



Founder: Carolyn Cleveland

## A JOURNEY THROUGH COMPLAINTS USING EMPATHY

Complaints in the health and social care often go beyond dissatisfaction of a service and into issues of patient safety, harm, both physical and psychological and sadly even death. Going through a complaint as a patient, or loved one, elicits powerful emotions and often from the perspective of having witnessed distressing, sometimes traumatic events. Witnessing such events, puts the patient or loved one in a position of having often crucial information, a key part of thorough investigations, and also leaves them with many questions, where openness and compassionate honesty is sought.



Understanding some of complex emotional motivations are just some of the challenges that health and social care professionals need to be confident and skilled at recognising and working with. Giving them opportunity to extract important emotional data, as well as not causing further psychological harm (Duty of Candour) creating the best chance of a compassionate process and resolution, and all important meaningful lessons learned.

From a perspective of loss and bereavement counselling, and having been through the complaints process following the death of a child, Carolyn challenges thinking and culture and examines in a thought provoking way, some of the emotions surrounding very sensitive issues.

Hearing what people feel, and why, through narratives, is a key way in understanding how to achieve the most compassionate and best experience for those involved in the process. Having the opportunity to further analyse such a narrative on a deeper level, enables the exploration of not only our own emotions, but personal and cultural biases and attitudes, and how these impact on communication, behaviour and outcomes. Exploring how to optimise empathy, gives an enriched, felt, and informative experience to empower those working with frustrated, bereaved, and often very vulnerable people, to create a compassionate and trusting professional relationship and optimal experience.

### Learning Outcomes :

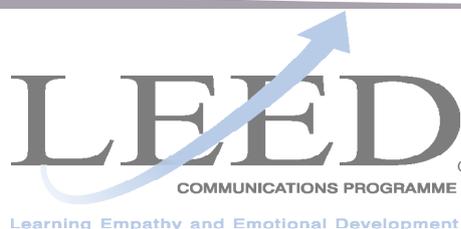
- Understanding a journey through a complaint - seeing different perspectives, observing the presence and absence of empathy.
- Explore the 'Funnel of Life' and the implication this has on communication. Identifying and understanding the difference between empathy, sympathy and apathy, and the impact on the human connection.
- Observe how biases and the lack of empathy in one-on-one encounters has the potential to cause psychological harm.
- Learn to recognise, listen to and understand 'emotional data', and the emotional experience.
- Explore what gets in the way of responding with empathy and how to develop a reasoned approach.



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