A positive look forward
08	OD Essentials	23	Contact us
12	OD Virtual Mentoring		



Introduction

In an ever-changing world, the practice of organisation development (OD) and the professionals involved in it are more important than ever.

Since 2013, Do OD has worked with the community, for the community, to raise the ambition and deepen the practice of OD, in service of the people we work with and those they provide services to.

During that time, our OD community has pulled together to explore questions they did not have answers to, growing and learning along the way. Our intention has always been to help our community to connect with a wider network, share their practice, learn from each other, and grow their capability and confidence.

We have learned so much about the NHS and the impact of OD, we thought it was time to collate it and share it in an accessible way.

2020 changed the way we work beyond imagination and presented us with challenges that we have never experienced, even in the complex system of the NHS.

The NHS OD community responded to the challenge of COVID-19 with sensitive and impactful actions. As we move through different phases of the pandemic, the world of work may never be the same again and our OD practice must keep up, or stay one step ahead of the changing context we are in.

This guide feels like the end of the first chapter of our work, and the beginning of another. It is a privilege to serve our OD community and we experience on a daily basis the passion and dedication you bring to the NHS. We hope that our work reflects that passion as we commit to supporting you in this brave new world that will contain many unknowns.

Together we are always better.



Paul, Karen & Steph
Team Do OD
February 2021

What is Do OD?

Do OD is the expert resource on OD for health and care, delivered by NHS Employers in partnership with NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI).

We support, develop and raise the profile and influence of OD practitioners in health and care by stimulating the theory and practice of OD.

How do we define OD?

OD enables people to transform systems. It is the application of behavioural science to organisational and system issues to align strategy and capability. It enhances the effectiveness of systems through interventions that enhance people's collective capability to achieve shared goals.

We support OD practitioners, organisations and systems, and aim to strengthen their ambition and capability to make an impact on patient care.

We take a systems approach to our work, clearly demonstrating our values of curiosity, creativity, courage and co-production in everything we do. Aligning and connecting across our system with all those leading change, we offer insights from global OD theory and practice to help shape the future of OD in the NHS.

We have created:

- a national network and community of practice
- thought leadership in the OD space
- tools, models, knowledge and OD theory
- connectivity through conferences and events
- a collective voice for the OD community in health and care.

The ten most frequently used words to describe Do OD in our 2020 community survey were:

1. supportive
2. engaging
3. inspirational
4. innovative
5. network
6. creative
7. informative
8. collaborative
9. inclusive
10. community.

The story so far

A timeline of highlights from our first 8 years.

2013



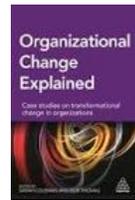
2014



2015



2016



2017



2018



2019



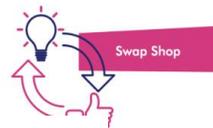
2020



Blogs and articles



OD Virtual Mentoring



Swap Shop



Culture tool



Do OD app



CPD tool



OD Essentials: The Fundamentals of Organisational Development

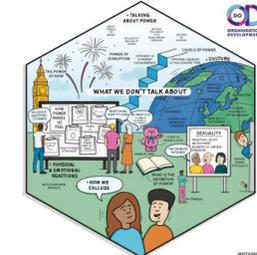
Understand Organisational Development (OD) models and strategies, and learn how to lead change in your organisation through OD.

Starts 2019

Go to course



Community Conversations
Subject: Community Conversations



What OD practitioners do

What OD practitioners do	What OD practitioners do	What OD practitioners do
1. They work in a variety of roles, from strategic advisor to operational support.	2. They work in a variety of roles, from strategic advisor to operational support.	3. They work in a variety of roles, from strategic advisor to operational support.
4. They work in a variety of roles, from strategic advisor to operational support.	5. They work in a variety of roles, from strategic advisor to operational support.	6. They work in a variety of roles, from strategic advisor to operational support.
7. They work in a variety of roles, from strategic advisor to operational support.	8. They work in a variety of roles, from strategic advisor to operational support.	9. They work in a variety of roles, from strategic advisor to operational support.
10. They work in a variety of roles, from strategic advisor to operational support.	11. They work in a variety of roles, from strategic advisor to operational support.	12. They work in a variety of roles, from strategic advisor to operational support.



@NHSE_DoOD

Do OD priorities and activity

Central to our work in OD in the NHS is enabling successful delivery of the NHS People Plan. The NHS People Plan is practical and ambitious, and means more staff working differently in a compassionate and inclusive culture. Built on extensive engagement, OD has a key role to play.



Human resources (HR) and organisational development (OD) professionals are critical to the NHS and will play a unique professional role in driving the implementation of this plan, whatever the size of organisation they work in.

They can help the NHS attract and retain more people, embed a compassionate and inclusive culture, create an increasingly multidisciplinary and adaptive workforce, and drive different and more flexible working practices. Professionals leading HR and OD work also play a crucial role in smaller organisations and in primary care.

We are the NHS: People Plan 2020/21 - Action for us All, July 2020



The NHS People Plan says:

The NHS needs more people, working differently, in a compassionate and inclusive culture:

- **More people** in training and education and being recruited to ensure that our services are appropriately staffed.
- **Working differently**, embracing new ways of working in teams, across organisations and sectors, and supported by technology.
- **In a compassionate and inclusive culture**, building on the compassion at the heart of our NHS to look after and value our people, create a sense of belonging and promote a more inclusive service and workplace so that our people will want to stay

Actions to focus on:

- **Looking after our people**, particularly the actions we must all take to keep our people safe, healthy, and well – both physically and psychologically.
- **Belonging in the NHS**, highlighting the support and action needed to create an organisational culture where everyone feels they belong.
- **New ways of working and delivering care**, emphasising that we need to make effective use of the full range of our people's skills and experience to deliver the best possible patient care.
- **Growing for the future**, particularly the need to build on renewed interest in NHS careers, to expand and develop our workforce, as well as taking steps to retain colleagues for longer.



Addressing complex OD challenges

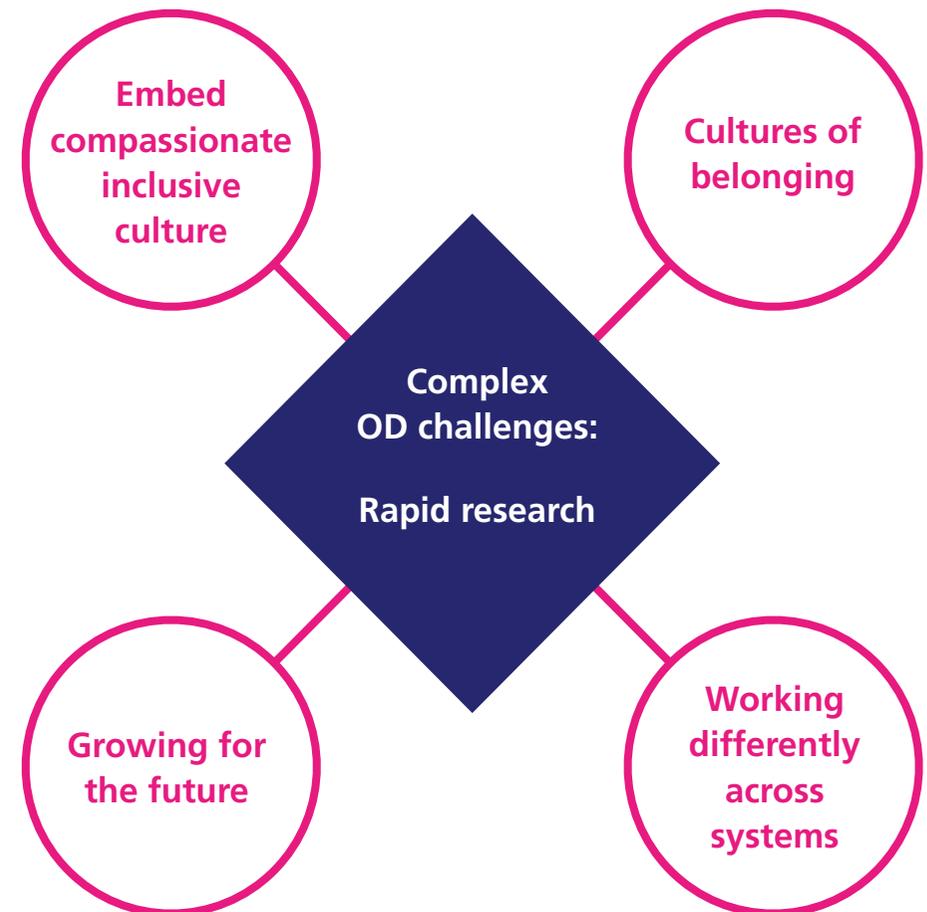
Here at Do OD we recognised there were opportunities for OD teams to contribute towards transformational change in organisations.

Our ongoing commitment to building the capability of OD professionals creates the conditions for success in addressing complex OD challenges. At the intersection of the NHS People Plan and our OD community priorities, we have identified four areas that require support, exploration, and further resources:

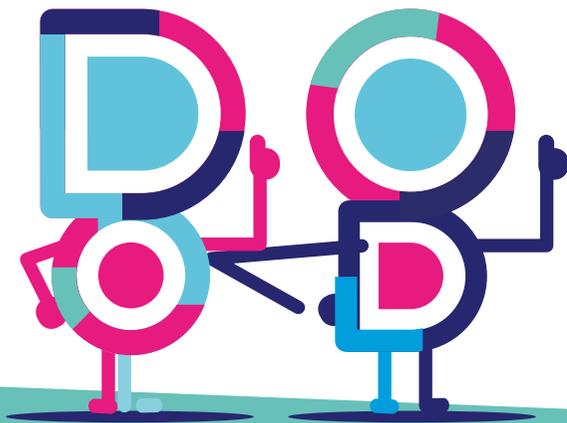
1. Embedding compassionate and inclusive cultures.
2. Ensuring a culture of belonging.
3. Teams working differently across systems.
4. Growing our workforce for the future.

Each of these areas have complex and unique OD challenges, which we will respond to through rapid research and practice groups to explore, test and implement new ways of thinking.

We have set up rapid inquiry groups, which will be producing work to share at our eighth annual conference in March 2021.



As well as the work on the complex OD challenges, we will continue to build and maintain our Do OD community through:



OD Essentials

Since the launch of Do OD in 2013, we have invested significant resource around building OD capacity and capability. Our work on building OD capability has uncovered a need for the system to support ways for OD practitioners to address the basics of OD theory and practice.

The online course, OD Essentials - The Fundamentals of Organisation Development, was designed to meet this need through providing OD practitioners working in the NHS and social care with a thorough grounding in the theory and practice of organisation development.

The course covers a number of elements:

- Exploring the origins of OD.
- Understanding essential elements of OD theory and research.
- Learning the definitions and applications of OD in practice.
- Discovering the role of OD in enhancing the effectiveness of systems through interventions that improve people's ability to achieve shared goals.
- Understanding the importance of the self in OD practice, and the impact of OD on the quality and safety of patient care.

When learners finish the course, they are asked to complete an anonymous end-of-course survey.

We asked survey respondents to rate the following statements out of 5, with 5 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree. The average scores for each statement are below:

- The course helped me to be able to choose and integrate a variety of OD/change tools effectively ★★★★★
- The course introduced useful and evidence-based tools and models ★★★★★
- The course supported connections among participants ★★★★★
- The course invited individual and group reflection ★★★★★
- I know more about the theory and practice of OD now than I did before the course ★★★★★

Check out what some participants said about OD Essentials...

Application in real-life work settings

"Being relatively new to OD it has given me a real grounding in OD theory and application and I'm already using what I've learnt in work placed OD interventions."

"Following the course, I created our local OD model which encompasses the OD Essentials framework. The only real difference is that I added wellbeing into the framework."

"The course has helped me to build the self-confidence and belief to enable me take up a job role within an OD environment when the right opportunity arises."

Useful and high-quality learning materials and content

"I found the course helpful in encouraging me to analyse my role within a complex organisation and consider how my role can add value and support the achievement of trust strategy."

"I have found the material fantastic; it's comprehensive but concise and easy to digest and has given me so much food for thought regarding my own practice."

"The academic history of OD combined with the opportunity to reflect on its practical application within your organisation, has been incredibly helpful at refreshing my vigour and passion for OD."

Well structured

"The weeks were well structured, and I liked the online aspect. The platform made the content accessible and flexible to my needs."

"It really fitted my learning style and pressured workload – I was able to do it in bite-sized chunks around other commitments."

"I was delighted to see a specific programme to support staff in OD. It made you stop and reflect on your practice and the exercise and reflective questions worked well. The length of the programme worked well."

Check out what some participants said about OD Essentials...

Highly recommended

"It's something I think every manager and leader should have in their kit bag."

"I found this course very useful and have recommended it to the workstream leads in my department responsible for building capability, leadership, and team development."

"I would absolutely recommend to others – it's a great way for everyone to see and understand what OD is and importantly what it isn't – it's not a magic wand, it's hard work, commitment and persistence."

Learning from others

"I really liked the ability to add comments and share each other's experiences. I valued the perspective of other learners as it helped me compare their experiences with my own organisation."

"Liked being able to interact with others. Liked having my thoughts challenged."

"I've particularly enjoyed hearing other participants' perspectives on the various topics and found it refreshing to find that thoughts and ambitions for the future of OD are in line with my own within my organisation."

Online learning for OD professionals

From 2021 we will offer the following online courses for OD practitioners working in the NHS:

OD Essentials - we will be continuing to offer OD Essential as well as introducing further courses for graduates of OD Essentials and experienced OD professionals on topics such as:

- Doing OD virtually
- Complexity and change
- Transformational collaboration
- Developing your OD career
- HR for OD
- Team working across systems.

Essential Elements - This will be a separate three-week course, available to all on the basics of OD. We will also offer further open courses for anyone interested in OD in the NHS on:

- building OD mindsets
- culture
- OD, diversity and inclusion.



OD Virtual Mentoring

The purpose of OD in the NHS is to improve the quality of patient care. The NHS faces unprecedented challenges and the cornerstone of our work as Do OD is to build and grow OD capability to be able to meet these challenges.

Do OD has developed an exciting and unique virtual mentoring initiative that develops the capability, expertise and confidence of those working to change and transform their systems in service of our patients. The scheme is open to all OD practitioners in the NHS in England.

The OD Virtual Mentoring Initiative

This unique and successful initiative develops capability and capacity across the NHS to enable change and transformation. OD practitioners in the NHS are a small workforce with big challenges. Our work identified an urgent need to offer support to OD practitioners from others who had walked in their shoes. We had two immediate challenges: a small financial resource and a large geographical area to cover. We made the choice to invest in developing internal OD practitioners with previous mentoring experience, training them to work in a virtual space. This enabled us to use the experience and wisdom already in our healthcare system to develop and create internal capability instead of spending money on external consultants.

How it works

From a small, successful OD virtual mentoring pilot, this project has grown in reach and reputation. Over seven cohorts, we have trained 60 OD virtual mentors, and over 150 mentees across England will have benefited from virtual mentoring.

Our mentees are people working in OD and change, often in pressurised environments. They might be new to an OD role, or more experienced OD practitioners seeking support on a particular transformation or change issue, such as a merger. Our OD mentors come from a range of backgrounds. We select them for training based on their track record of successful OD practice, OD experience, knowledge and personal qualities.

Mentors gain:

- high-quality training to be a mentor in a virtual space
- an opportunity to share their learning and experience with others
- development and support throughout the mentoring experience from OD supervision and action learning
- opportunities to work with mentees from across the country.

Mentees gain:

- high-quality mentoring in the virtual space
- an opportunity to learn from the experience of others
- a safe space to stay sharp in their OD practice
- to put their learning into practice and make a difference in their organisation and system.



Check out what some participants said about OD Virtual Mentoring...

Quotes from mentees:

"Mentoring has been incredibly beneficial and would recommend to anyone who could do with a little bit more support and someone to bounce ideas off of."

"I found the mentoring really enjoyable and couldn't fault it for how it has benefitted myself from both a personal and professional perspective."

"My mentor was such a help to me - I've really valued this programme and would definitely be interested in mentoring/being mentored again."

"Every session was exactly the appropriate challenge, the right mix of advice, guidance and support."

"I have developed so much as a person both at work and home and my mentor has been with me on this journey, I would be hard to really pin-point anything specifically as they are quite interlinked."

Quotes from mentors:

"I have thought more about what I do every day as OD rather than just business as usual."

"Renewed confidence and ability that coaching /mentoring can be done virtually. We have also developed a number of key online virtual tools, so the practice of noticing and listening to people and making observations as we do in OD already, has really consciously happened more."

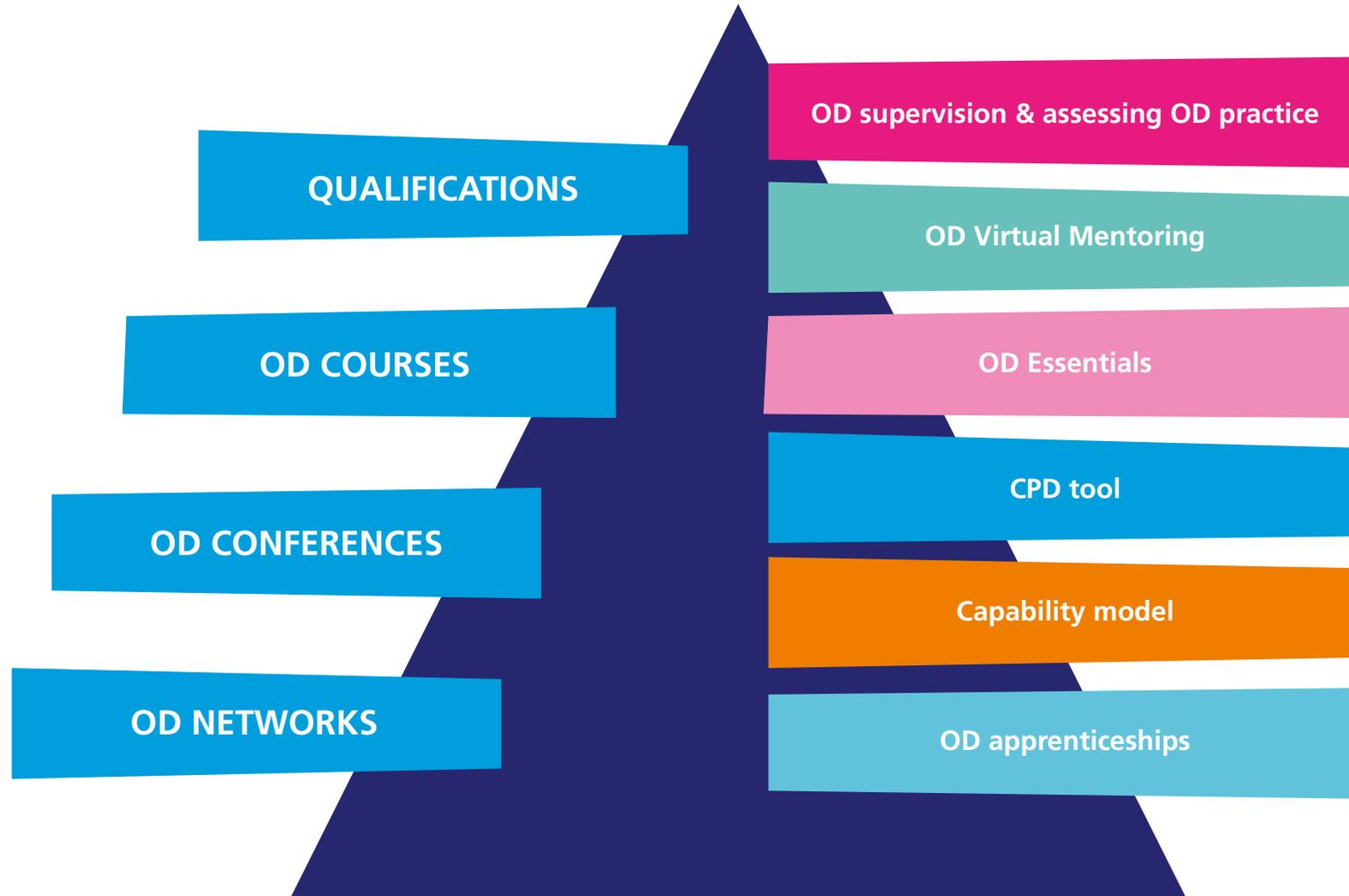
"It's given me confidence - I know much more than I realised."

"I have brought some new approaches back into my workplace."

"The entire virtual OD mentoring programme completely transformed my views about the capabilities of telephone/remote mentoring and coaching. I joined the pilot a sceptic and became a total convert. What a brilliant foundation for this current world."

These two flagship programmes are only a snapshot of the opportunities for OD development. See [pages 17-18](#) for more resources to help you in your OD work.

We have lots of different ways to help you build confidence and competence in your OD work.



Connect with the Do OD community

We offer our community opportunities to stay in touch with each other, to connect, to think, share experiences, learning and resources. There are three ways to do this:

Weekly community conversations

Every second Tuesday, 10am to 11am. A telephone version of those water cooler conversations that we're all missing.

Email do.od@nhsemployers.org for details of how to join.

Monthly virtual gatherings

A virtual meeting on a topic chosen by our community.

Email us at do.od@nhsemployers.org for details of how to join.

NHS Do OD Slack Group

A space for us to chat and share updates.

[Join the Slack group.](#)



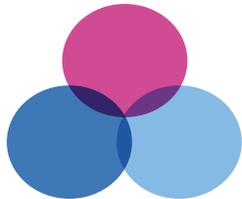
Resources

We have highlighted a variety of resource to help you in your OD work.



[TEAM Toolkit](#)

Our TEAM Toolkit remains a firm favourite among the OD community and has recently been updated to include a focus on virtual and remote working with teams.



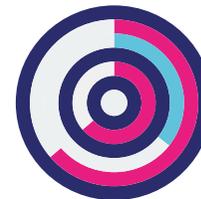
[Do OD Capability Model](#)

Built with our OD community, the capability model is a tool for self-assessment, reflection and conversation. It brings together elements of capability that we can build on to strengthen our OD practice. Download [through our app](#).



[CPD and Professional Development Tool](#)

Many OD practitioners told us they struggled with continuing professional development (CPD), either not knowing where to start or how to keep track. We built our CPD tool as a way of stimulating development ideas as well as giving a space to record activity that can be shared as part of your development portfolio. [Access the tool on our app](#). Our paper on [the role of OD in the NHS](#) describes the aspirations of our community to move into more strategic spaces and stretch our practice beyond our comfort zones.



[Culture Tool](#)

In response to the Francis Review, we worked with ten NHS trusts to explore how OD practitioners could ensure their readiness for culture change. The tool available through [our app](#) asks questions to encourage conversations about what culture change means to your team, organisation or system.



Evaluating OD

The ability to demonstrate the impact of our work is a key OD practice. Our resources on evaluation help practitioners describe and evidence how their work delivers not only return on investment, but also intention. These are recently updated with a focus on evaluation in complexity. We also made [three short films](#) on the power of OD at individual, organisational and system levels.



Transformational collaboration

Working across boundaries, particularly in systems outside our organisations, is a key part of the NHS Long Term Plan. Our work on collaboration explored how to move from transactional to transformational models of cooperation and how OD practitioners can create the conditions needed for successful partnerships. To accompany this theme, we published a paper on [place-based OD](#), highlighting the Greater Manchester system as a case study of OD practice.



Power tool

Power is a key issue in organisations and systems but often people shy away from tackling or naming it. The tool gives prompts to reflect on what we always, never or could talk about when it comes to power, helping us have better conversations about it every day. Well OD'd Organisations Framework

Co-designed with the OD community, our Well OD'd Framework is a resource for OD practitioners and their teams to use as a self-assessment as well as a tool for conversations with colleagues across their organisations, including senior leaders, to assure them that our OD practice is fit for purpose now and in the future.

Our COVID-19 response



**ORGANISATION
DEVELOPMENT**

**Responding to the present;
preparing for the future**

We are committed to supporting our NHS OD community during COVID-19.

Connect, share and learn with us via these channels:



NHS Employers
Part of the NHS Confederation



**NHS
Leadership Academy**

Weekly Community Conversations

Every Tuesday, 10am – 11am

- A telephone version of those water cooler conversations that we're all missing.

Dial 0333 1133951
Room: 58227056#
PIN: 6336#



Fortnightly Virtual Gatherings

Every other Thursday, 2pm-3pm

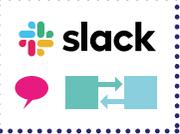
- A virtual meeting on a topic chosen by our community.
- Request a link** for each session.



NHS Do OD Slack Group

- A space for us to chat and share updates.
- Download the app or open it in your web browser.

Join here



Dynamic Responsive Support

- Virtual coaching and mentoring when you need it.
- Initially offered as a one-off session.

Fill in your details here



Capturing learning from COVID-19

- We'd like to capture your current experiences for post COVID-19 learning.
- Please **fill in this short form** as many times as you like.



OD Essentials

- Our free online course on organisational development in the NHS.
- It requires around 6 hours' work per week for 5 weeks.
- Find out more** about current and future cohorts.



#NHSDoOD

Dynamic responsive support mentoring

We wanted to support our OD community throughout the coronavirus pandemic. As soon as lockdown started, we held weekly community conversations where OD practitioners could dial in and talk about what was on their mind. We had some really interesting conversations and it emerged that many OD practitioners felt their work was quite different to their usual OD roles. They wanted some support in managing these changes whilst staying true to their OD values and behaviours and not losing their 'OD mojo'.

As a response to this emerging demand, Do OD set up Dynamic Responsive Support- a new coaching and mentoring scheme where OD practitioners could sign up for a telephone session with one of our experienced OD virtual mentors. We advertised it as an opportunity to: 'talk to someone about what's on your mind; what are you working on; what would you like help with; how you are feeling and what support do you need with your OD work at the moment.'

The aim of this offer was to support our OD community during COVID-19 both now and in the immediate future through responsive, agile, easy-to-access OD coaching and mentoring. Applicants filled in a short online form and were then matched with a mentor within five working days, though often much quicker. They then made contact, arranged a session and decided between themselves whether it would just be a one-off conversation or longer-term coaching/mentoring.

We had 36 applications; all were matched.
We had a bank of 18 trained virtual mentors.

Every mentor and mentee who responded to the evaluation survey rated the whole experience 5/5 and praised the speed, responsiveness, and ease of the process. Mentees were very impressed with the quality of the mentoring as it offered the right level of challenge and provided a safe, relaxed atmosphere for them to talk through their OD challenges. They felt as though they had achieved their goals and become more resilient, and all could articulate something they had done differently as a result of the mentoring. Being able to quickly offer agile responsive mentoring was part of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and it definitely made a positive difference to the OD community during this difficult time.

People who took part in dynamic responsive support mentoring said:

"Really strong active listening by the mentor. Challenging questions, an unbiased view, and a lot of experience brought to the conversation by the mentor."

"The opportunity was timely, the session was challenging and thought-provoking."

"Believe more in the relevance of OD even at a time like this."

"All the training, comms and organisation has been excellent. I have never been on such good training - even classroom based!"

A positive look forward

OD practitioners played a central role in supporting front-line staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the first phase on the pandemic in 2020, OD practitioners were deployed in creative and helpful ways, offering practical and emotional support to colleagues delivering frontline services. When formal programmes of OD were paused, we offered help by being responsive to the immediate needs, using our OD skills and mindsets to be of most use.

We moved from OD programmes to OD practice. As we have settled into new ways of working, some virtually, we are identifying new ways of doing OD in the digital space using new tools and techniques that help people connect to each other. Our core skills and values are still central to that work even if the method of delivery has changed.

OD practitioners give equal importance to task and process. While responding to the urgent needs in the system, we also spent time collecting and analysing data about how the nature and practice of work in the NHS was changing:

- We noticed that change happened overnight, not over years. Some of the initiatives that would previously have been slow were accelerated surprisingly quickly.
- People worked differently, more collaboratively, and with better and faster communication. Having a shared purpose helped us to coalesce in pragmatic ways.
- A crisis needs clear systems, and while our leadership structures may have moved into more traditional command and control forms, we continued to support our leaders to be compassionate and inclusive in their style of working.
- We were deeply moved by the impact of COVID-19 on BME NHS colleagues, bringing sharply into focus the need to provide safe spaces for BME OD practitioners to share their stories and find support.
- Our work was agile, responsive and compassionate, providing both practical and emotional support by helping with immediate needs and creating spaces for people to talk, listen, sense-make and support each other.
- The pandemic also took a toll on OD colleagues. Some of us felt anxious and exhausted. Some were fulfilled by the ability to offer practical help. All were busy. We shared the emotional impact with our frontline colleagues. Our own wellbeing must be something that we carry into the future.

After analysing data we are left with three observations to consider:

1. Change during COVID-19 happened overnight and we responded to that with surprising agility. In turbulent times, longer programmes of change initiatives may be less effective than the iterative noticing and naming of patterns, changing cultures through conversation on a daily basis and working with the unfolding rhythms of the system.

Is this the most effective way to approach and lead change now?

2. The enablers of successful responses in the pandemic included working across system boundaries, coalescing over a shared purpose and going beyond professional identities. True collaboration can't and won't happen in traditional ways of organising.

How can we resist going back to a buildings mentality as it becomes safer to go back to the office?

3. People have been truly living through complexity, not thinking about it theoretically. Uncertainty and ambiguity created conditions of huge creativity. Change happened at the boundaries of predictable behaviour. However, some are already keen to go back to how things were.

How do we help hold the tension between the need for security and a momentum for change?

We look forward to working with our OD community to answer these questions and the many more that will emerge from doing OD in the NHS.



Contact us

This guide has been produced by Do OD, the expert resource on organisation development (OD) for health and care, delivered by NHS Employers in partnership with NHS England and NHS Improvement.

 do.od@nhsemployers.org

 www.nhsemployers.org

 [@NHSE_DOOD](https://twitter.com/NHSE_DOOD)

Published March 2021