



Gofal Cymdeithasol **Cymru**
Social Care **Wales**

Compassionate leadership principles and how to use them

Explains the compassionate leadership principles, and ways you could use them.

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Explains the compassionate leadership principles, and ways you could use them.

In Wales, compassionate leadership is based on seven principles.

We share these principles with people who work in health care.

They help us to create cultures where people can respond effectively to challenges and thrive in their work.

Principle 1: agreeing direction, alignment and commitment for working together

This means involving everyone in the team early on when we set goals, so they understand the goal and feel it's worthwhile.

We should encourage them to trust their own decisions and give them fair feedback.

This builds trust in us and our decisions and helps the team to stay motivated.

Ways you could do this

- Working with your team to find out how they'd like to reach the goal and letting them ask questions if they're not sure of anything.
- Setting up one-to-one feedback sessions so you can give and receive feedback from your team and explain how you'll use that feedback.

Principle 2: creating environments where collective leadership thrives

This means we include other people in our decisions, and we encourage and support other people to take the lead or have a say – regardless of their job role or the team they work in.

Ways you could do this

- Asking your team members to set meeting agendas or to chair team meetings.
- Set up individual or group meetings where your team members can share things they'd like to change or are worried about, and you can agree the next steps together.

Principle 3: establishing conditions for our workforce to reflect, learn, continually improve and innovate

This means we always ask people in our team if they have new ideas about how we work to see what we can learn.

We try to make it easier for our team to try new or different ways of doing things.

It also means we help our team to manage how much work they have and give them time to reflect on their work and learn new things.

Ways you could do this

- Ask your team members about training they'd like to do, and support them to go on courses or attend training.

- Set up sessions where your team can share new ideas or skills with other people.
- Make time in the week to talk about things that have gone well and things the team would like to do differently.

Principle 4: managing difficulties positively, openly, courageously and ethically

This means we work openly, fairly and honestly and don't jump to conclusions when something goes wrong. We give our team space to explain things to us if we're concerned.

If something does go wrong, we try to do the right thing and support our team.

Ways you could do this

- Stay calm and take a moment to focus on the next steps for your team before you talk to them. If you're calm, your team will be calm and able to process what's happening.
- Ask your team members what happened, and listen carefully when they explain. Repeat the key points back to them so you're both sure of what's happened.
- Explain clearly and honestly what the next steps may be and what the process is.
- Let your team know about any support they may be able to access such as employee assistance programmes or support groups.

Principle 5: developing supportive and effective team and inter-team working

This means we all work to the same goal, sometimes with other teams, and we try to maintain good relationships with all the people we need to work with. We also try to give helpful feedback so people can do their job better.

Ways you could do this

- Set up a meeting with everyone you need to work with and agree who will do what, so that everyone feels included and understands their role.
- Set aside time so everyone affected by decisions we make can give feedback on our plans.
- Invite team members to sessions where they can get to know each other, and where you can find out what matters most to them.

Principle 6: improving equality, inclusion and diversity, consciously removing barriers

This means we make sure the people in our team can contribute, grow, succeed and flourish in their work. This might mean we have to give more support to some people than others, but we make sure everyone has what they need to thrive.

It also means we report things that are unfair, including bullying and discrimination, whenever we see this.

Ways you could do this

- During one-to-one or group sessions, ask your team members to explain how they're working in line with the organisation's equality values. You could use their examples to suggest changes to the way the team works.

- Read and understand your organisation's bullying and discrimination policies, and discuss these with your team so everyone understands them.
- Set up a staff equality, diversity and inclusion group, led by people with lived experience to share what matters to them and to influence policies and decisions that affect them.

Principle 7: enabling safe, trusting and engaging systems and cultures

This means we really listen to our team and focus on making the culture a positive one. That includes asking for our team's views, ideas and feedback, and actually using it. We recognise that everyone is doing their best with the support they have, but we're all human and we all deserve compassion even if things don't go to plan.

Ways you could do this

- Commit to making time every day or week to celebrate your team members and what they've achieved that day or week.
- If someone makes a complaint or wants to share something that's bothering them, really listen and agree how you'll resolve it or make things better.
- Make sure your team members understand that it's safe to share anything affecting them or their well-being, and tell them about any policies in place that may support them.

Find out more

More about the principles of compassionate leadership

You can find out more about the compassionate leadership principles [on the Gwella portal](#).