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**Pharmacy Management
Review of Clinical Leadership in Pharmacy (CLIP) Programme
Scotland 2016-17**

Final Report
Strathclyde Business School
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1. Introduction to the Review

This report summarises the findings of a limited scope review of the Clinical Leadership in Pharmacy (CLIP) programme that was conducted in March 2017 by Strathclyde Business School. The CLIP programme, which is provided by Pharmacy Management, aims to unlock the potential of Scotland's future pharmacy leaders. By embedding collective leadership behaviours within the pharmacy sector, this programme aims to support future leaders in maximising the opportunities created by health and social care integration and novel models of care. The purpose of this review is to assess the outcomes of CLIP in relation to the development of leadership practice amongst participants.

The design of the review process was based on the course documentation provided, discussions in July 2016 with John Stanley, CEO for Pharmacy Management, and conversations with the delivery team during one of the modules at Stirling Management Centre. These exploratory discussions enabled us to more fully understand the CLIP programme, its anticipated outcomes, and the potential for Strathclyde Business School to offer novel feedback to inform the future development of this programme.

2. Our Approach

Traditionally evaluations of leadership development programmes have focussed primarily on measuring changes in participants' skillsets. However, this type of approach, which is guided by a logic of accountability, offers little insight into the multi-faceted, socio-cultural complexities of leadership as it emerges in practice. There is now a growing awareness that it is at least equally important to evaluate how individuals' underlying assumptions about leadership and themselves as leaders (their mindsets) may evolve over the course of a development programme (and beyond), and how these assumptions subsequently translate into the practice of leadership within the workplace. This form of evaluation calls for more fluid and emergent methods that recognise leadership practice as both art and science.

The methods used by Strathclyde Business School in conducting this limited scope review draw on Personal Construct Psychology (PCP), a theory that traces its origins back to George Kelly in 1955. Unlike other psychological theories that seek, for instance, to define the essential attributes of individual leaders, PCP sets out to understand how people continuously make sense of the world in relationship to each other. It is concerned less with the actual stuff of life and more with how meanings emerge over time; less with the nature of being in the world and more with doing in practice; less with the stabilities of experience and more with the creative dynamics of social interplay. These bipolarities are examples of what Kelly called 'personal constructs', which are dimensions of meaning-making that are always characterised by two contrasting poles. It is in the tension between these two poles that there is potential for learning to occur through the ongoing challenges of daily living. According to Kelly, each of us has a multi-layered system of intersecting personal constructs (a mindset), which we use as a sort of template to guide the meanings that we extract from our ongoing experience. Of course, constructs can, and do change as we learn through experience, but they are often held as tacit knowledge that requires subtle techniques of inquiry to make them explicit and articulable.

Kelly developed a number of methods to explore personal constructs in clinical contexts. One of these is the repertory grid interview technique, which we have adapted and customised specifically for this review. The purpose of a repertory grid interview is to map the interviewee's personal construct system in relation to a particular topic, which in the context of this review is 'leadership'. This topic was explored through relationships between a series of elements that were selected by interviewees to represent their own experiences of leadership. We offered a suite of images drawn from public domain sources to represent a wide range of potential leadership experiences. Each of the participants was invited to select seven images that represented different aspects of their own experience and practice of leadership. Then, through a structured interviewing process, we elicited 4-6 bipolar constructs about leadership from each participant's personal construct system. We concluded each interview with a brief discussion of the participant's perceptions of the CLIP programme overall.

Interviews were conducted on the 2nd March 2017 with ten volunteers from the CLIP programme all of whom had previously agreed to participate in this review. Our engagement with these participants was undertaken in accordance with the University of Strathclyde's Ethics procedures. All participants were fully informed about the interview process, all gave signed consent to their participation, and all agreed to be audio-recorded during the interview on the understanding that their data would remain confidential to the Strathclyde researchers. Although this sample is reasonably significant in relation to the full cohort of 30 participants in the CLIP programme, the findings are not intended to be more widely generalizable.

Participants experienced this interview process as both challenging and interesting in ways which, ultimately, they really enjoyed. Several did mention that they found it a difficult process that required some mental gymnastics, while others remarked that the process made them think completely differently about what leadership means to them and how they might best proceed on their own leadership journeys. Certainly the benefits of having time for self-reflection were mentioned by most of the participants. Further, the selection of images helped participants focus on their own specific and practical leadership experiences rather than reverting to more idealised or aspirational perspectives.

3. Our Findings

In this section, we begin by discussing the images that interviewees selected as elements for their repertory grids, then we present the key constructs that emerged during the interviews, and finally we briefly report some more general comments made by the interviewees about the CLIP programme.

3.1 Elements

The elements selected by each interviewee are shown in the appendix to this report. Whilst the meaning of each of these images is particular to each interviewee, there are some interesting patterns that are worthy of comment.



This image depicts a cooperative huddle where everyone is an equal party to the work being undertaken. It was selected by 7 out of the 10 interviewees and was used to describe both excellence in leadership practice, and also how several of the interviewees saw their own current practice as they approached the conclusion of the CLIP programme.



This image depicts a leader who is distinctive, but also very much a part of the team. It was selected by 7 out of the 10 interviewees to describe excellence in leadership, but also leadership that is too inclusive, perhaps lacking a more balanced view.



This image has a distinctly gendered dimension that shows a woman leader dominating those around her. It was selected by 6 out of the 10 interviewees to describe both good and bad leadership practice.



This image shows a leader skilfully juggling multiple items. It was selected by 5 out of the 10 interviewees to describe both good and bad leadership practice.



This image shows a leader taking a commanding position in relationship to the team. It was selected by 5 out of the 10 interviewees to describe both good and bad leadership as well as an aspiration for their own future leadership practice.



This image shows a leader who is confused and unable to make a decision. It was selected by 5 out of the 10 interviewees, always describing an undesirable expression of leadership.



This image shows a leader giving a helping hand to a team member, allowing them both to achieve the goal. It was selected by 4 of the 10 participants, always as an exemplar of good leadership or as an aspiration for their own future leadership practice.



This image shows a leader shouting (and not listening). It was selected by 4 out of the 10 participants, always as an example of poor leadership practice.

The frequent occurrence of these 8 images across the 10 interviews already suggests a few themes that appear to characterise this CLIP cohort. Firstly, there is a real commitment to a form of leadership that is collaborative and cooperative, and a concomitant rejection of more autocratic, command-based models. Given the preponderance of heroic leadership theories, this shift towards more social and relational approaches seems to be a significant achievement for the CLIP programme, and it is something to be commended. Secondly, several of the images are used ambivalently to suggest either good or bad leadership. This points to the complexity of leadership in practice, where what works in one context may not work in others, reminding us that leadership is not a black & white landscape. Finally, there is a clear rejection of uncertainty, confusion and one-directional communication as inappropriate in the context of leadership.

3.2 Constructs

Up to 6 constructs were elicited from each interviewee by comparing and contrasting selected elements from her/his chosen set of images. These constructs are always bipolar, their full meaning being revealed in the contrast between poles. As each construct was elicited, interviewees were asked to rate their own current leadership practice, their practice before they embarked on the CLIP programme, and where they hoped to see their practice in another 18 months' time. These ratings used a scale of 1-7, where 1 represents the left-hand dominant pole of the construct, and 7 represents the right-hand contrasting pole. Our analysis of all the constructs elicited reveals five broad themes, as follows:

3.2.1 Engaging

This theme gathers together a total of 17 constructs, all of which relate in some way to the importance of mutual support, inclusivity, positivity and the impossibility of doing the job on your own. Contrasting poles include a saviour mentality and dictatorial approaches that deny the agency and creative potential of team members. Typical constructs include:

Construct Dominant Pole (=1)	Self before CLIP	Self Now	Self in 18 months	Construct Contrasting Pole (=7)
Engages team in decision making	6	4	2	Says no, or agrees to everything
Being inclusive; being part; not better or worse	5	3	1	Stand alone in the role; no buy-in
I can't do everything; need to work in a team; can't be everything to everyone	5	3	1	Not accepting help; isolated; thinking don't need help

Connect and engage with people	5	3	2	Put self and personal needs first
Keeps people engaged; gains respect; approachable; less confrontational	5	4	1	Distances team; generates fear, unapproachable; conflict
Empathic; coaching; asking not telling; inclusive	5	1	1	Direct; unfeeling; dictating; not coaching or asking

In all of these examples there is a clear trend from where interviewees considered themselves to be in terms of their leadership practice before they stated CLIP, to where they are now, and where they aspire to be in another 18 months. This trend moves consistently towards the dominant construct pole demonstrating a clear developmental pathway as programme participants increasingly recognise the need for a more engaged and relational approach to their leadership practice.

3.2.2 Working together

This theme encompasses 12 constructs that emphasise the power of collaboration in developing people and accomplishing service outcomes. The contrasting poles reflect teams that are demotivated and dissatisfied, where potentials go unrecognised and no guidance is offered for staff seeking development. Typical constructs include:

Construct Dominant Pole (=1)	Self before CLIP	Self Now	Self in 18 months	Construct Contrasting Pole (=7)
Supports and develops people	5	4	3	Doesn't provide support or guidance
Helping hand, coach & mentor	4	3	2	Superman; a bit delusional; could do better
Provides autonomy to work towards a vision	5	3	2	Robotic, corporate, stifling
Builds team cohesion	5	4	3	Lets issues fester

Once again, there is a clear trend in how interviewees saw their leadership practice changing since the beginning of CLIP, and onwards into their future practice. Interestingly here though, the aspirational future is not identical to the dominant pole of these constructs. Rather it stands off from this extreme, perhaps recognising that there will always be some occasions when the contrasting pole may be needed in practice. Having access to both poles is therefore important for these interviewees.

3.2.3 Listening

This theme is recorded in 4 constructs that emphasise openness and inquiry rather than just telling people what to do. This theme is very closely associated with the Engaging theme, above, but it came across in our analysis as sufficiently important to warrant a category in its own right. Typical constructs include:

Construct Dominant Pole (=1)	Self before CLIP	Self Now	Self in 18 months	Construct Contrasting Pole (=7)
Open and encouraging	5	4	2	Radio silence
Asking; getting to the bottom of the situation	5	4	3	Making assumptions that are not correct; loss of trust; telling

These constructs suggest that there is a communicative style that is more appropriate for the inclusive and collaborative leadership that is reflected in the Engaging and Working together themes above. Once again, there is a consistent developmental path through CLIP and on into the future, but also recognising that ultimately balance between the construct poles may be more valuable than attaining the dominant pole.

3.2.4 Reflecting

We categorised 7 constructs within this theme, capturing the importance of respect, trust and passion in leadership as opposed to unfettered ego and apathy. Most of these constructs follow similar patterns to those already recorded above, but there was one slightly different approach recorded as follows:

Construct Dominant Pole (=1)	Self before CLIP	Self Now	Self in 18 months	Construct Contrasting Pole (=7)
Wants to be liked; tough and confident, but also sensitive; takes things too personally, too precious	2	3	4	Doesn't care; lack of interaction; going own way; sometimes it's good not to need endorsement of the crowd

Once again we see a clear progression through the CLIP programme, and onwards into the future, but it is a trend away from the dominant pole and towards the middle of the construct. This interviewee clearly recognises that s/he may have been too sensitive in the past, but is now developing in a direction that will allow more independent action if and when it seems necessary.

3.2.5 Making a difference

We categorised the remaining 9 constructs under this theme, which is concerned with having a vision and moving on in creative and flexible ways. Contrasting poles reflected the problems of an overly narrow focus, and the threat of being disorganised. Typical constructs include:

Construct Dominant Pole (=1)	Self before CLIP	Self Now	Self in 18 months	Construct Contrasting Pole (=7)
Making a difference; having an impact	5	4	1	Hamster on a wheel
Worthwhile vision which makes a difference	5	3	2	No definition of success
Connection with frontline staff; sharp end; keeps it real; value of the job is about the patient	4	4	1	Too focussed on process or structure, or only on counting pennies
Flexible and creative	5	3	2	Process focussed and box ticking

This final theme continues the patterns already observed above where there is a clear developmental progression towards the dominant construct pole. The consistency of this pattern across the entire dataset provides considerable comfort that participants in CLIP have indeed experienced a significant developmental shift over the course of the entire programme, and that they anticipate this trend continuing into their future leadership practice.

3.3 General Comments

At the end of each interview, participants were invited to comment on their overall experience of the CLIP programme. Without exception, they were very positive about their experience, which they have valued greatly. Many perceive that the programme has moved them forward significantly in terms of their own leadership practice while also enabling them to come to a better place within themselves. Various of the tools taught, such as the Skill & Will matrix, Myers-Briggs assessments, and the Colours model, plus the sessions on high performing teams and visioning were singled out for compliment. The benefits of networking and the opportunities for coaching were identified as key factors in the success of the programme. Many of the interviewees also commented on the facilitator's considerable skill and knowledge in working with a diverse group such as this.

On the other side of the ledger, many were distressed about the way the projects had turned out. They seemed to be suggesting that their brief may have been unclear so they were confused about requirements, ultimately leading to disappointing outcomes. Some suggested that given the collaborative nature of the rest of the programme, it might have been more useful to undertake a much larger collaborative project that allowed them to work together to do some really impactful work. Another suggestion was that instead of a project, participants could be asked to develop a portfolio of actions and outcomes that critically reflects on participants' ongoing and evolving experience of leadership. There was also some sense that the programme might have benefitted from improved administration and structural support in order to better harmonise participants' objectives with those of Pharmacy Management. However, these were generally minor matters compared with the overwhelming positive feedback provided by the interviewees.


4. Conclusion








By focussing on the collaborative and cooperative dimensions of leadership, the CLIP programme appears to have been very successful at introducing participants to ideas about leadership that are both novel and useful in the intensely complex domain of pharmacy work. The verbal feedback reported in section 3.3 above will no doubt be consistent with the feedback collected by Pharmacy Management at the end of each taught session, but it is in the repertory grid analysis of elements and constructs that this review can offer fresh insight into the effectiveness of the programme. The elements selected by interviewees reflect a strong orientation towards leadership that is not about individual performance, but rather attends to the social and work-based contexts within which leadership arises. This same orientation is evident in the constructs that the interviewees actually use as they endeavour to make sense of their own leadership experiences. Although the five themes identified in this analysis – Engaging, Working together, Listening, Reflecting, and Making a difference – are not in themselves novel in the context of leadership, their elaboration through bipolar constructs provides a lot more nuanced detail about what they actually mean to participants in their own ongoing leadership development. Furthermore, the constructs have enabled a temporal mapping that shows how the interviewees themselves perceive their leadership practice has changed over the course of the CLIP programme, and how they anticipate it will continue to develop once the programme has finished. This suggests that they are leaving the programme with a very clear agenda for their continuing development, which seems very positive given the more usual experience that once a course has been completed, people simply revert to their old practices. Becoming better at understanding and managing the complexities of leading and organising is a key issue for today's organisations. The insights offered from this limited review, although just a single snapshot taken at the end of an 18 month programme, suggest that the CLIP participants are well equipped now to take on this challenge.

Appendix – Repertory Grid Elements

This appendix records the images selected by each participant as elements in their individual repertory grids

Interviewee 1							
Interviewee 2							
Interviewee 3							
Interviewee 4							

Interviewee 5							
Interviewee 6							
Interviewee 7							No Image
Interviewee 8							

Interviewee 9							
Interviewee 10	