

Learning from Excellence- the importance of focussing on what works

Learning from excellence (LFE) is an initiative which promotes the idea of learning from when things go well. It has two interdependent aims: 1. to learn from what works, 2. To provide positive feedback to staff. Its purpose is to enable learning and improvement, to foster a culture of appreciation and improve morale.

To enable these aims to be practically realised at the centre of LFE is a positive reporting system which encourages staff to notice, report and feedback episodes of everyday good practice that they witness at work.

Many organisations throughout healthcare have introduced their own versions of positive reporting systems adapted for their own setting – for example Greatix, Excellence Reporting, Favourable Event Reporting, Above and Beyond systems. These systems share the same aims as Learning from Excellence.

All reports are fed back to the individual (s) named and in some organisations selected reports are investigated with Appreciative Inquiry ([link to this](#)).

What constitutes excellence?

Themes from the reports vary. Some reports are about high risk or complex situations which have a positive outcome, but the majority relate to a process going well – a team working well together, an individual stepping outside their role to adapt to difficult or different circumstance. Some reports are about *how* something is done, rather than *what* is done – these are often examples of positive workplace behaviours such as compassion, kindness and being supportive.

What is important about the reports is that they are sincere and specific. So adding to a general thank you with some more intelligence - *“thank you for... it helped me because... this impact of this was...”*

What are the benefits of positive reporting?

- Positive feedback is a source of **learning** – for both individuals and teams. It reinforces the conditions required for success. You can read more about the benefits of positive feedback here: [Why Feedback Rarely Does What It's Meant To \(hbr.org\)](https://hbr.org/2013/07/why-feedback-rarely-does-what-it-s-meant-to/)
- Positive feedback about something that went well or was done well can also be used for **quality improvement**. In the PRAISe QI project, positive reporting and appreciative inquiry were used as interventions to improve antibiotic stewardship. [Impact of Positive Feedback on Antimicrobial Stewardship in... : Pediatric Quality & Safety \(lww.com\)](https://www.lww.com/antimicrobial-stewardship/2019/07/impact-of-positive-feedback-on-antimicrobial-stewardship-in-pediatric-quality-safety/)
- Positive feedback also helps to develop **relationships**. It is a form of recognition of good work, which has been linked to improving staff engagement ([EXMEYMZ5 \(ibm.com\)](https://www.ibm.com/pressroom/2014/05/exmeymz5)). High performing teams have been shown to exchange more positive feedback than low performing teams [The Ideal Praise-to-Criticism Ratio \(hbr.org\)](https://hbr.org/2013/07/the-ideal-praise-to-criticism-ratio/).
- Being appreciative and expressing gratitude also has benefits for our personal **wellbeing** ([The impact of gratitude on your mental health and wellbeing \(headspace.org.au\)](https://www.headspace.org.au/2017/05/the-impact-of-gratitude-on-your-mental-health-and-wellbeing/))