

Do OD Leaders

**Culture
Change
Toolkit**

Know OD, Be OD, Do OD



Quick start

Module 1: Purpose and readiness

Illustrative example: Using the toolkit in practice

Tool: Leaders self-check

Tool: Cultural readiness reflection tool

Tool: Support pathway

Module 2: Understanding culture

Illustrative example: 'It's just how we do things'

What is culture?

Tool: Team climate health check

Tool: Mini culture check-in

Put it into practice

Module 3: Know yourself

Illustrative example: 'I didn't realise how I was coming across'

Tool: Leadership style and impact self-assessment

Tool: Personal values exercise

Tool: Stress response mapping

Tool: Emotional regulation planner

Tool: Bias check-in

Tool: Leadership journal template

Put it into practice

Module 4: Work with others

Illustrative example: 'No one speaks up in my meetings'

Tool: Psychologically safe conversations guide

Tool: Civility reflection tool

Tool: What's OK / what's not OK team discussion exercise

Tool: Manual of me

Tool: Microaggression response checklist

Tool: Conversation starters and prompts

Tool: Giving feedback planner

Tool: Feedback response planner

Put it into practice

Module 5: Lead culture change

Illustrative example: 'Small changes can shift culture'

Tool: Adaptive Leadership self-awareness assessment

Tool: Behavioural consistency tracker

Tool: Culture accountability framework

Tool: Engagement planning canvas

Tool: Meeting check-in prompts

Tool: Resistance response map

Put it into practice

Module 6: Taking action

Illustrative example: 'Keeping new habits alive'

Tool: Consolidated action plan builder

Tool: Weekly culture check-in template

Tool: Culture commitment card

Tool: Customisable team charter

Tool: Peer accountability planner

Tool: Stakeholder mapping exercise

Put it into practice

Module 7: Track impact

Illustrative example: 'Are we really making progress?'

Tool: Monthly reflection sheet

Tool: Simple impact tracker

Tool: Feedback loop planner

Tool: Stop / start / continue activities

Put it into practice

Resources

Contents



Central navigation

Quick start

Use this quick start to get a sense of what's inside, where to begin and how to make the most of the toolkit.



Module 1: Purpose and readiness

Pause before diving in. Reconnect with your purpose, define what you want to change and assess readiness.



Module 2: Understanding culture

Explore what culture really means, what shapes it and how it shows up in day-to-day work.



Module 3: Know yourself

Build self-awareness and understand how your behaviour, values and emotional responses shape your team's culture.



Module 4: Work with others

Improve how people work together, strengthening communication, trust, inclusion and civility in teams.



Module 5: Lead culture change

Learn how to lead cultural change deliberately, through consistent behaviours, shared accountability and engagement with others.



Module 6: Taking action

Turn insight into consistent action. Plan, communicate and sustain practical steps that strengthen your team's culture over time.



Module 7: Track impact

Review progress, capture learning and keep culture improvement alive. Use these tools to understand what's working, where to adjust and how to maintain momentum.



Resources

Access additional external and internal resources to support your culture change plans and actions.



Quick start Getting started: How to use this toolkit

This toolkit is a practical resource for NHS leaders who want to strengthen team and organisational culture. Use this section to get a sense of what's inside, where to begin and how to make the most of the toolkit.



What this toolkit is

- A practical resource grounded in organisational psychology, organisational development and NHS learning.
- Designed for busy leaders - short on theory, focused on action.
- Flexible. Dip in where it's most relevant.
- Built around a cycle of learning: **Reflect** → **Learn** → **Apply** → **Review**.

When to use it

- Planning or running a team away day.
- Addressing low-level conflict or incivility.
- Resetting team purpose or objectives.
- Tackling unclear roles or accountability.
- Building effective leadership habits as a new leader.
- Responding to concerning staff survey results, high sickness, or overwhelm.



How to use it

- Start by scanning the quick start section on the next page to decide where to begin.
- Each tool can be used on its own or combined with others as part of ongoing development.
- You don't have to complete modules in sequence, move between them based on your priorities and context.

How it's structured

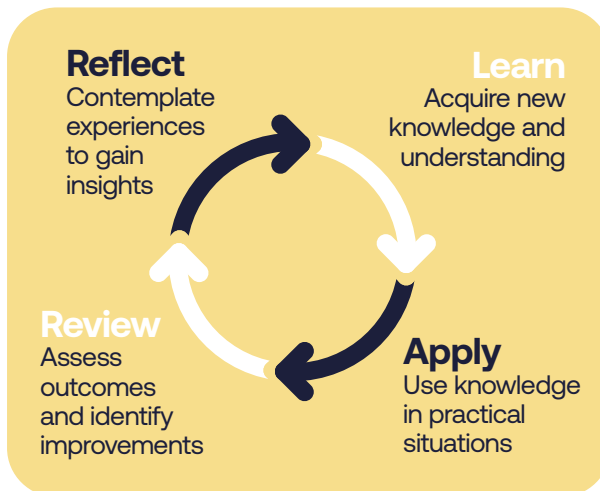
There are seven modules, each combining reflection and practice (hyperlinks to navigate across modules are at the bottom of every page):

1. **Module 1:** Start here: purpose and readiness
2. **Module 2:** Understanding culture
3. **Module 3:** Know yourself
4. **Module 4:** Work with others
5. **Module 5:** Lead culture change
6. **Module 6:** Taking action
7. **Module 7:** Track impact

Each tool includes background context, reflection questions, practical steps, and "put into practice" actions.

Who it's for

For leaders at all levels: ward managers, team leads, heads of service and professional leads. Anyone shaping how people behave, connect and work together.



Choosing where to start

Use the table below to identify your starting point and follow the links to the relevant module.

Starting point	Next step
I'm not sure where to begin or what's driving the issues in my team.	Start with Module 1: Purpose and readiness and Module 2: Understanding culture to reflect on what matters and where the challenges lie.
I want to better understand my leadership style and impact.	Go to Module 3: Know yourself to explore your values, strengths and blind spots.
I want to improve relationships, trust or communication within my team.	Use tools in Module 4: Work with others to strengthen connection and collaboration.
I have a clear culture change I want to lead or influence.	Head to Module 5: Lead culture change and Module 6: Taking action for practical tools to plan and deliver change.
I've already made changes and want to measure progress or sustain improvement.	Go to Module 7: Track impact to review outcomes and maintain momentum.

Get started now

If you only have ten minutes

Try the leaders' self-check in **Module 1: Purpose and readiness**. Identify one insight and one small action to take this week.

If you want to start with your team

Use the mini culture check-in in **Module 2: Understanding culture** to explore what's working well and what could improve.

If you're planning a larger or more complex change

Start with the cultural readiness reflection and the support pathway in **Module 1** to judge complexity and when to involve OD or HR.



Module 1: Purpose and readiness

Everything you need to know in 60 seconds



Purpose of this module

Understand your starting point and clarify what you want to change and why.

When to use it

- At the very start of your culture work.
- When you need clarity on goals, scope or support.
- When you're not sure if your team is ready for change.



Tip

Start here before moving into later modules, it helps you target your effort where it's needed most.

Tools in this module

Tool	Time / effort	Support needed	Best for...
Leader's self-check	Quick win	None	Reflecting on your motivation and confidence to lead change.
Cultural readiness self-assessment	Deeper dive	None	Assessing your team's current culture and readiness for change.
Support pathway	Quick win	Optional HR / OD	Identifying when and where to seek extra support.

Introduction

Building a positive, inclusive team culture is essential for safe, high-quality care and staff wellbeing. As a leader, how you act, communicate and set expectations directly shapes how your team feels and performs. This first module helps you pause before taking action – to reconnect with your purpose and consider what you’re trying to influence.

The Leaders Culture Change Toolkit is designed as a flexible resource, not a step-by-step programme. You can use each module independently, depending on your context and priorities. If you’ve looked at the quick start section, this section helps you reflect on your role, clarify why culture matters in your setting and assess your readiness to move forward. Culture is central to how care is delivered and how people experience work. Understanding what shapes culture and how it can be influenced, is explored in **Module 2: Understanding culture**.

This first module focuses on you as a leader, why you want to improve culture, what you hope to achieve, and how ready you and your team are to take action.

What the toolkit is and is not

What it is

- A practical, coaching-style guide to help you reflect and act.
- A set of short, easy-to-use tools designed for busy leaders.
- Grounded in NHS frameworks and organisational research.
- Flexible: use it alone or with support from peers, OD colleagues or coaches.

What it is not

- A detailed textbook on leadership or organisational theory.
- A one-size-fits-all solution. Culture change depends on your context.
- A replacement for HR, OD or formal policy.

Who it’s for and when to use it

Who it’s for

- Frontline supervisors, team leaders and middle managers.
- Senior leaders who want a structured way to work on culture.
- Anyone leading people in healthcare who doesn’t have day-to-day OD support.
- This toolkit complements the [NHS England Culture and Leadership Programme](#), which supports leaders and organisations to foster compassionate, inclusive culture.

When to use it

- When you want to improve culture including things like inclusion, civility or psychological safety.
- To strengthen engagement, clarity and accountability in your team.
- As part of PDR, coaching, leadership development or when starting in a new role.

This toolkit can be adapted to reflect your organisation's culture and values. Add your trust's values, behavioural standards or cultural priorities here.

Common reasons leaders might use this toolkit

- You're planning a **team away day** and want to co-design it with your team, share delivery and review the impact.
- A **concern has been raised** (e.g. via a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian), there are no formal findings to act on, but you still want to address what's going on locally.
- There's **low-level conflict or incivility** between team members that's affecting morale or collaboration.
- **Team behaviours** aren't aligning with agreed values or expectations.
- You want to **reset purpose, goals or ways of working** after a period of change or culture drift.
- Your **leadership team isn't functioning well** and needs to rebuild clarity and trust.
- You need to **review roles or responsibilities** because work isn't being done effectively or ownership is unclear.
- You're a **new leader** and want to establish healthy habits, team rituals and boundaries early on.
- You're a **new leader facing pushback or challenge** from team members and want to handle it constructively.
- Your **staff survey results highlight concerns** linked to the People Promise or specific culture themes.
- **Sickness or burnout** levels are high and you want to explore underlying causes.
- Your team feels **overwhelmed, uncertain or fatigued** by ongoing change.

Intended outcomes

Understand your role in shaping and sustaining culture

Recognise how your behaviour, decisions and priorities directly affect how people feel and perform in your team. You may find, through using this toolkit, you will identify personal development gaps and increase your self awareness.

Support you to lead with clarity, consistency and integrity

Communicate expectations clearly, follow through on commitments and model the behaviours you want from others.

Equip you with key knowledge and tools

Use simple, evidence-based exercises to strengthen engagement, inclusion and psychological safety in your team.

Support you to take leadership accountability

Own your impact as a leader and commit to small, consistent actions that build trust and performance.

How to use this toolkit

Format	Editable PDF with short explainers, checklists and reflection tools. Mobile-friendly and printable.
Structure	Modular. You can work through it in order or dip into the section most relevant to your challenge.
How to navigate	Each module has a short overview and practical tools. Look out for 'put it into practice' prompts.
Supplementary resource	You may also find the NHS England Learning Together online course a helpful companion, especially to reinforce leadership practice around culture.

Toolkit tip:

Set aside 15 minutes a week to reflect and use the tools. Keep a notebook or digital journal to capture insights and actions.



Tools in this module

The following tools help you reflect on your readiness to lead culture change. Use them alongside local data and feedback to understand your team's starting point.

Leaders self-check



A short pause to reflect on 'why am I here?' and set your mindset before starting. Helps you clarify your purpose, readiness to reflect and one habit or strength to focus on.

Cultural readiness reflection tool



A light-touch reflection using traffic light ratings, linked to the NHS People Promise. It helps you spot your team's strengths, watch points and barriers so you can judge where to begin culture work and what might be needed on the way.

Support pathway



A simple decision tool that helps you assess your confidence, self-awareness and support routes. It guides you to decide whether to lead culture activities on your own, work with a peer coach, or seek HR/OD support first.

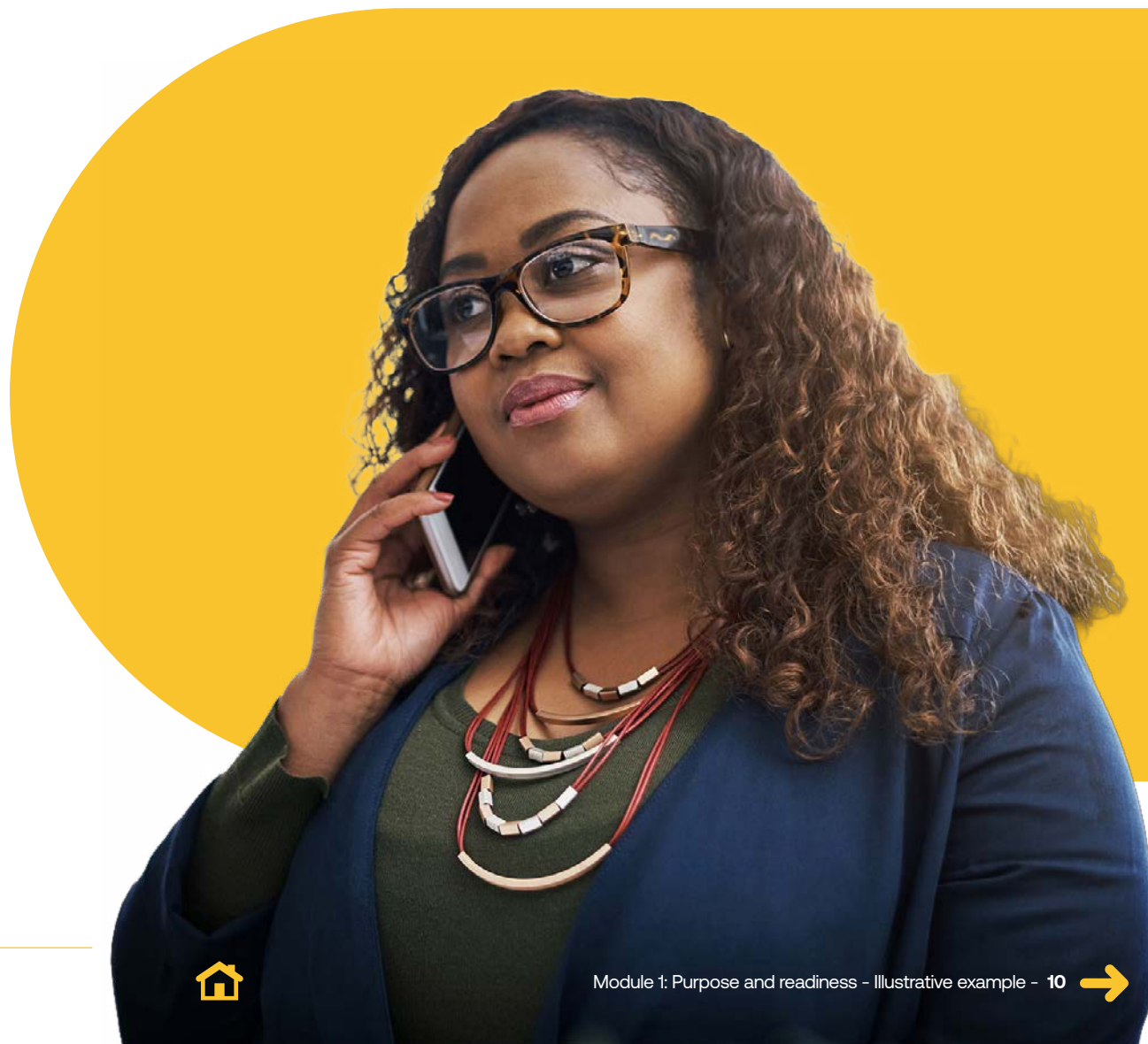
Illustrative example

Using the toolkit in practice

Amira, a ward manager, noticed rising tension in her team. Staff were avoiding handovers and complaining about workload. She wanted to improve the culture but wasn't sure where to start.

Using the leaders' self-assessment tool in module 3, she recognised she often avoided conflict. The team charter tool showed her that her team valued patient care but lacked clarity on expectations. Amira set aside 20 minutes a week to use the toolkit. She began small: opening huddles with appreciation, clarifying responsibilities, and inviting staff to share concerns.

Within a month, staff felt more respected and engaged. Miscommunication reduced and Amira gained confidence in leading cultural improvements without constant HR or OD input.



Reflect

Write down your reflections about the illustrative example, using the following prompts:

What part of Amira's experience feels familiar to me?

What does this example show about a leader's actions?

Tool: Leaders self-check

Time / effort: Quick win  **Supported needed:** None

Outline

Before you start, pause. This short self-check helps you clarify why you are here, your readiness to change, and your confidence in leading culture work.

Instructions

- Take five minutes.
- Be honest — this is for you, not for scoring.
- Use it as a mindset check before moving forward.

Step 1: Why am I here?

What has brought me to use the team leader culture journey today?

What do I hope will be different in my team's culture?

Step 2: My readiness to change (tick one)

I don't see much need to change.

I see the need but feel unsure or hesitant.

I've decided I want to change and I'm preparing.

I've already started acting differently.

I've made changes and want to keep them going.

Tool: Leaders self-check

Step 3: My capability and confidence (rate 1 - 5: low → high)

Rating

I have the knowledge and skills to lead culture change.

I feel confident I can change my own behaviour as a leader.

I know what support or resources I can access if needed.

Step 4: My motivation and intention

One personal value that motivates me to lead culture change is:

My clear intention is:

One behaviour I want to model as a role-model leader is:

Reflection

One strength I bring is:

One habit I'd like to change is:

Next steps

Notice your stage of change

If you ticked 'unsure or hesitant' in step 2 above, don't push ahead yet. Focus on clarifying your 'why'. Try the purpose and values alignment tool in [Module 1: Start here](#), and discuss it with a trusted peer, manager or mentor. If you're already in 'preparation or action', move forward with the toolkit.

Spot your strengths and gaps

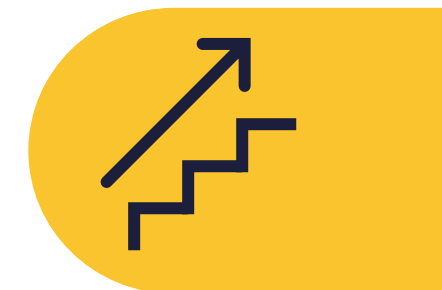
If you rated low on confidence, capability or support in step 3, note what you need (e.g. further training, peer support, coaching) and aim to have this in place. Use the adaptive leadership self-awareness assessment in [Module 5: Lead culture change](#) to reflect on what you need to lead well. If support is your gap, identify who can help using the support pathway decision tree in [Module 1: Purpose](#).

Capture your intention

Keep your one clear intention visible (write it in your journal, stick it on your desk or share it with a peer). This helps strengthen follow-through. If you want a structured way to follow through, use the culture commitment card in [Module 6: Taking action](#).

Return to it

Revisit this self-check after using a few modules to see how your mindset and confidence might change over time. You can track progress using the monthly reflection sheet in [Module 7: Track impact](#).



Tool: Cultural readiness reflection

Time / effort:
Deeper dive



Supported needed:
None

Outline

This tool helps you understand your team's starting point for culture work. It highlights strengths to build on and barriers to manage. Each prompt maps to NHS People Promise themes so you can align with existing priorities.

Instructions

- Think about your team as a whole.
- Use traffic lights: **green** = **strong**; **amber** = **mixed**; or **red** = **barrier**.
- Be honest, this is about spotting where to begin.

Before completing your readiness reflection, take a moment to look at the information you already have about your team and culture. Drawing on existing data will help you base your reflections on evidence, not just perception.

Step 1: Sources of insight

Examples

People and experience data

NHS Staff Survey, NHS People Promise metrics, local engagement or pulse surveys.

Operational indicators

Sickness, turnover, vacancy and retention data.

Feedback and listening

Exit interviews, stay conversations, Freedom to Speak Up reports, informal feedback.

Observation and behaviour

What you notice in meetings, handovers, or walkarounds; patterns of civility, communication or escalation.

Team feedback

Team effectiveness reviews, development sessions, or appraisal discussions.

Use these insights to identify strengths, early warning signs and areas that might need focused action. Then complete the cultural readiness reflection to assess where you and your team are starting from.



Tool: Cultural readiness reflection

Step 2: Quick ratings

Green = strong Amber = mixed Red = barrier.

People feel safe to raise concerns. (We each have a voice that counts)

We have clear shared expectations for how we work. (We are a team)

There is openness to trying new approaches. (We are always learning)

Relationships are respectful and constructive. (We are compassionate and inclusive)

We have time and capacity for culture discussions. (We work flexibly, we are safe and healthy)

Team contributions are recognised and valued. (We are recognised and rewarded)

We feel physically and emotionally safe at work. (We are safe and healthy)

Tool: Cultural readiness reflection

Step 3: Reflection

Strengths I can build on (greens):

Watch points (ambers):

Barriers that could hold us back (reds):

Step 4: What to do with your responses

- **Greens:** Use these as your foundation. Celebrate them in your team (e.g. name what's working, share examples in meetings). These strengths are your building blocks for culture work.
- **Ambers:** Bring these into the open. Talk with your team about what feels inconsistent. Test one small change at a time and see if it shifts things (e.g. try a new meeting practice, or introduce a quick check-in).
- **Reds:** These are barriers to overcome. They show where you may need to begin. If, for example, safety is red, you might start with listening activities, agreeing team behaviours, or giving people more voice. You don't need to decide how to fix it now. Later modules in this toolkit give you practical tools for each area.
- **If you feel stuck:** That's normal. You don't have to do this alone. Use the next tool in this module (support pathway) to decide if you'd benefit from support (e.g. HR, OD or a coach) before tackling the issue.

Toolkit tip:

Consider what culture actions you can sustain even on your busiest or most pressured days. Start small. Small consistent actions build lasting change.



Tool: Cultural readiness reflection

Step 5: What next?

What your reflection shows:

People don't feel safe to raise concerns	Use the psychologically safe conversations guide or what's OK / what's not OK team discussion exercise in Module 4: Work with others to build trust and openness.
Lack of shared expectations or clarity about how we work	Try the Customisable Team Charter in Module 6: Taking action to set and agree ways of working together.
Low openness to learning or improvement	Use the Behavioural Consistency Tracker in Module 5: Lead culture change to make learning visible and consistent.
Tension or poor relationships	Use the civility reflection tool or microaggression response checklist in Module 4: Work with others .
Little time or space for culture discussions	Try the weekly culture check-in template in Module 6: Taking action to keep progress light but regular.
Low recognition or value of contributions	Use the feedback loop planner in Module 7: Track impact to make recognition routine.
Concerns about emotional or physical safety	Escalate appropriately through HR, OD, or Freedom to Speak Up routes before leading culture work.

Tool: Support pathway

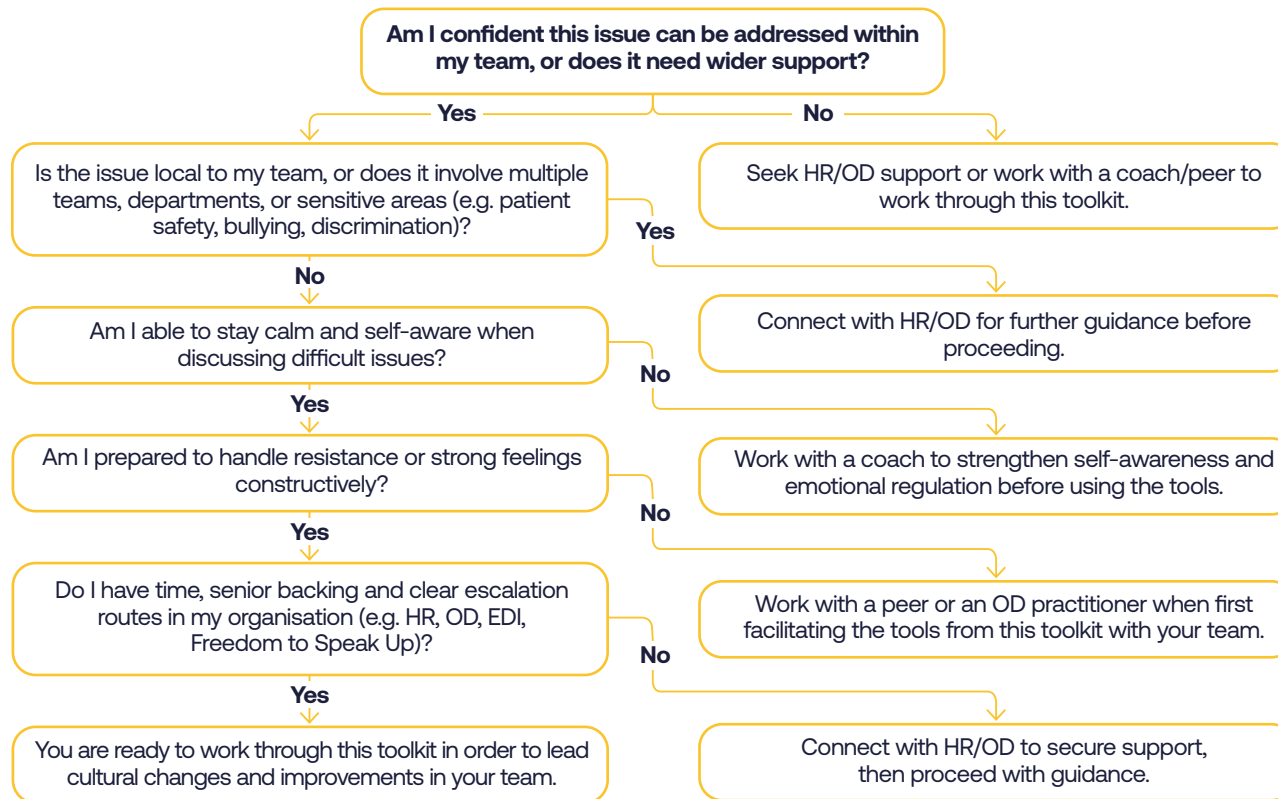
Time / effort: Quick win **Supported needed:** Optional HR/OD/coach

Outline

Not every culture issue can or should be tackled alone. This tool helps you decide whether to proceed with this toolkit independently, with a coach or with additional OD/HR support. This may increase the chance that culture work feels safe, doable and effective.

Instructions

- Take three to five minutes.
- Follow the decision points honestly.
- The aim is not to test you, but to guide you to the right level of support.
- Where additional guidance may be needed, contact your OD/HR team.



Toolkit tip:

If you're unsure, start small. Use one tool, then reflect. Culture change is iterative and works best with peer and OD support.



Module 2: Understanding culture

Everything you need to know in 60 seconds



Purpose of this module

Explore what culture really means, what shapes it and how it shows up in day-to-day work.

When to use it

- To explore the deeper factors influencing your team's behaviour.
- When you want to build a shared understanding of culture.
- When planning conversations about change.



Tip

Use these tools early. They'll give you evidence and shared language to focus your culture work.

Tools in this module

Tool	Time / effort	Support needed	Best for...
Team climate health check	Deeper dive 	Optional HR / OD	Assessing the current team environment (safety, civility, trust, inclusion, etc.)
Mini culture check-in	Quick win 	None	Brief pulse-style discussion to sense how the team is feeling.

Learning objective

In this module, you'll recognise how culture shapes daily behaviour, how it operates at visible and hidden levels, what that means for you and your team, and what you can do to influence culture.

Tools in this module

The following tools help you reflect on your readiness to lead culture change. Use them alongside local data and feedback to understand your team's starting point.

Team climate health checklist

Spot signs of positive or harmful cultural habits.



Mini culture check-in

Gives you the language and structure to ask your team about the culture.



Illustrative example

'It's just how we do things'

Fatima is a new team lead in a busy diagnostics unit. Staff are friendly on the surface, but Fatima notices people rarely raise concerns. Handovers are rushed. When she tries to bring in small changes, she's told:

"Don't worry, you'll get used to how we do things here."

Later, a junior staff member shares a patient safety concern in private but says they don't feel safe speaking up in front of others. Another colleague jokes in meetings that 'you'll only get noticed if you make the boss look good.' No one challenges it.

Fatima is confused. The trust's values are clear about openness and compassion. But day-to-day behaviour tells a different story.



Reflect

Write down your reflections about the illustrative example, using the following prompts:

What are some of the unspoken rules in Fatima's team?

How do people learn what's expected without it being said?

What behaviour is rewarded, and what gets ignored or avoided?

What kind of risks might people feel unsafe taking in this team?

What's the gap between what's said (e.g. trust values) and what's done?



What is culture?

Culture is how things are done around here. It's not just what's written on the walls, it's the shared assumptions, behaviours, language and habits that shape daily work. It influences how decisions are made, who gets listened to, and what gets overlooked.

Despite decades of research, there's no single agreed definition of organisational culture. But most definitions include three levels, originally proposed by Edgar Schein (1985), which help make sense of the visible and invisible elements.

Toolkit tip:

You can't change culture by only changing artefacts (e.g. new posters or slogans). Culture shifts when people's experiences at work change.



The three levels of organisational culture (Adapted from Schein, 1985)



Level	Description	Examples	Understanding
Artefacts	The visible surface layer. What you can see, hear or touch.	Dress code, office layout, language used, posters, annual reports, routines, meeting rituals.	Easy to observe but may not reflect deeper beliefs.
Values and norms	What people say matters to them. How people should behave.	'We value openness'. 'Patients come first'. How people respond to mistakes or challenge.	Sometimes stated in vision documents, sometimes assumed.
Basic assumptions	Deeply held beliefs, often unconscious, that shape thought and behaviour.	'Speaking up gets you in trouble'. 'We're here to survive, not to thrive'.	These drive culture but are rarely named directly.

How culture works in practice

Culture isn't static. It shows up in daily behaviour, language, decisions and priorities. It's shaped by:



You can have multiple subcultures within one organisation. What feels normal in one ward or department may feel alien in another.

How culture differs from climate

Culture is deeper and slow moving. Climate is surface-level and more responsive. Culture tells you what matters. Climate tells you how it feels right now.

Organisational climate refers to the shared experience of day-to-day work. What people perceive, feel and report about their working environment.

Culture

'How we do things around here'.

Shaped by history and assumptions.

Slow to change.

Understood through observation and patterns.

Climate

'How it feels to work here right now'.

Shaped by current perceptions.

Can shift quickly.

Measured through surveys and feedback.

There's no universal model of organisational climate, but research suggests the following areas help to describe it:

Toolkit tip:

Improving climate is often the first step toward changing culture. For example, improving psychological safety in meetings can start to shift norms around voice and inclusion.



Why it matters in the NHS and to you as a leader

People Promise



The People Promise sets the tone for NHS values: compassion, civility, inclusion and fairness. You can learn more about the [NHS People Promise in this video](#).

Inclusive cultures improve care quality, reduce harm, and improve staff wellbeing.

Dysfunctional cultures are linked to burnout, bullying and unsafe care. NHS leaders are expected to model and maintain positive team culture, not just promote it.

Tool: Team climate health check

Time / effort:
Deeper dive



Supported needed:
Optional HR / OD

Outline

This tool aims to help you spot early warning signs or strengths in your team climate. You can complete it alone or use it with a colleague or small group.

Instructions

- Read each item.
- Tick one that best reflects your team right now.

Area	Indicator	Yes	Not sure	No
Psychological Safety	People feel able to speak up without fear of embarrassment or blame.			
Civility	Team members treat each other with respect, even when under pressure.			
Trust	People trust each other to do their jobs well and follow through.			
Inclusion	Everyone feels they have a voice, regardless of background or role.			
Communication	Information is shared clearly, honestly and in good time.			
Fairness	Decisions, opportunities and praise are distributed fairly.			
Workload	People have the capacity and support to manage their workload.			
Feedback	People receive useful, timely feedback about their work.			
Conflict handling	Disagreements are addressed constructively, not avoided.			
Recognition	Contributions are noticed and appreciated.			

Reflect

Write down your reflections on the climate health check responses using the following prompts:

Which areas stood out most? Why?

What are people saying, doing or avoiding that gives you this impression?

What pattern might be emerging?

What feels within your control to change?

Which area feels like your next best conversation with the team?



After the checklist: **what now?**

Look for patterns, not perfection.

It's not about scoring high or ticking every box. It's about noticing patterns:

Mostly 'yes'

These may be cultural strengths. Acknowledge and protect them. Celebrate with your team.



Mostly 'not sure'

Suggests uncertainty. These are areas to explore with your team. Use the mini culture check-in with your team to gather further insight.



Mostly 'no'

Potential risks or blind spots. Choose one to start working on. There will be other tools within this toolkit to help you.



Using your results

Once you've completed the team health check, focus on one or two areas where your team scored lowest or where discussion felt most important. The table below suggests tools from the toolkit to help you take the next step in each area.

Toolkit tip:

Don't aim to fix everything. Focus on one small thing that will make the biggest difference to how your team works together.



Area	If you answered 'no', try...	Module
Psychological Safety	Psychologically safe conversations guide; what's OK / what's not OK discussion exercise.	Module 4: Work with others
Civility	Civility reflection tool, microaggression response checklist.	Module 4: Work with others
Trust	Team charter or peer accountability planner.	Module 6: Taking action
Inclusion	Conversation starters and prompts for inclusive dialogue.	Module 4: Work with others
Communication	Giving feedback planner and feedback response planner.	Module 4: Work with others
Fairness	Culture accountability framework.	Module 5: Lead culture change
Workload	Weekly culture check-in template to surface team pressures.	Module 6: Taking action
Feedback	Giving feedback planner and feedback loop planner.	Module 4: Work with others and Module 7: Track impact
Conflict handling	Psychologically safe conversations guide or what's OK / what's not OK discussion.	Module 4: Work with others
Recognition	Monthly reflection sheet or stop / start / continue activities.	Module 7: Track impact

Tool: Mini culture check-in

Time / effort: 
Quick win

Supported needed:
None

Use this short, low-pressure conversation to get a quick insight on your team's experience of culture.

Purpose: Encourages open dialogue and surfaces early signs of issues in a safe, structured way.

Instructions

- Use in a team huddle, 1:1 or away day.
- Pick two to three questions.
- Give people time to think and just listen.
- Don't fix. Just notice and thank them.

Suggested questions:

- 1 What helps us work well as a team?
- 2 What gets in the way of feeling like a team?
- 3 What's one thing that would make this a better place to work?
- 4 What kind of behaviour helps people feel safe to speak up?
- 5 When we're at our best, what are we doing?



Reflect

Write down your reflections for the following prompts:

What did I hear that surprised me?

What's one thing I can acknowledge or act on?

What pattern might be emerging?

How can I keep the door open for more honest feedback?

Put it into practice

Use this page to plan a small action using one of the tools from this module. Keep it simple. The goal is to learn something useful, not to fix everything.

1. Choose one tool to try this month

Team climate health checklist (do this on your own)

Mini culture check-in (use this with your team)

2. Plan when and how you'll use it

Which tool are you using?

When will you do it?

Date/time:

Toolkit tip: Protect time for this by adding it to your calendar / diary now.



Where and how?

e.g. 'During my 1:1 with Sam' or 'End of team huddle'.

What do you need to prepare?

e.g. print a copy, read sample questions, decide how you'll introduce it.

3. After you've done it, reflect

What did you notice?

What stood out or surprised you?

How did others respond (if used with team)?

Did anything feel uncomfortable or unclear?

4. Next steps based on what you've learned

At least one thing I will follow up on is:

Share what I heard back with the team.

Run a second check-in next month.

Raise something privately with a peer or manager.

Use another toolkit module to go deeper.

Other:

5. Accountability prompt

I will check in with myself or someone else about this on:



Module 3: Know yourself

Everything you need to know in 60 seconds

Purpose of this module

Build self-awareness and understand how your behaviour, values and emotional responses shape your team's culture.

When to use it

- When you want to reflect on your leadership style and impact.
- When feedback or tension suggests your behaviour may be influencing team climate.
- When you want to strengthen self-management and emotional control.



Tip

Regular self-reflection helps you stay grounded and model the behaviours you want to see in others.



Tools in this module

Tool	Time / effort	Support needed	Best for...
<u>Self-assessment: leadership style and impact</u>	Deeper dive 	None	Exploring how your style affects others and the team culture.
<u>Personal values exercise</u>	Quick win 	None	Clarifying what drives you and aligning your behaviour with values.
<u>Emotional regulation planner</u>	Deeper dive 	None	Planning how to stay composed and constructive under pressure.
<u>Stress response mapping</u>	Quick win 	None	Recognising personal triggers and responses in stressful moments.
<u>Bias check-in</u>	Deeper dive 	None	Reflecting on unconscious bias and fairness in your decision-making.
<u>Leadership journal template</u>	Quick win 	None	Recording insights, progress and lessons over time.

Learning objective

To strengthen your self-awareness and emotional regulation so you can lead with authenticity, integrity and resilience under pressure.

Tools in this module Click on icons below to go straight to the module.

Self-assessment: Leadership style and impact

Reflect on how your behaviours align with NHS values and how others experience your leadership.



Personal values exercise

Identify your top three to five leadership values and check whether you're modelling them consistently.



Emotional regulation planner

A quick and practical way to regain control of your emotions before they shape your behaviour.



Stress response mapping

Spot your common stress triggers and patterns, so you can prepare for them instead of reacting on autopilot.



Bias check-in

Brief prompts to raise awareness of unconscious biases and reduce their impact on decisions.



Leadership journal template

Capture weekly reflections to track progress, spot habits and keep yourself accountable.



Illustrative example

‘I didn’t realise how I was coming across’

David is an experienced IT manager known for being efficient and results focused. During busy periods, he often speaks quickly, interrupts staff and makes decisions without much discussion. He thinks this helps the team stay on track.

One day, a colleague quietly tells him that junior staff avoid raising concerns with him because they feel ‘shut down’. Another mentions that his tone sometimes comes across as impatient. David is surprised - he thought he was being clear and decisive.

Using the toolkit, David maps his stress responses and reflects on his values of fairness and respect. He realises that under pressure, his behaviour doesn’t always align with these values. By practising a short pause before responding and making space for others to speak, he starts to show the empathy and openness he wants to model. Over time, staff begin to speak up more and David notices the team feels calmer and more engaged.



Reflect

Write down your reflections about the illustrative example, using the following prompts:

What emotions was David experiencing under pressure, and how did these show up in his behaviour?

How did David's reactions affect how safe and respected his team felt?

Which of David's personal values were at risk of being undermined by his behaviour?

What practical strategies did David use to regulate his responses and demonstrate empathy?

Thinking of your own leadership, what situations trigger similar reactions for you, and how might you apply the same strategies?



Why is self-awareness important?

Improving team culture starts with self-awareness. How you behave, especially under stress, sets the tone.

NHS leadership frameworks stress the need to understand your own behaviour and how this impacts your team.

Emotional intelligence (managing your own emotions and empathising with others) is linked to better team climates, engagement and patient care.

Compassionate leadership begins with compassion toward yourself, acknowledging triggers, being open to feedback and committing to personal growth.

Reflective practice builds awareness. Even ten minutes a week can help you spot patterns and strengthen your impact.



Tool: Leadership style and impact self-assessment

Time / effort:
Deeper dive



Supported needed:
None

Outline

How you lead day-to-day sets the tone for your team's culture. This tool helps you reflect on your leadership style and the impact it has on others. It draws on the NHS Healthcare Leadership Model, which sets out nine dimensions of leadership behaviour such as leading with care, influencing for results, engaging the team and inspiring shared purpose.

By completing the NHS Leadership Academy's Healthcare Leadership Model self-assessment, you'll get a snapshot of your leadership strengths and areas for development. You'll then use the reflection prompts here to connect those insights to your role in shaping and sustaining a positive team culture.

Instructions

1. Go to the [NHS Leadership Academy self-assessment tool](#).
2. Complete the self-assessment (around 15 minutes). Download or note your results.
3. Spend ten minutes with the reflection prompts below. Keep your notes as a reference for later modules.
4. Optional: Ask a trusted peer, mentor or coach for feedback on how your results match how they experience you.

Reflection prompts

Which of your leadership strengths (from the leadership model results) are already supporting a healthy culture in your team?

Which development areas could hold your team back if not addressed?

What's one leadership behaviour you'll consciously role model more often over the next month?

Tool: Personal values exercise

Time / effort:
Quick win



Supported needed:
None

Outline

Your values are the guiding principles that shape how you lead and how your team experiences its culture. They influence the tone of conversations, how you respond under pressure and the behaviours you role model. Research shows that when leaders' behaviours align with their stated values, staff trust increases and cultures feel fairer, safer and more inclusive.

In culture change, values act as your anchor. They guide decisions when things feel uncertain, help you role model consistency, and show to others what matters most. When your values clash with your actions, for example, saying you value openness but reacting defensively to feedback, trust and credibility can suffer. This exercise helps you clarify your values and test how well your actions align with them, so you can lead culture improvements with authenticity and integrity.

Instructions

1. Read through the list of sample leadership values below. Add any others that feel important to you.
2. Identify your top three to five values - the ones that feel non-negotiable in how you want to lead.
3. For each chosen value, complete the short reflection prompts in the table.
4. Keep this as a reference when working through later modules. Revisit it regularly to check whether your behaviours reflect your values.

Step 1: Select your values

Respect	Integrity	Inclusivity	Compassion
Accountability	Courage	Fairness	Transparency
Empathy	Collaboration	Learning	Honesty



Step 2: Reflect on your values in action

My value	What it looks like in action	What it doesn't look like	When have I lived this value?	When have I fallen short?	One way I can show this more consistently
Example: Respect	Listening without interruption	Talking over people	Last week, letting a junior colleague finish before responding	In yesterday's meeting, I cut someone off	In meetings, I'll pause to let others finish before I speak

Step 3: Reflection questions

Do my current behaviours align with the culture I want to create?

Where is there a gap between intention and impact?

Which value will I focus on role modelling more consistently this month?

Tool: Stress response mapping

Time / effort:
Quick win



Supported needed:
None

Outline




As a leader, stress is unavoidable, but how you react under pressure sets the tone for your team. Many of us fall into automatic 'fight, flight or freeze' patterns: snapping, withdrawing or shutting down. These autopilot reactions are natural but can damage trust and morale if left unchecked.

Research shows that leaders who recognise and plan for their stress triggers are more likely to respond calmly and constructively, creating safer and more engaged teams (Goleman, 1995; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Bandura, 1977). This tool helps you spot patterns, so you can prepare for difficult moments rather than reacting automatically. This tool is a good precursor to use alongside the emotional regulation planner tool.

Instructions

1. Think about times at work when you felt under pressure.
2. Use the table to record your trigger, the autopilot stress pattern (fight, flight or freeze) and how it usually affects your team. If you find it hard to self-reflect or notice your own responses, ask a trusted colleague or coach for feedback.
3. Notice which pattern shows up most often. This is your stress default.
4. Keep your map handy. You'll use it to feed into the emotional regulation planner, where you'll practise new responses.

Example

Stress trigger (theme)	My autopilot stress pattern (fight, flight, freeze)	My typical reaction (feelings, thoughts, behaviours)	Impact on my team
Staff miss deadlines	Fight 	Feelings: Angry, tense. Thoughts: 'They're unreliable.' Behaviours: Criticise, micromanage.	Team feels blamed, morale declines.
Senior leader challenges me in a meeting	Freeze 	Feelings: Anxious, stuck. Thoughts: 'I can't defend this.' Behaviours: Go quiet, avoid eye contact.	Team sees lack of confidence, issues remain unspoken.
Overloaded with work	Flight 	Feelings: Overwhelmed. Thoughts: 'I just need to get away.' Behaviours: Withdraw, delay decisions.	Team feels abandoned, uncertainty increases.

Stress response map

Stress trigger (theme)	My autopilot stress pattern (fight, flight, freeze)	My typical reaction (feelings, thoughts, behaviours)	Impact on my team



Reflection

Which autopilot (fight, flight, freeze) do I fall into most often?

How do these patterns affect how my team sees me?

Which of my values are undermined by these reactions?

Which trigger will I take forward into the emotional regulation planner to practise a different response?

Tool: Emotional regulation planner

Time / effort:
Deeper dive



Supported needed:
None

Outline

As a leader, how you respond under pressure sets the tone for your team. Emotional reactions are natural, but if left unchecked they can undermine trust and psychological safety. Research on emotional regulation (Gross, 1998), emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995) and compassionate leadership (West, King's Fund) shows that leaders who pause, label emotions and respond with clarity and fairness create healthier, more resilient team cultures.

This planner helps you prepare for and reflect on situations that trigger strong emotions, so you can choose responses that support your values and create psychological safety for your team.



Instructions

1. Think of a real or potential situation at work that triggers a strong emotional response.
2. Complete the table. Note the trigger, your usual reaction, and what you want to do differently. If you find it hard to self-reflect or notice your own responses, ask a trusted colleague or coach for feedback.
3. Use the Pause–Label–Respond method:
 - **Pause** – create space before reacting.
 - **Label** – name the feeling (e.g. frustration, anxiety).
 - **Respond** – choose a constructive behaviour.
4. Revisit this planner after key moments to reflect on what worked and where you want to adjust.

Emotional regulation planner

Trigger situation	My usual reaction (feelings, thoughts, behaviours)	Impact on my team	Pause-Label-Respond: My chosen response	What this signals to my team and how it aligns with my values
<p>Example: A staff member challenges my decision in a meeting</p>	<p>Feelings: Frustrated, tense.</p> <p>Thoughts: ‘They don’t respect my authority.’</p> <p>Behaviours: Speak quickly, cut them off, shift tone to defensive.</p>	<p>Others feel it’s unsafe to speak up, discussion shuts down.</p>	<p>Pause: Take a slow breath, count to three before replying.</p> <p>Label: ‘I notice I feel defensive.’</p> <p>Respond: Say calmly: ‘I appreciate you raising that. Can you explain your perspective so we can consider it?’</p>	<p>That I value input, can manage myself under pressure, and want open dialogue.</p> <p>This aligns to my value of respect.</p>

Reflection

Did I remember to pause before reacting? What helped or got in the way?

How well did I label the emotion I was feeling? Was I accurate or did I only notice it afterwards?

How did my chosen response differ from my usual autopilot reaction?

What impact did this new response have on my team in the moment?

Next time, how can I strengthen one step (pause, label, or respond) to improve further?



Tool: Bias check-in

Time / effort:
Quick win**Supported needed:**
None

Outline

We all hold unconscious biases - automatic shortcuts our brains use to process information. In leadership, these biases can influence how we make decisions, allocate opportunities or judge behaviour, often without us realising. Research shows that unchecked bias reduces fairness, inclusion and team trust (Kahneman, 2011; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995).

The good news: simply pausing to check for bias before acting reduces its impact. This tool gives you quick prompts to notice when bias might be at play and adjust your approach.

Toolkit tip:

Below are some of the common types of biases we experience and what to do if you notice them.



Bias	Definition	What to do if you notice it
Similarity bias	Favouring people who are like us.	Ask: 'Who is missing from my decision?' Seek input from someone different.
Confirmation bias	Noticing evidence that supports our beliefs, ignoring what doesn't.	Deliberately look for disconfirming evidence before deciding.
Halo effect	Letting one positive trait shape our whole view of someone.	Separate observations: list behaviours, not impressions.
Horns effect	Letting one negative trait overshadow everything else.	Balance by noting strengths as well as weaknesses.
Gender bias	Judging people differently based on gender stereotypes.	Use objective criteria; check if language differs by gender.

Bias	Definition	What to do if you notice it
Age bias	Assuming abilities or limitations based on age.	Focus on evidence of skills and contribution, not age.
Affinity bias	Preferring those with similar backgrounds, interests or values.	Rotate opportunities fairly; ask: Am I being consistent?
Attribution bias	Excusing our own mistakes as situational but blaming others' mistakes on character.	Ask: What context might explain their behaviour?
Status quo bias	Preferring things to stay the same, resisting change.	Consider benefits of change. Test small experiments.
Anchoring bias	Relying too heavily on the first piece of information we receive.	Gather at least two additional data points before deciding.

Instructions

1. Before making a decision (e.g. hiring, allocating tasks, handling conflict), take two minutes to run through the prompts below.
2. Note any 'yes' answers. These signal where bias may be influencing you.
3. If bias is possible, pause and consider an alternative view, seek more evidence or check with a trusted colleague.
4. Use this tool regularly until it becomes second nature.

Decision/task I'm about to make:

- 1 Am I favouring someone because they remind me of myself, or because they fit a 'typical' image of success?
- 2 Am I being less patient, generous or trusting with certain people than with others?
- 3 Am I giving airtime or opportunities more often to the same individuals?
Who might I be overlooking?
- 4 Am I interpreting behaviour differently depending on who shows it?
(e.g. confident in one person = 'leadership', in another = 'arrogant')
- 5 If I flip the situation, would I react the same way if someone else was involved?
- 6 Have I sought out more than one perspective before deciding?

Reflection

Which types of bias do I notice most in myself (e.g. similarity bias, confirmation bias, gender or age stereotypes)?

How does my awareness of bias help me role-model fairness and inclusion?

What practical step can I take to reduce bias in my next decision (e.g. structured criteria, wider input, blind review)?



Tool: Leadership journal template

Time / effort:
Deeper dive



Supported needed:
None

Outline

Taking ten minutes a week to reflect can make a big difference to how you lead. Writing things down helps you step back, notice patterns and learn from experience instead of repeating the same habits. Research shows that leaders who regularly reflect become more self-aware, regulate their behaviour better and build stronger, more compassionate cultures. This simple journal is designed to help you do just that - short notes, each week, that keep you learning and accountable.

Weekly leadership journal template

Week of: _____

What went well this week in my leadership?

What challenged me or triggered a strong response? How did I handle it?

How did I support or hinder the culture I want to create?

Which of my values showed up in my actions? Which didn't?

Who did I recognise, thank or support? Who might I have overlooked?

One thing I want to do differently next week is...

Instructions

1. Set aside a regular ten-15 minutes each week.
2. Use the template prompts to jot down short notes. Keep it simple, don't overthink.
3. Re-read your entries monthly to look for patterns.
4. Share insights with a coach, mentor or trusted colleague if you want accountability.



Reflection prompts over time

What themes keep repeating in my journal?

How have my responses to stress or challenge changed over the past month?

What progress do I see in living my leadership values consistently?

Which small actions are making the biggest difference to team culture?

Put it into practice

Use this page to plan a small action using one of the tools from this module. Keep it simple. The goal is to learn something useful, not to fix everything.

1. Choose one tool to try this month

Leadership style and impact self-assessment (Do this on your own)

Stress response mapping (Do this on your own)

Personal values exercise (Do this on your own)

Bias check-in (Do this on your own)

Emotion regulation planner (Do this on your own)

Leadership Journal Template (Do this on your own)

2. Plan when and how you'll use it

Which tool are you using?

When will you do it?
Date/time:

Toolkit tip: Protect time for this by adding it to your calendar / diary now.



Where and how?
e.g. 'During my 1:1 with Sam'
or 'End of team huddle'.

What do you need to prepare?
e.g. print a copy, read sample
questions, decide how you'll
introduce it.

3. After you've done it, reflect

What did you notice?

What stood out or surprised you?

How did others respond (if used with team)?

Did anything feel uncomfortable or unclear?

4. Next steps based on what you've learned

At least one thing I will follow up on is:

Practise one emotion regulation technique in a real situation this week.

Share one personal value or reflection with a trusted peer or coach.

Ask a colleague for one piece of feedback about how my behaviour impacts the team.

Review my stress triggers and update my stress response map.

Write a short reflection in my leadership journal at the end of the week.

5. Accountability prompt

I will check in with myself or someone else about this on:



Module 4: Work with others

Everything you need to know in 60 seconds

Purpose of this module

Improve how people work together, strengthening communication, trust, inclusion and civility in teams.

When to use it

- When relationships feel tense or disconnected.
- When you need to build psychological safety or respectful challenge.
- When you want to reset expectations or improve feedback conversations.

Tip

Pick one area - trust, civility, or feedback - and start there. Small, consistent changes in how people talk and listen make the biggest difference.



Tools in this module

Tool	Time / effort	Support needed	Best for...
Psychologically safe conversations guide	Deeper dive 	Optional OD	Creating safety and openness in team discussions.
Civility reflection tool	Deeper dive 	Optional HR / OD	Exploring team behaviours and their impact.
Manual of me	Quick win 	None	Building understanding of how each person works best.
Microaggression response checklist	Quick win 	Optional HR	Supporting inclusion and addressing small acts of disrespect.
What's OK / what's not OK team discussion exercise	Deeper dive 	Optional OD	Setting shared behavioural norms in teams.
Conversation starters and prompts	Quick win 	None	Starting open conversations on culture and teamwork.
Giving feedback planner	Deeper dive 	None	Planning how to deliver feedback constructively.
Feedback response planner	Quick win 	None	Reflecting on how you receive and respond to feedback.

Learning objective

To strengthen how you lead relationships in your team through civility, inclusion, trust and compassionate communication.

Tools in this module Click on icons below to go straight to the module.

Psychologically safe conversations guide

Starter questions to open safe conversations with your team and prompts and questions to help you listen with empathy and without judgement.



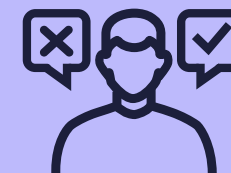
Civility reflection tool

A short exercise to review how respectful your behaviours are day-to-day.



Manual of me

A simple, reflective tool used to build understanding and trust within teams.



Microaggression response checklist

Simple phrases and actions to address harmful or exclusionary comments.



What's OK / what's not OK team discussion exercise.



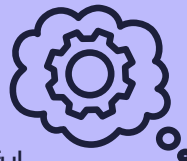
Conversation starters and prompts

A group activity to define shared standards for respect and inclusion.



Giving feedback planner

A simple structure that helps leaders deliver clear, respectful and constructive feedback that supports learning and strengthens team culture.



Feedback response planner

Steps to take after receiving feedback so you act constructively.



Illustrative example

‘No one speaks up in my meetings’

Sonia is a service manager leading a multi-disciplinary team. Meetings run smoothly on the surface, but she notices the same few people dominate discussions. Quieter staff rarely contribute, and when mistakes happen, issues are dealt with outside the room rather than openly.

After a junior colleague tells her privately that they don't feel safe raising concerns, Sonia realises her quick, task-focused style may be limiting open discussion. She begins using simple tools from this module, inviting everyone to share one idea, using psychological safety prompts, and thanking people for raising difficult issues.

Over time, team members start speaking up more freely. Problems are identified earlier and discussions become more balanced and constructive. Sonia sees that making small changes in how she interacts with others creates a more inclusive and trusting culture.



Reflect

Write down your reflections about the illustrative example, using the following prompts:

What signs in Sonia's meetings suggested that some staff didn't feel safe to speak up?

How might a leader's style (pace, tone or focus on tasks) affect team openness?

What simple changes could you make in your own meetings to invite quieter voices?

How can you recognise and reinforce when someone takes the risk to raise a concern?

What difference could more inclusive discussions make for your team's culture and outcomes?

Working better with others

Team culture is shaped by daily interactions. How you respond to mistakes, run meetings or handle disagreements sets the tone for everyone else.

Psychological safety is central. When people feel safe to speak up and admit mistakes, teams learn and perform better. A dismissive reaction can close people down; curiosity and appreciation encourage openness.

Inclusion matters too. Involving quieter voices, being transparent about decisions and addressing disrespect directly all demonstrate fairness and belonging. Small acts of civility such as thanking, apologising or showing interest, build trust. But accountability is just as important; people need to know that standards are clear and applied consistently.

Working well with others means balancing compassion and accountability. By listening, valuing contributions and addressing issues fairly, you create the conditions for trust, wellbeing and high performance.



Tool: Psychologically safe conversations guide

Time / effort:
Deeper dive



Supported needed:
Optional OD

Teams perform best when people feel safe to speak up, share ideas, and admit mistakes without fear of blame. This is called psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999) and research shows it's the single biggest predictor of team performance and learning. In the NHS, creating this safety is vital for high-quality care, staff wellbeing and improvement.

Leaders set the tone. Asking open questions and listening with empathy shows staff their voice matters. This tool gives you starter prompts to open conversations and a listening guide to help you respond constructively, even when feedback is difficult to hear.

Instructions

- Use the discussion prompts to start regular conversations about safety, inclusion, and teamwork.
- When staff share, use the listening guide to keep your responses open, non-defensive and supportive.
- Capture key themes and agree small actions as a team. This shows you're acting on what you hear.

Part 1: Psychological safety discussion prompts

Use these to start conversations that encourage openness without judgement. These prompts show humility, invite multiple voices, and normalise mistakes as learning opportunities.

- 1 'I may not have all the answers - what are your thoughts on this?'
- 2 'It's OK if you see this differently. What's another perspective we should consider?'
- 3 'What's one improvement we could try as a team, even if it's a small step?'
- 4 'What challenges are you noticing that I might not be aware of?'
- 5 'I want to learn from this too - what feedback do you have for me?'
- 6 'When things don't go as planned, what can we learn from it together?'

Part 2: Safe space listening guide

When someone speaks up:

Do:

- pause, give full attention (eye contact, body language)
- thank them for sharing, even if you disagree reflect back what you heard: 'It sounds like you felt excluded when...'
- ask with curiosity: 'Can you tell me more about what would help?'
- agree on next steps, however small.



Don't:

- interrupt or rush to defend yourself dismiss or minimise feelings ('That's not a big deal')
- blame or shame
- promise action you won't follow through on.



Reflection

How easy is it for me to hear uncomfortable feedback without becoming defensive?

What signals do I give, with words, tone or body language, that either encourage or shut down honesty?

What one behaviour could I practise this week to make my listening safer?

Tool: Civility reflection tool

Time / effort:
Deeper dive



Supported needed:
Optional OD / HR

Outline

Civility is about showing everyday respect such as listening, acknowledging and treating colleagues with fairness and courtesy. Research in healthcare shows that even small acts of incivility (interrupting, sarcasm, ignoring input) can lower morale, reduce teamwork and even impact patient safety. Conversely, leaders who consistently role-model respectful behaviours build trust, inclusion and psychological safety. Watch East and North Hertfordshire Teaching NHS Trust's video [Civility and Kindness Matters](#).

This tool helps you quickly reflect on your daily behaviours and their impact, so you can strengthen respectful habits.

Instructions

- At the end of each day (or week), use the prompts below to reflect on your behaviour.
- Be honest, this is for your own awareness, not judgement.
- If you notice patterns of incivility, pick one behaviour to change and revisit next week.

Civility reflection prompts

Today / this week...

- 1 Did I listen without interrupting?
- 2 Did I acknowledge contributions (a simple 'thank you' or 'good point')?
- 3 Did I show respect in tone, body language and words?
- 4 Did I avoid dismissive remarks, sarcasm or ignoring input?
- 5 Did I role-model calm responses under pressure?
- 6 Did I treat all team members with equal fairness and courtesy?

Tool: What's OK / what's not OK team exercise

Time / effort:
Deeper dive



Supported needed:
Optional OD

Outline

Respectful behaviour is the foundation of a healthy culture. But what feels respectful to one person might feel dismissive or harmful to another. Clark's Civility Spectrum (2017) shows that behaviours exist on a scale: some are clearly respectful, some clearly uncivil and some fall in a grey zone where context and intent matter.



Instructions

- **Set the scene.** Explain the purpose: 'We're defining our shared standards for respect and inclusion so we all know what's expected and what isn't.'
- **Draw three columns** on a flipchart or digital board:
 - **OK** (respectful, inclusive behaviours we want more of).
 - **Grey zone** (behaviours that depend on tone, frequency or context).
 - **Not OK** (behaviours that undermine respect, inclusion or safety).
- **Facilitate brainstorming.** Ask the team to suggest behaviours for each column. Encourage real examples from meetings, emails, feedback and daily interactions. You could break the team into groups for this part.
- **Discuss the grey zone.** These are the most valuable conversations. For example, 'banter' can build connection for some but feel excluding for others. Agree as a team how you'll handle these. Where possible, move them into 'OK (with conditions)' or 'Not OK'.
- **Agree team standards.** Highlight the top five-to-seven agreed behaviours from 'OK' and 'Not OK'. Capture grey zone items as watch points to monitor.
- **Commit and revisit.** Write up the agreed list and keep it visible. Revisit it regularly, especially if tensions arise.

Example output

OK

- Listening without interrupting.
- Thanking people for contributions.
- Honest feedback, shared respectfully.



Grey zone

- Banter/jokes (OK if inclusive, not OK if at someone's expense).
- Challenging ideas in meetings (OK if respectful, not OK if personal).



Not OK

- Eye-rolling or sarcasm.
- Ignoring or dismissing ideas.
- Public criticism or blame.



Reflection

Did everyone get a chance to contribute to defining behaviours?

Which grey zone behaviours created the most debate and what does that tell me about our culture?

How will I role-model the agreed standards consistently?

Toolkit tip:

This tool makes civility and inclusion visible, explicit and co-owned by the team. By addressing the grey zone, you reduce the risk of small incivilities escalating into bigger cultural problems.



Tool: Manual of me

Time / effort:
Quick win



Supported needed:
None

Outline

This tool helps you and your team understand how each person works best. It encourages open conversations about preferences, needs and working styles. By sharing how you like to communicate, what supports you and what challenges you, you can reduce misunderstandings and strengthen trust.

Use it during a team development session or away day, when welcoming new team members or forming a new leadership team, or as a reset exercise after change.

Instructions

- Explain that this is about understanding how to work well together, not judging performance.
- Ask everyone to complete their own manual of me, using the prompts below (ten–15 minutes).
- Share in pairs or small groups. People share what they're comfortable with; others listen.
- Discuss as a full team: what helps us work well together, what to change, what to keep.
- Agree two or three shared team habits.
- Keep and revisit after six months or when team members change.



Steps

Prompt	My response
What energises me at work:	
What drains me:	
How I prefer to communicate (e.g. email, chat, face-to-face):	
How I like to receive feedback:	
How do I react under pressure:	
What I need from others on busy or stressful days:	
What I value most in a team:	
Something people often misunderstand about me:	
How to get the best from me:	
What I'm working on improving:	

Optional reflection: After the discussion, ask:

- What have we learned about how we can support each other?
- What small changes will make a difference to how we work as a team?

Reflection

What did I learn about my team that I didn't know before?

How did the team respond to sharing personal preferences?

What helped or hindered openness?

What small actions can I take to keep these insights alive in our day-to-day work?

Tool: Microaggression response checklist

Time / effort:  Quick win

Supported needed: Optional HR

Outline

Microaggressions are subtle, often unintentional comments or behaviours that infer exclusion or disrespect (Sue et al., 2007). In healthcare, even small acts of bias or dismissal can erode trust, morale and psychological safety. Research shows that when leaders ignore microaggressions, it sends a message of tolerance and the microaggressions spread (Rowe, 2019). Responding in the moment calmly, respectfully and consistently helps protect dignity and inclusion.

This checklist gives you simple response options to use when you witness or experience a microaggression.

Instructions

- When you notice or hear a microaggression, pause and choose the type of response that fits the moment.
- Use calm tone and non-judgemental language. Focus on the behaviour, not labelling the person.
- If the situation isn't safe to challenge in the moment, follow up privately.

Pause and clarify

'I just want to pause on that - what did you mean by it?'

'Can we check how that landed with others?'

Name the impact

'When comments like that are made, it can make people feel excluded.'

'That language doesn't align with the values we agreed as a team.'

Offer an alternative

'Let's reframe that, how else could we say it more respectfully?'

'In this team, we aim for inclusive language. Could we try another wording?'

Support the person affected

Check in afterwards: 'How are you feeling about what was said?'

'Do you want me to raise it further?'

Follow up if needed

Address privately with the person who made the comment: 'I don't think you intended harm, but that phrase could be taken as exclusionary. Let's think about other ways to say it.'

Reflection

Which type of response feels most natural for me - clarifying, naming impact, offering an alternative or following up?

When have I stayed silent in the past and what stopped me?

How can I role-model consistent responses so my team sees this as the norm?

Toolkit tip:

This tool makes addressing microaggressions practical and doable. By having a ready set of phrases, you can reduce hesitation and show your team that respect and inclusion are non-negotiable.



Tool: Conversation starters and prompts

Time / effort:  Quick win

Supported needed: None

Outline

Starting a tough or developmental conversation can feel uncomfortable. Leaders sometimes avoid them or delay until problems grow. Research shows that clear, respectful and timely conversations build trust, accountability and psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999; NHS People Promise). Motivational interviewing (Miller & Rollnick, 2013) and coaching-based leadership (Whitmore, 2017) suggest that open, non-judgemental questions encourage reflection and ownership.

This tool provides practical phrases to help you start well, because how you open sets the tone for the whole conversation.

Instructions

- Before the conversation, clarify your intent: what outcome do you want (learning, improvement, clarity)?
- Use a starter prompt to set the tone.
- Pair starters with listening. Don't just ask, hear the response with curiosity.
- End with shared next steps, not one-sided directives.

Framing the purpose

'I'd like us to talk about how things are going, My aim is to support you and strengthen the team.'

'This might feel a bit uncomfortable, but it's important we talk about it openly.'

Inviting perspective

'How do you feel things are working at the moment?'

'What's been most challenging for you recently?'

'How do you think others might be experiencing this situation?'

Addressing behaviour constructively

'I noticed [specific behaviour]. Can we explore what was happening for you at the time?'

'When [X] happened, the impact was [Y]. How do you see it?'

'What would you like to do differently next time?'

Encouraging ownership and solutions

'What ideas do you have to move this forward?'

'What support would help you succeed?'

'What's one step you could take this week?'

Closing with clarity and care

'Let's agree on next steps so we're both clear.'

'I appreciate your openness in this conversation.'

'I'll check in again next week, does that work for you?'

Reflection

Did I frame the purpose clearly and respectfully?

Did I spend more time listening than speaking?

Did we end with shared ownership of next steps?

Toolkit tip:

This tool makes tough conversations safer and more effective by giving you evidence-based phrases that build clarity, compassion and accountability.



Tool: Giving feedback planner

Time / effort:
Deeper dive



Supported needed:
None

Outline

Feedback is one of the most powerful ways you shape culture. Delivered well, it supports learning, accountability and trust. Delivered poorly, it can damage relationships and reduce psychological safety. Research shows that specific, timely, and respectful feedback leads to higher engagement, stronger performance and healthier team climates.

This tool gives you a simple structure, based on the DESC model (Describe, Express, Specify, Consequences), to help you give feedback that is clear, constructive and aligned with NHS values.

Instructions

- Use this tool for both positive and corrective feedback.
- Be timely, the closer to the event, the more useful it is.
- Focus on behaviours and impact, not personality.
- Use a calm, respectful tone and check in on how the feedback is landing.

Giving feedback: The DESC structure

D

Describe the behaviour

- State what you observed, factually and without judgement. Demonstrate empathy.
- 'In yesterday's handover, I noticed you interrupted two colleagues while they were speaking. I can see you were keen to get your point across and that came from wanting clarity.'

S

Specify what's needed

- Be clear about the change or continuation you'd like to see.
- 'I'd like you to give others space to finish before adding your point.'

E

Express the impact

- Share how the behaviour affects you, the team or patients.
- 'By interrupting, this made it harder for everyone to contribute fully.'

C

Consequences (positive or negative)

- Link to outcomes for the team, patients, or culture.
- 'This will help us run smoother handovers and make sure every perspective is heard.'

Example: Positive feedback

D

'I noticed you stayed calm and inclusive during a stressful patient admission. That can't have been easy for you.'

S

'Please keep using that approach.'

E

'It really helped the team stay focused.'

C

'Because it strengthens teamwork and patient care.'

Reflection

Did I focus on behaviour and impact, not personality?

Did I balance challenge with support?

How did the person respond and what does that tell me about psychological safety in our team?

Toolkit tip:

By using DESC, you deliver feedback that is specific, respectful and actionable, reinforcing a culture of learning and improvement.



Tool: Feedback response planner

Time / effort:  Quick win

Supported needed: None

Outline

How you respond to feedback sets the tone for your team. If you react defensively, people stop being honest. If you respond with openness, you build trust and show that learning matters here.

This planner gives you a simple step-by-step process to pause, reflect and act on feedback. It helps you manage your reactions, focus on what's useful and turn feedback into small, visible improvements. By doing so, you model the curiosity and accountability you want your team to show.

Instructions

Use this planner each time you receive feedback, whether in a formal appraisal, a team meeting or an informal comment.

Step

1

Pause

- Take a breath before reacting.
- Remember: feedback is data, not a verdict.

Step

2

Listen and clarify

- Thank the person for raising it.
- Ask for examples if the feedback is vague.
- Show curiosity: 'Can you tell me more about when you noticed that?'

Step

3

Reflect

- Ask yourself: 'What part of this feels accurate? What might I not have seen?'
- If it's hard to self-reflect, check with a trusted colleague or coach.

Step

4

Reframe

- Shift from defensiveness to growth: 'This is an opportunity to improve, not a personal attack.'
- Link back to your values and the NHS Leadership Code: 'Does my behaviour align with the values I want to model?'

Step

5

Respond and act

- Share what you'll take away: 'Thank you, I'll work on being clearer in meetings.'
- Decide one small action to test.
- Follow up later to show progress.

Reflection

How did I manage my initial emotional reaction?

What's one insight I gained from this feedback?

What's one action I'll take and how will I track it?

Toolkit tip:

This tool helps you turn feedback into progress. By pausing, reflecting and acting, you model the behaviours that build an open learning culture.



Put it into practice

Use this page to plan a small action using one of the tools from this module. Keep it simple. The goal is to learn something useful, not to fix everything.

1. Choose one tool to try this month

<input type="checkbox"/>	Psychologically safe conversations guide (Use this with your team)	<input type="checkbox"/>	What's OK / what's not OK (Use this with your team)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Civility reflection tool (Do this on your own)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conversation starts and prompts (Do this on your own)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Microaggression response checklist (Do this on your own)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Giving feedback planner (Do this on your own)

2. Plan when and how you'll use it

Which tool are you using?	
When will you do it? Date/time:	Toolkit tip: Protect time for this by adding it to your calendar / diary now. 
Where and how? e.g. 'During my 1:1 with Sam' or 'End of team huddle'.	
What do you need to prepare? e.g. print a copy, read sample questions, decide how you'll introduce it.	

3. After you've done it, reflect

What did you notice?

What stood out or surprised you?

How did others respond (if used with team)?

Did anything feel uncomfortable or unclear?

4. Next steps based on what you've learned

At least one thing I will follow up on is:

Use one listening tool (e.g. psychologically safe conversations guide) in your next 1:1 or team meeting.

When you give feedback, apply the giving feedback planner.

When you receive feedback, apply the feedback response planner and share how you'll act on it.

Try a 'what's OK / not OK' exercise with your team to co-create ground rules for civility and inclusion.

At the end of the week, reflect: Did I create space for every voice? Did I model civility in my interactions?

5. Accountability prompt

I will check in with myself or someone else about this on:

Module 5: Lead culture change

Everything you need to know in 60 seconds

Purpose of this module

Help you lead cultural change deliberately, through consistent behaviours, shared accountability and engagement with others.

When to use it

- When you're ready to lead a focused culture improvement effort.
- When you want to strengthen ownership and consistency across your team.
- When you're planning how to engage others in shaping the change.



Tip

Consistency builds credibility. Model the behaviour you expect, even when it's uncomfortable, that's where cultural change can start to happen.

Change

Tools in this module

Tool	Time / effort	Support needed	Best for...
Behavioural consistency tracker	Deeper dive 	None	Reviewing whether words and actions align with cultural goals.
Culture accountability framework	Deeper dive 	Optional OD/HR	Clarifying shared ownership for culture work across roles.
Engagement planning canvas	Deeper dive 	Optional OD	Structuring how you'll engage people in culture conversations.
Meeting check-in prompts	Quick win 	None	Embedding culture conversations into existing meetings.
Resistance response map	Quick win 	None	Planning how to respond to resistance constructively.
Adaptive leadership self-awareness assessment	Deeper dive 	Optional coaching	Reflecting on your leadership adaptability and readiness for change.

Learning objective

To equip you to lead cultural improvements in your team by role-modelling values, engaging others and turning good intentions into consistent actions.

Tools in this module Click on icons below to go straight to the module.

Behavioural consistency tracker

Spot where behaviours align with stated values and where they don't.



Culture accountability framework

A guide to clarify expectations and address issues constructively.



Engagement planning canvas

Plan how to involve your team in shaping and owning cultural improvements.



Meeting check-in prompts

Simple questions to keep meetings focused, timely and inclusive.



Resistance response map

Anticipate common sources of resistance and plan constructive responses.



Adaptive leadership self-awareness assessment

Short self-check to understand how you respond to complexity and change.



Illustrative example

‘Small changes can shift culture’

Martin, a clinical team leader, was frustrated that meetings often ran late and staff rarely offered new ideas. Morale was low, and many felt that change was out of reach.

He chose to start small. Together with his team, he set a simple norm: meetings would begin on time. Using check-in prompts to keep discussions focused, meetings soon became smoother and staff felt their time was respected. Encouraged by this, Martin introduced a short ‘ideas huddle’ each Friday. Participation grew quickly and within months the team had adopted two staff-led improvements.

By modelling consistency and involving others, Martin showed that culture change was possible through small, visible wins.



Reflect

Write down your reflections about the illustrative example, using the following prompts:

What small changes did Martin introduce and why were they effective?

How did these changes affect staff perceptions of respect and involvement?

What role did Martin's consistency play in building momentum?

How might 'small wins' build confidence for bigger cultural changes in your own team?

What is one practical action you could take to model culture change in your area?

Culture change is not about big statements, it's about daily behaviours. Even in large organisations, leaders can make a big difference within their own teams. The key is to set a clear vision of 'how we work here' and translate that into simple, shared norms.

Accountability is essential, but it's not the same as blame. Accountability means being clear about expectations and addressing issues fairly; blame shuts people down and damages trust.

Resistance and fatigue are normal. People may feel sceptical if they've seen initiatives come and go. This is why small, consistent wins matter. Visible progress such as a meeting that starts on time, an idea acted upon, all help to build belief.

The most powerful tool you have is role modelling. If you want openness, be open yourself. If you want inclusion, involve people actively. Values must be lived, not just stated.

Culture change works best when it is collective. Engage your team in shaping solutions and align with wider NHS programmes and values, such as the NHS People Promise. Small local actions, reinforced consistently, create ripple effects that add up to wider culture change.



Tool: Adaptive Leadership self-awareness assessment

Time / effort:
Deeper dive



Supported needed:
Optional coaching

Outline

Adaptive Leadership is about mobilising yourself and others to face challenges, adjust to change, and thrive in uncertainty. In complex NHS settings, leaders often face problems with no easy solutions. Adaptive leadership helps you stay curious, flexible and people-centred.

This self-check draws on research from Adaptive Leadership. It helps you reflect on how you typically respond to complexity and change, so you can identify strengths and areas to grow.

Instructions

- Read each statement and rate yourself from 1 (rarely true for me) to 5 (always true for me).
- Answer honestly. This is for your reflection, not a test.
- At the end, note your strongest areas and one area to develop.

Question (rating 1 = rarely true for me, 5 = always true for me)

Rating

I notice how my own emotions affect my leadership in uncertain situations.

I am aware of the assumptions I bring to complex problems.

I reflect on how my leadership behaviours impact the wider team culture.

I can recognise when my usual approaches are not working and need to shift.

I am open to feedback that challenges my perspective.

Question (rating 1 = rarely true for me, 5 = always true for me)**Rating**

I involve others in diagnosing problems rather than rushing to solutions.

I help my team experiment with new approaches, even if outcomes are uncertain.

I encourage diverse viewpoints, even when they conflict with my own.

I stay focused on long-term goals while managing short-term pressures.

I take responsibility for modelling the behaviours I want to see in others.

Scoring**High (40–50)**

Strong adaptive mindset and behaviours.
Keep modelling and supporting others.

**Moderate (25–39)**

Good awareness but room to grow.
Identify one or two items to focus on.

**Low (10–24)**

Opportunity to develop adaptive
leadership capacity. Use the toolkit tools
(e.g. resistance response, engagement
planning) to build skills.

Reflection

Which items scored highest?

What do they say about your strengths?

Which items scored lowest?

How do these show up in your team?

What one behaviour could you practise in your next team challenge?

Toolkit tip:

This tool is designed as a quick pulse for self-reflection, not a validated diagnostic.



Tool: Behavioural consistency tracker

Time / effort:
Deeper dive



Supported needed:
None

Outline

Culture change depends on consistency: what leaders and teams do every day must match what they say they value. When there's a gap, trust declines and cynicism grows.

This tracker helps you (and your team) spot alignment between stated values and visible behaviours and highlight inconsistencies that need attention.

Instructions

- Choose three-to-five **core values** (e.g. respect, inclusion, compassion), ideally drawn from your trust's values.
- Over a week, observe and note examples of behaviours that align with those values, and examples that conflict with them. Include your own behaviours as a leader.
- Reflect: Are the positive behaviours visible enough? Do inconsistent behaviours get ignored or challenged?
- Share key insights with your team (e.g. in a huddle or meeting) and invite them to add examples.
- Pick one area of inconsistency and agree a small change to trial.



Behavioural consistency tracker template

Value	Aligned behaviours (examples observed)	Inconsistent behaviours (examples observed)	Next step
Example: Respect	Staff listened without interrupting in handover	A colleague's idea dismissed without discussion	Agree 'one voice at a time' rule
Example: Inclusion	Invited quieter staff to share updates	Same two people dominate every meeting	Use round-robin in next meeting
Example: Compassion	Team checked in on a stressed colleague	Jokes made about someone 'not coping'	Address openly in huddle and reinforce

Reflection

Where am I modelling our values clearly?

Where am I unintentionally demonstrating the opposite?

What small, visible action can I take this week to close the gap?

Tool: Culture accountability framework

Time / effort:
Deeper dive



Supported needed:
Optional OD / HR

Outline

Healthy cultures balance compassion with accountability. Leaders often avoid addressing poor behaviours out of fear of conflict, but research shows that clear expectations, fair follow-up and consistency are what sustain positive cultures (Edmondson, 1999; West, 2017).

This framework helps you clarify expectations, role-model values and address behaviours constructively without blame.

Instructions

- **Set expectations clearly** - agree team values and norms together (see 'what's OK/not OK' tool in Module 4).
- **Notice behaviours** - pay attention to small signs of alignment and misalignment (see behavioural consistency tracker tool in module 5).
- **Address promptly and fairly** - use constructive feedback structures (e.g. see giving feedback tool in module 4) to discuss behaviours.
- **Link back to values** - frame conversations around agreed values, not personalities.
- **Follow through** - reinforce positive changes and if behaviours don't change, escalate consistently using organisational processes.

Culture accountability framework

Step	What this looks like in practice	Leader prompt
1: Clarify	Make expectations explicit by co-creating values and behavioural standards. (see what's OK/not OK tool in module 4).	'What behaviours do we all agree show respect in our team?'
2: Observe	Actively notice behaviours that align or conflict with values. (see behavioural consistency tracker tool in module 5).	'What did we see / hear this week that reflects our values?'
3: Address	Give timely, constructive feedback. (e.g. see giving feedback tool in module 4).	'When X happened, it had Y impact. I'd like to see Z next time.'
4: Support	Ask what the person/the team needs to succeed and offer resources.	'What might help you/us act differently in these situations?'
5: Escalate if needed	If behaviours persist, involve MR/OD and follow formal processes.	'We've talked about this before, let's agree next steps with support.'

Reflection

Do I address issues consistently, or only when they become serious?

Do my team know what behaviours are expected and why they matter?

How do I balance empathy with accountability when addressing issues?

Toolkit tip:

This tool supports you to act early, fairly and consistently, showing that cultural expectations are real and lived, not optional. Over time, this builds trust, psychological safety and integrity in the team.



Tool: Engagement planning canvas

Time / effort:
Deeper dive



Supported needed:
Optional OD

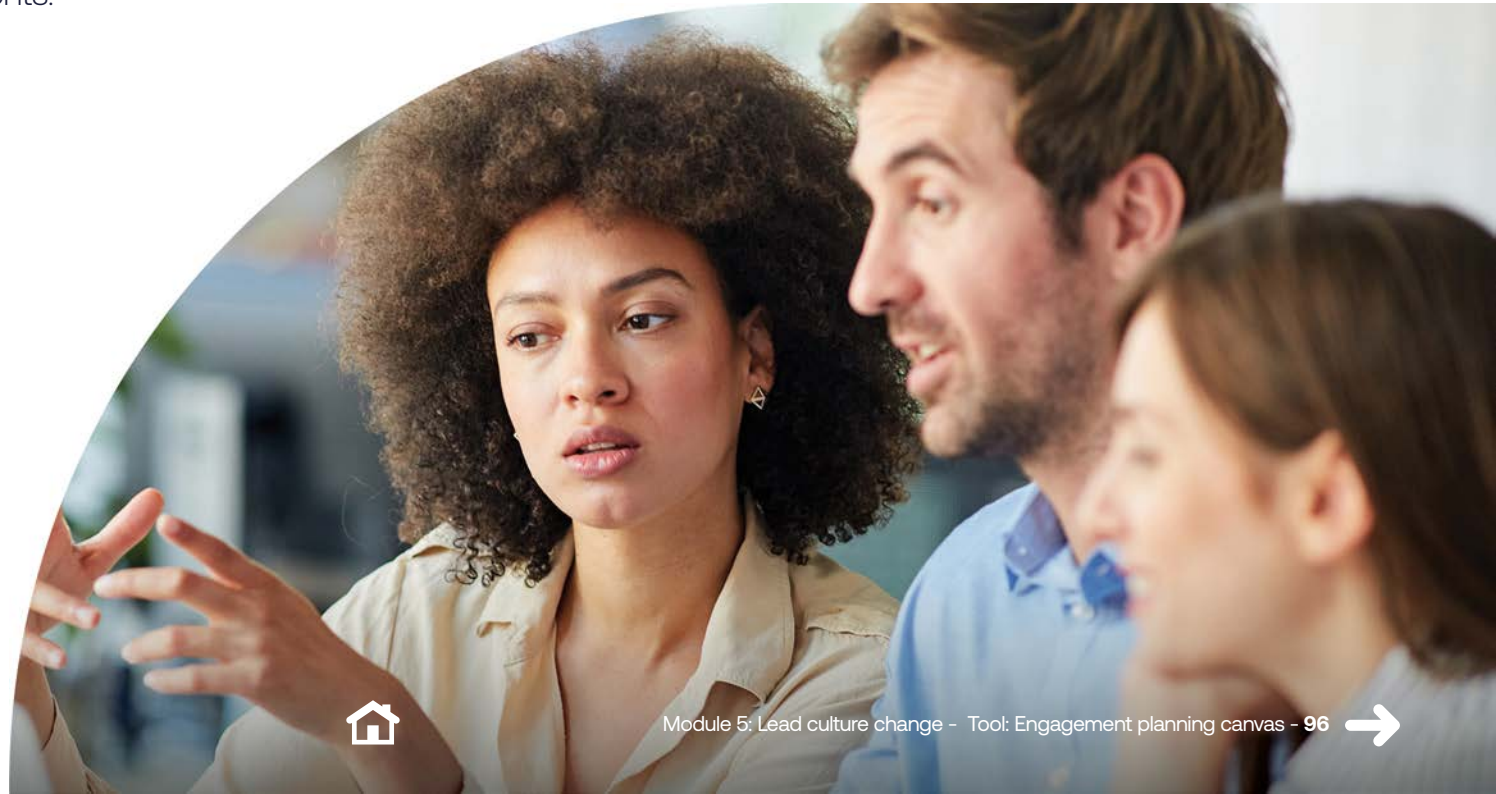
Outline

Culture change is most effective when staff feel ownership and involvement. Research shows that participation increases commitment and reduces resistance (Kotter, 1996; Edmondson, 1999). In the NHS, collective leadership and the People Promise emphasise that 'we each have a voice that counts.'

This canvas helps you plan how to actively involve your team in shaping and sustaining cultural improvements.

Instructions

- Choose a cultural improvement focus (e.g. civility, psychological safety, team wellbeing).
- Use the canvas to map how you will invite input, build ownership and keep communication two-way.
- Review progress with your team and adapt the plan regularly.



Engagement planning canvas

Element	Prompts	Your plan
Purpose	What cultural improvement are we working on? Why does it matter for staff and patients?	
Voices to involve	Who needs to be part of the conversation (all staff, patients, partners)? How will you include quieter or marginalised voices?	
Ways to engage	What methods will you use, e.g. workshops, huddles, surveys, suggestion boxes, team meetings?	
Shared ownership	How will staff co-create solutions rather than just receive instructions?	
Quick wins	What visible action can be taken soon to build confidence and momentum?	
Communication	How will you keep everyone updated and show that input is acted on?	
Feedback loop	How will you review together what's working, what's not and what needs adjusting?	

Reflection

Am I involving a wide enough range of voices, not just the most vocal?

Do staff see visible evidence that their input makes a difference?

How am I keeping engagement alive beyond the first conversation?

Toolkit tip:

This tool makes sure cultural change is done with people, not to them, increasing ownership, trust and sustainability.



Tool: Meeting check-in prompts

Outline

Meetings are where culture is reinforced every day. If they start late, run long, or exclude voices, the culture suffers. Research shows that inclusive and well-structured meetings increase engagement, psychological safety, and collective ownership.

This tool offers short prompts you can use at the start and end of meetings to keep them focused, respectful, and inclusive.

Time / effort:
Quick win



Supported needed:
None

Instructions

- Choose one-to-two prompts from the list below to use consistently at the start or end of your meetings.
- Keep them short (30 - 60 seconds each). The point is to demonstrate respect and inclusion, not add length.
- Encourage rotation. Invite different people to pose the question each time.

At the start



- 'What one word describes how you're arriving at the meeting today?'
- 'Is there anything we need to clear so we can focus?'
- 'Who else's perspective do we need in this meeting?'
- 'What's the most important outcome we want from today?'

At the end



- 'What worked well in how we met today?'
- 'Did everyone feel able to contribute?'
- 'What's one thing we'll do differently next time?'
- 'Is there anyone we should thank or recognise before we close?'

Reflection

Do my meetings model the values I want in our team culture (respect, inclusion, clarity)?

Who speaks most and who speaks least in my meetings?

How can I adjust prompts to bring in quieter voices?

Toolkit tip:

These quick questions help you to make meetings not just efficient but also a live demonstration of team culture. Small, consistent practices in meetings shape how safe, respected and valued people feel.



Tool: Resistance response map

Time / effort:
Quick win



Supported needed:
None

Outline

Resistance is a normal part of culture change. People may worry about losing control, fear extra workload or doubt that change will last. Research shows that naming and addressing resistance constructively is more effective than ignoring it (Kotter, 1996; Bridges, 2009).

This tool helps you anticipate common sources of resistance and plan responses that show empathy, provide clarity and keep momentum.

Instructions

- Before starting a culture initiative, list possible sources of resistance from your team.
- Use the map to categorise them and plan constructive responses.
- Revisit the map during implementation to check what's emerging and adapt.



Resistance response map

Common resistance	What it may mean (underlying concern)	Constructive leader response
'We've tried this before, nothing changes.'	Cynicism, low trust in follow-through.	Acknowledge past experiences, explain how this is different (small, team-led actions), celebrate early wins.
'I don't have time for this.'	Fear of extra workload.	Reframe: culture work reduces stress long term. Keep activities short and embed into existing routines.
'This won't work here.'	Belief team/department is unique, change irrelevant.	Listen, invite examples, adapt solutions with the team.
Silence or withdrawal.	Anxiety, fear of speaking up.	Create safe space, invite one-to-one input, reinforce psychological safety.
Open challenge or pushback.	Concern about fairness, hidden issues or values misalignment.	Thank them for honesty, explore root issues, involve them in solutions.
'No one asked me.'	Loss of control or autonomy.	Involve staff early, give choices where possible, emphasise shared ownership.
'I don't think I can do this.'	Capability concerns, low confidence.	Normalise learning, provide support/training, coach through change.
Emotional reaction (frustration, sadness).	Fear of change itself or grief over old ways.	Acknowledge feelings, give time, provide reassurance about what's staying the same.
Hidden resistance (undermining, side conversations).	Underlying conflict, competing priorities, politics.	Surface issues openly, align culture work with wider goals, address conflicts fairly.

Reflection

Which of these forms of resistance do I notice most often in my team?

Do I usually avoid, challenge, or explore resistance when it shows up?

Which response could I practise to turn resistance into dialogue and learning?

Put it into practice

Use this page to plan a small action using one of the tools from this module. Keep it simple. The goal is to learn something useful, not to fix everything.

1. Choose one tool to try this month

Behavioural consistency tracker (Use this with your team)

Meeting check-in prompts (Use this with your team)

Culture accountability framework (Do this on your own or with your team)

Resistance response map (Do this on your own)

Engagement planning canvas (Use this with your team)

Adaptive leadership self-awareness assessment
(Do this on your own)

2. Plan when and how you'll use it

Which tool are you using?

When will you do it?

Date/time:

Toolkit tip: Protect time for this by adding it to your calendar / diary now.



Where and how?

e.g. 'During my 1:1 with Sam' or 'End of team huddle'.

What do you need to prepare?

e.g. print a copy, read sample questions, decide how you'll introduce it.



3. After you've done it, reflect

What did you notice?

What stood out or surprised you?

How did others respond (if used with team)?

Did anything feel uncomfortable or unclear?

4. Next steps based on what you've learned

At least one thing I will follow up on is:

Agree one clear cultural norm with my team (e.g. punctuality, respect, openness).

Use a meeting check-in prompt to set the tone for our next discussion.

Apply the behavioural consistency tracker to reflect on whether my actions match our stated values.

Map sources of resistance using the resistance response map and plan my response.

Involve the team in the engagement planning canvas to co-create improvement ideas.

Share an example of me role-modelling one of our team's values.

5. Accountability prompt

I will check in with myself or someone else about this on:

Module 6: Taking action

Everything you need to know in 60 seconds

Purpose of this module

Turn insight into consistent action. Plan, communicate and sustain practical steps that strengthen your team's culture over time.

When to use it

- When you've identified priorities or issues to work on.
- When you're ready to translate learning into action.
- When you need to build accountability and shared ownership.



Tip

Small, visible actions build momentum. Don't wait for perfect plans, start with one action your team can take this week.



Tools in this module

Tool	Time / effort	Support needed	Best for...
Consolidated action plan builder	Deeper dive 	None	Structuring clear, achievable actions with timelines.
Weekly culture check-in template	Deeper dive 	None	Keeping progress visible through short team reflections.
Culture commitment card	Deeper dive 	None	Capturing and communicating small, individual commitments.
Customisable team charter	Quick win 	Optional OD	Agreeing shared values, norms and expectations.
Peer accountability planner	Quick win 	None	Pairing up to maintain motivation and mutual support.
Stakeholder mapping exercise	Deeper dive 	None	Identifying who to involve or influence to sustain change.

Learning objective

This module brings together learning from the previous sections and helps you embed sustained cultural change in your team. The focus is on consolidation – turning new practices into lasting habits and making them part of ‘how we do things.’

Tools in this module Click on icons below to go straight to the module.

Consolidated action plan builder

Pulls together your culture goals, actions and measures all in one place.



Weekly culture check-in template

A reusable tool to track progress and gather team reflections.



Culture commitment card

Capture your top three behaviours to model and share with others.



Customisable team charter

A framework to co-design ‘how we work here’ as a group.



Peer accountability planner

Pair with a colleague or buddy to give and receive feedback on behaviours.



Stakeholder mapping exercise

Identify allies, influencers and blockers to sustaining change.



Illustrative example

‘Keeping new habits alive’

Gillian, a department manager, introduced weekly team huddles to improve communication. At first, staff were enthusiastic, but after a couple of months attendance started to drop and the habit slipped.

She used the weekly culture check-in template to ask the team what was and wasn't working. Staff said they wanted the huddles to be shorter and more focused. Gillian reframed them as ten-minute updates with one positive story each week. Attendance picked up again, and the team valued the routine.

To keep herself consistent, Gillian filled out a culture commitment card, promising to role-model punctuality and openness at every huddle. Her visible commitment helped the team see the change was here to stay.



Reflect

Write down your reflections about the illustrative example, using the following prompts:

What challenge was Gillian facing with sustaining the new habit?

How did involving her team in shaping the huddles improve attendance and engagement?

What role did the culture commitment card play in Gillian's consistency?

How do visible commitments from leaders affect trust and follow-through in a team?

What small change could you make in your own practice to keep a new habit alive?



Culture change sticks when new behaviours are repeated, reinforced and celebrated. Without this, old habits creep back once the novelty wears off. Research on habit formation shows that self-monitoring, regular feedback and visible role-modelling accelerate adoption.

As a leader, your role is to keep reinforcing the practices you want. This doesn't mean being heavy-handed, but steady and consistent: reminding people of agreements, celebrating successes and embedding new practices into processes. For example, if you start meetings with a check-in, keep it going until it becomes automatic.

Celebrating milestones matters. Share stories of improvement, highlight what's working and link achievements back to the cultural changes you've made. This recognition builds ownership and motivation.

Anchoring change also means formalising it. Update protocols, team agreements or appraisal goals so new behaviours are protected from slipping away. Aligning structures with values shows people that culture is not optional, it is integral to how the team works.

On tough days, it's easy for culture work to slip down the list. It's OK to focus on one small action you can still take - a check-in, a thank-you, a calm response, a quick reset conversation. Consistency matters more than intensity. Behaviour change research tells us that small daily actions compound over time to shift culture and build trust.

Finally, commit personally. Reflect on what you've learned, identify the behaviours you want to keep and share them with others. Public commitment boosts accountability and sets you up as a role model.



Tool: Consolidated action plan builder

Time / effort:
Deeper dive



Supported needed:
None

Outline

Sustaining culture change requires clarity and follow-through. Research on behaviour change shows that written action plans, with specific goals, measures and accountability, significantly improve the chances of change sticking. The NHS People Promise emphasises clarity, inclusion and continuous learning, all of which benefit from having a shared, visible plan.

This tool helps you bring together what you've learned from earlier modules into one simple document. It links your cultural goals to clear actions, measures and ownership, so you and your team stay aligned and accountable.

Instructions

- With your team (or alone if appropriate), complete the table below.
- Keep it simple: one-to-three cultural goals is enough.
- Review progress regularly (e.g. monthly check-ins).
- Celebrate small wins and adapt the plan as needed.



Consolidated action plan template

Cultural goal	Why this matters (link to our values)	Specific actions	Who is responsible	Measure progress	Check in
e.g. improve psychological safety	'We each have a voice that counts' - NHS People Promise	Introduce 'what's OK / not OK' team exercise; role-model speaking up	Sonia (manager) and all team members	Staff survey item on speaking up; number of concerns raised in meetings	Review in one month
e.g. strengthen team respect	NHS value: respect and compassion	Use civility reflection tool monthly; recognise positive behaviours	All supervisors	Fewer reports of conflict; peer recognition stories	Review in two months

Reflection

Are our actions aligned with our stated values?

Do we have enough small wins to build momentum?

Are we celebrating progress, not just spotting gaps?

What barriers are emerging and what support might help us adapt?

Tool: Weekly culture check-in template

Time / effort:  Quick win

Supported needed: None

Outline

Culture changes when small, consistent habits become the norm. Research on psychological safety, team learning cycles and habit formation shows that regular, structured check-ins build trust, accountability and resilience. Unlike formal surveys, weekly check-ins are light-touch and conversational.

This tool gives you a reusable template to take the 'pulse' of your team. It helps identify small wins, challenges and actions before issues snowball, while reinforcing shared responsibility for team culture.

Instructions

- Set aside ten minutes at the end of the week (e.g. in a huddle or team meeting).
- Ask the team to respond to the three prompts below.
- Capture the responses briefly (whiteboard, flipchart or notes).
- Agree one small action for the week ahead.
- Revisit next week. Track progress, celebrate wins and adapt.

Weekly check-in template

- 1** What went well this week in how we worked together?
(Celebrate a specific example - reinforces positive behaviours.)
- 2** What got in the way or made it harder to live our values?
(Name tensions, pressures or behaviours that felt unhelpful.)
- 3** What's one small change or action we want to try next week?
(Agree a collective step - keep it realistic and achievable.)

Optional quick pulse (scale: 1 = strongly disagree - 5 = strongly agree)**Rating**

I felt safe to speak up this week.

We treated each other with respect this week.

Our behaviours reflected our values

Reflection

Did everyone get a chance to contribute, or did some voices dominate?

Are we following up on agreed actions, or just collecting issues?

What patterns are emerging over time?

Toolkit tip:

Keep it light. The aim is progress, not perfection. Over weeks, this creates a rhythm of reflection, action and learning, making culture change stick.



Tool: Culture commitment card

Time / effort:  Quick win

Supported needed: None

Outline

This tool helps you capture and commit to the three behaviours you most want to model in your leadership. By writing them down and sharing them with others, you strengthen your accountability and show to your team that culture starts with daily actions.

Culture commitment card template

My top three leadership behaviours to model:

1

2

3

Why these matter for our culture: _____

Who I'll share this with: _____

Instructions

- Reflect on the culture you want to create in your team. Think about recent insights from the toolkit (values, civility, psychological safety, feedback).
- Choose three specific behaviours you will role-model (e.g. 'I will start meetings on time', 'I will thank someone daily for their contribution', 'I will pause before responding under pressure').
- Write them in the boxes below.
- Share your card with a peer, coach or your team and invite them to notice and remind you.
- Revisit the card monthly. Adjust or add behaviours as your team's culture evolves.

Reflection

Which behaviours from me will make the biggest difference to my team's culture right now?

Where have I noticed a gap between my intentions and my impact?

Which values do I want to be most visible in my daily actions?

Tool: Customisable team charter

Time / effort:
Deeper dive



Supported needed:
Optional OD

Outline

A team charter is a shared agreement on 'how we work here'. It clarifies expectations, strengthens trust and creates accountability. Research on psychological safety and team contracts shows that teams who co-design their working norms perform better, handle conflict more constructively and adapt more quickly.

This tool provides a simple framework for leaders to facilitate a collaborative discussion with their team. It links to the NHS People Promise and values of inclusion, respect and compassion.

Instructions

- Set aside 45–60 minutes with your team. Explain the purpose: 'We're creating a shared agreement on how we want to work together.'
- Use the prompts below on the team charter template to guide discussion. Capture the group's answers (e.g. on Post-it notes) on a shared document, whiteboard or flipchart.
- Agree on clear statements and record them on the team charter template below. Keep the team charter visible (e.g. post in team area, include in induction).
- Review every three-to-six months or after major changes.



Culture commitment card template

Accountability and support

How we'll hold each other accountable:

Recognition

How we'll celebrate positive behaviours:

Our values in action

Values that matter most to us:

What this looks like in practice:

What undermines it:



Strengths and contributions

What each of us brings to the team:

Working together

How we want to communicate and decide things:

Respect and civility

What's OK:

What's not OK:

Include discussion of 'grey areas' and how we'll handle them

Signatures (optional)

By signing we agree to uphold our team charter:



Reflection

Did all voices contribute equally to the discussion?

Are our charter statements specific enough to guide behaviour day-to-day?

How will I role-model these commitments consistently?

Toolkit tip:

Keep the team charter as a single page, practical and team owned.



Tool: Peer accountability planner

Time / effort:
Deeper dive



Supported needed:
None

Outline

Sustaining culture change is easier when you don't do it alone. This tool pairs you with a colleague or buddy so you can hold each other accountable for the behaviours you want to strengthen. By making commitments visible, checking in regularly and exchanging feedback, you increase the chances of sticking with new habits.

Peer accountability builds trust and shows that culture is everyone's responsibility, not just the leaders'. It also provides a safe, supportive space to notice patterns, celebrate progress and talk openly about challenges. Research shows that when people share goals and get feedback from trusted peers, they are more likely to follow through and sustain change.

Instructions

- Choose a partner you trust and work with regularly.
- Each of you selects one or two behaviours you want feedback on.
- Agree a short check-in rhythm (weekly or fortnightly, ten minutes is enough).
- Use the feedback structure below to keep conversations constructive.
- Capture reflections in the table to track progress over time.

Feedback structure

Observe: 'I noticed...' _____

Impact: 'The effect was...' _____

Explore: 'How do you see it?' _____

Commit: 'Next time, I'll...' _____

Peer accountability planner

Date	My commitment	Feedback from peers	My reflection	Next step
Example: 10 October	Pause before responding under pressure	In yesterday's meeting, you did pause before replying to a tough question, and it came across as calm and though	I noticed the pause helped me feel in control and set a better tone for the discussion. I still felt defensive inside, but the team's reaction was positive.	Practise naming my feeling quietly to myself ('I feel defensive') before responding.

Toolkit tip:

Accountability works best when it's mutual. Avoid one-way feedback and agree from the start that both partners will give and receive input. Rotate partners every few months to get new perspectives.



Reflection

What feedback surprised me most and why?

Am I acting consistently with the behaviours I committed to?

How does it feel to be held accountable by a peer rather than a manager?

What small step will I take before the next check-in?

Tool: Stakeholder mapping exercise

Time / effort:
Deeper dive



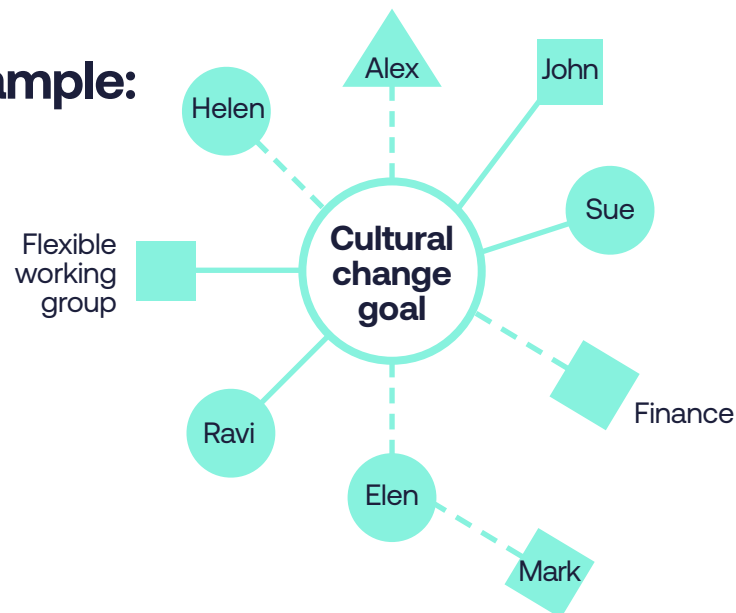
Supported needed:
None

Outline

Culture spreads through relationships. This tool helps you visually map allies, influencers and blockers by drawing your network of stakeholders. Instead of just ranking them, you show how people are connected and where influence flows. This makes it easier to see who you need to bring on board, who to partner with and where you may face resistance.

Research on social networks and informal leadership shows that influence often comes from trusted colleagues, not necessarily the most senior people. By mapping connections, you can spot hidden influencers and understand the dynamics that will shape your culture change effort.

Stakeholder map example:



Instructions

- Write your cultural change goal at the centre of the page.
- Add names (or initials/roles) of stakeholders around it. Use:
 - **circle** for allies/supporters
 - **triangle** for influencers (formal or informal)
 - **square** for blockers/resistors.
- Draw lines to show relationships or flows of influence (thicker lines = stronger influence).
- Step back and look at the map:
 - Who are the central connectors?
 - Where are the gaps?
 - Who needs more engagement?
- Plan your next steps using the engagement prompts below.

Reflection

Who are my key allies and how can I keep them energised?

Which influencers can I involve visibly so others follow?

How can I approach blockers with curiosity, not defensiveness?

Are there 'hidden connectors' who link groups together?

Does my current network reflect diversity and inclusion?

Am I overlooking any informal influencers?

Where should I focus my first conversations to build momentum?

Toolkit tip:

Don't ignore blockers, they can be valuable. Engaging them respectfully can turn resistance into insight or even into advocacy over time.



Put it into practice

Use this page to plan a small action using one of the tools from this module. Keep it simple. The goal is to learn something useful, not to fix everything.

1. Choose one tool to try this month

Consolidated action plan builder (Do this on your own)

Customisable team agreement builder (Use this with your team)

Weekly culture check-in template (Use this with your team)

Peer accountability planner (Use this with a colleague)

Culture commitment card (Use this with your team)

Stakeholder mapping exercise (Do this on your own)

2. Plan when and how you'll use it

Which tool are you using?

When will you do it?

Date/time:

Toolkit tip: Protect time for this by adding it to your calendar / diary now.



Where and how?

e.g. 'During my 1:1 with Sam'
or 'End of team huddle'.

What do you need to prepare?

e.g. print a copy, read sample questions, decide how you'll introduce it.

3. After you've done it, reflect

What did you notice?

What stood out or surprised you?

How did others respond (if used with team)?

Did anything feel uncomfortable or unclear?

4. Next steps based on what you've learned

At least one thing I will follow up on is:

Complete a culture commitment card with my top three behaviours to model and share it with my team or a peer.

Use the weekly culture check-in template at the end of my next team meeting to capture what's working and what's slipping.

Pair with a colleague using the peer accountability planner to give and receive feedback on culture behaviours.

Update our team agreement with at least one behaviour that has become part of 'the new normal.'

Map key allies and blockers using the stakeholder mapping exercise to strengthen support for culture change.

5. Accountability prompt

I will check in with myself or someone else about this on:



Module 7: Track impact

Everything you need to know in 60 seconds

Purpose of this module

Review progress, capture learning and keep culture improvement alive. Use these tools to understand what's working, where to adjust and how to maintain momentum.

When to use it

- After implementing actions or culture initiatives.
- When reviewing progress with your team or senior leaders.
- When you want to build a habit of continuous reflection and improvement.



Tip

Make reflection a routine, not a one off. Revisit your plans regularly and share small wins, that's what sustains culture change.



Tools in this module

Tool	Time / effort	Support needed	Best for...
Monthly reflection sheet	Quick win	None	Reviewing what's working and what needs adjustment.
Simple impact tracker	Deeper dive	None	Tracking progress and visible culture shifts over time.
Stop / start / continue activities	Quick win	None	Encouraging open reflection on team practices.
Feedback loop planner	Deeper dive	Optional OD	Creating structured ways to gather and act on feedback.

Learning objective

To help you measure whether cultural changes are taking hold, celebrate progress and adapt when needed.

Tools in this module Click on icons below to go straight to the module.

Monthly reflection sheet

Capture observations, wins and challenges each month.



Simple impact tracker

Log and visualise key metrics like absence, turnover or survey scores.



Start / stop / continue activities

Quick team exercise to spot what's helping, what's holding back and what to keep.



Feedback loop planner

Structure how you gather and share feedback to keep culture visible.



Illustrative example

‘Are we really making progress?’

Ahmed, a community team lead, introduced regular check-ins to build openness. Staff seemed more positive, but he wasn't sure if anything had really changed.

He started using the simple impact tracker to record monthly sickness absence, turnover and a short pulse survey. After three months, absence had dropped and most staff reported feeling safer to speak up. Ahmed shared the results in a team meeting, celebrating the progress together.

When one score dipped later, he used the feedback loop planner to ask the team what was happening and agree adjustments. Keeping track helped show improvement was real and kept culture on the agenda.



Reflection

What difference did Ahmed notice once he started tracking absence, turnover and survey results?

How did sharing progress with the team contribute to building motivation and trust?

What risks might occur if leaders don't measure or share cultural progress?

When scores dipped, how did Ahmed respond constructively and what does this show about leading culture over time?

How could you build a simple routine in your own team to measure, share and adjust cultural improvements?



Taking action

The question for any culture initiative is: how will we know it's working? Tracking impact provides both accountability and motivation. When you see progress, it reinforces effort; when you don't, it shows you where to adjust.

Look for both numbers and stories. Quantitative indicators include staff engagement scores, absence, turnover or safety survey results. Qualitative indicators include staff saying they feel more listened to or patients noticing teamwork. Both matter.

Culture work is about learning, not just performance. Treat measurement as part of an ongoing cycle. Reflect on what's changing, adapt and test again. Regular reviews stop old habits creeping back and create momentum. Sharing progress with your team, peers and leaders builds pride and spreads good practice.



Tool: Monthly reflection sheet

Time / effort:
Quick win



Supported needed:
None

Outline

Sustaining culture change requires regular reflection, not just one-off actions. A monthly pause helps leaders and teams notice progress, challenges and where to adjust. Evidence from reflective practice in healthcare leadership shows that leaders who reflect consistently are better able to maintain compassionate, safe and high-performing teams.

Instructions

- Set aside 20 to 30 minutes once a month (individually or with your team).
- Use the prompts below to capture highlights, low points and patterns.
- Identify one action you'll carry forward into the next month. Keep each month's sheet. Over time, you'll see trends and evidence of culture change.

Monthly reflection sheet

Observations	What positive behaviours or cultural shifts did I notice this month? What concerns or setbacks stood out?	
Wins	What worked well that we should celebrate or repeat? Who contributed in a way that aligned with our values?	
Challenges	Where did behaviours fall short of our cultural goals? What barriers got in the way?	
Insights	What did I learn about myself as a leader this month? What did I learn about my team?	
Next steps	What one commitment will I carry into the next month? What support or resource might I need?	



Tool: Simple impact tracker

Time / effort:
Deeper dive



Supported needed:
None




Outline

Measuring impact helps leaders know if cultural changes are making a difference. Without evidence, it's easy for efforts to fade or be dismissed. This tracker offers a simple way to log key indicators of cultural health and keep them visible. Tracking outcomes beyond day-to-day impressions helps you see whether changes are sticking, celebrate progress and identify areas that need more attention. Keeping metrics visible also encourages continuous improvement and keeps culture work on the team's agenda.

Instructions

- Select three-to-five indicators you can realistically track (examples below).
- Record them monthly or quarterly in the table.
- Note any relevant context (e.g. 'winter pressures', 'restructure').
- Use colour coding (**green** / **amber** / **red**) to spot trends.
- Share highlights with your team. Celebrate wins and discuss challenges.

Simple impact tracker

Indicator	Baseline (Month 0)	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Trend   	Notes / context
Staff absence (%)						
Turnover (leavers/month)						
Engagement pulse score						
Psychological safety (Q: 'I feel safe to speak up')						
Patient feedback (positive mentions %)						



Reflection

What patterns am I noticing in the data?

How does this connect with team feedback or observations?

Are changes in metrics linked to specific culture actions we've taken?

Where do we need to dig deeper before drawing conclusions?

Toolkit tip:

Don't overcomplicate - start small. Even tracking one or two indicators consistently can provide powerful insights into cultural change over time.



Sharing the data

People are more motivated when they can see progress. Sharing results openly builds trust, reinforces accountability and shows that efforts are paying off. You might consider using a very simple dashboard to highlight key metrics, positive stories and behaviours, making it clear how change is experienced in daily work.

Tool: Feedback loop planner

Time / effort:
Deeper dive



Supported needed:
Optional OD

Outline

Culture change only sticks if people see that their input matters and that progress is shared back with them. A feedback loop makes this visible: you gather insights, act on them and then show the team what's changed. This builds trust, engagement, and accountability..

Instructions

- Choose a cultural focus area (e.g., civility, inclusion, wellbeing).
- Decide how you'll gather feedback (survey, team huddle, one-to-ones).
- Record what you've heard in the table.
- Agree on actions with your team and capture them clearly.
- Share back regularly: 'You said... We did... Here's what's next.'

Feedback loop planner

Stage	Prompts / actions	Notes / examples
1: Gather	How will we collect feedback? (survey, pulse check, anonymous form, open discussion)	e.g. five-question monthly survey.
2: Listen	What themes are emerging? What concerns or ideas are recurring?	e.g. staff feel team meetings run too long.
3: Act	What actions can we take in response? Who is responsible?	e.g. trial shorter, timed agenda meetings.
4: Share back	How will we close the loop? ('You said... We did...')	e.g. update in next huddle and team email.
5: Review and adjust	Did the action make a difference? What do we need to adapt or try differently?	e.g. check meeting satisfaction in four weeks.



Reflection

Do my team see visible action from the feedback they've given?

Am I balancing listening with clear communication about what can't change?

How can I keep feedback loops short and consistent, so momentum builds?

Toolkit tip:

Feedback loops don't have to be complex. Even a simple habit like starting a meeting with 'Here's what we heard last month and what we've done since' keeps culture work visible and credible.



Tool: Start / stop / continue activities

Time / effort:
Quick win



Supported needed:
None

Outline

This simple exercise helps teams reflect together on what's working and what needs to change. By categorising behaviours and practices into stop, start and continue, you create clarity and shared ownership. The tool is grounded in action learning, which emphasises learning through reflection and action, and in appreciative inquiry, which highlights the value of building on what already works well. It's widely used in organisational development because it is structured, participative and quick.

Instructions

- Gather your team (in a meeting or huddle).
- Explain the purpose: 'We're going to identify what we should stop, start and continue to improve our culture.'
- Use sticky notes, a whiteboard or a digital board (if virtual).
 - Stop unhelpful behaviours or practices that hold us back.
 - Start new behaviours or practices that could improve how we work.
 - Continue things that are working well and should be reinforced.
- Cluster similar ideas and discuss briefly.
- Agree on one-to-two small actions in each category.
- Record outcomes in the template and revisit monthly or quarterly.

Feedback loop planner

Stop (what's unhelpful)	Prompts / actions	Notes / examples
e.g. talking over others in meetings	e.g. rotating chairing roles	e.g. thanking colleagues in huddles

Reflection

Did everyone have a chance to contribute?

Are the agreed actions realistic and within the team's control?

How will we track whether these changes stick?

Toolkit tip:

Keep it short and focused. Even a 15-minute stop / start / continue discussion can spark quick wins and reinforce shared values.



Put it into practice

Use this page to plan a small action using one of the tools from this module. Keep it simple. The goal is to learn something useful, not to fix everything.

1. Choose one tool to try this month

Monthly reflection sheet (Do this on your own)

Feedback loop planner (Do this on your own and with your team)

Simple impact tracker (Do this on your own)

Start / stop / continue activities (Use this with your team)

2. Plan when and how you'll use it

Which tool are you using?

When will you do it?
Date/time:

Toolkit tip: Protect time for this by adding it to your calendar / diary now.



Where and how?

e.g. 'During my 1:1 with Sam'
or 'End of team huddle'.

What do you need to prepare?

e.g. print a copy, read sample
questions, decide how you'll
introduce it.

3. After you've done it, reflect

What did you notice?

What stood out or surprised you?

How did others respond (if used with team)?

Did anything feel uncomfortable or unclear?

4. Next steps based on what you've learned

At least one thing I will follow up on is:

Run a stop / start / continue activity with my team to identify what's helping, what's holding back and what to keep.

Complete a monthly reflection sheet to capture shifts, wins and challenges.

Enter at least two data points into the simple impact tracker (e.g. sickness absence, pulse survey scores).

Share progress with my team.

Use the feedback loop planner to design my next feedback conversation.

5. Accountability prompt

I will check in with myself or someone else about this on:



Resource page



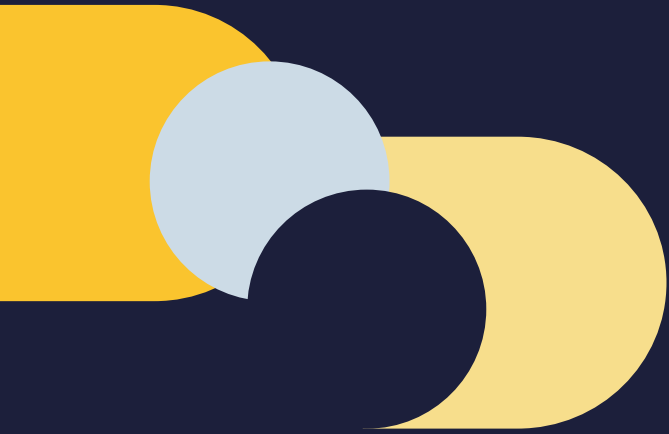
This section is for local adaptation, you may wish to include:

- Trust values and behaviours.
- Leadership development or OD contact.
- Reporting and feedback channels.
- Local resources and learning platforms.

Mary Seacole Programme: NHS Leadership Academy's six-month leadership development programme, designed in partnership with global experts, recently refreshed and delivered by experienced facilitators to develop your knowledge and skills in leadership and management.

Proud2bOps: Proud2bOps is a national network that energises, connects and develops operational managers and leaders working within provider health and care organisations, including community, acute, primary, mental health, independent, voluntary and ambulance sectors.

Do OD: Do OD is a programme from NHS Employers; the expert resource on Organisation Development for health and care.

**NHS Employers**

Calls Wharf
2 The Calls
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS2 7JU

0113 306 3000

www.nhsemployers.org

enquiries@nhsemployers.org

[X @NHSEmployers](https://twitter.com/NHSEmployers)

Copyright © NHS Employers 2026.

You may copy or distribute this work, but you must give the author credit, you may not use it for commercial purposes.

