



# *Learning from rapid innovation and improvement*

Virtual workshop

7 August 2020

Delivered by



Supported by



## *Objective for today's session*

This is a write up of the fifth and final Rapid Learning and Improvement workshop, delivered by Q.

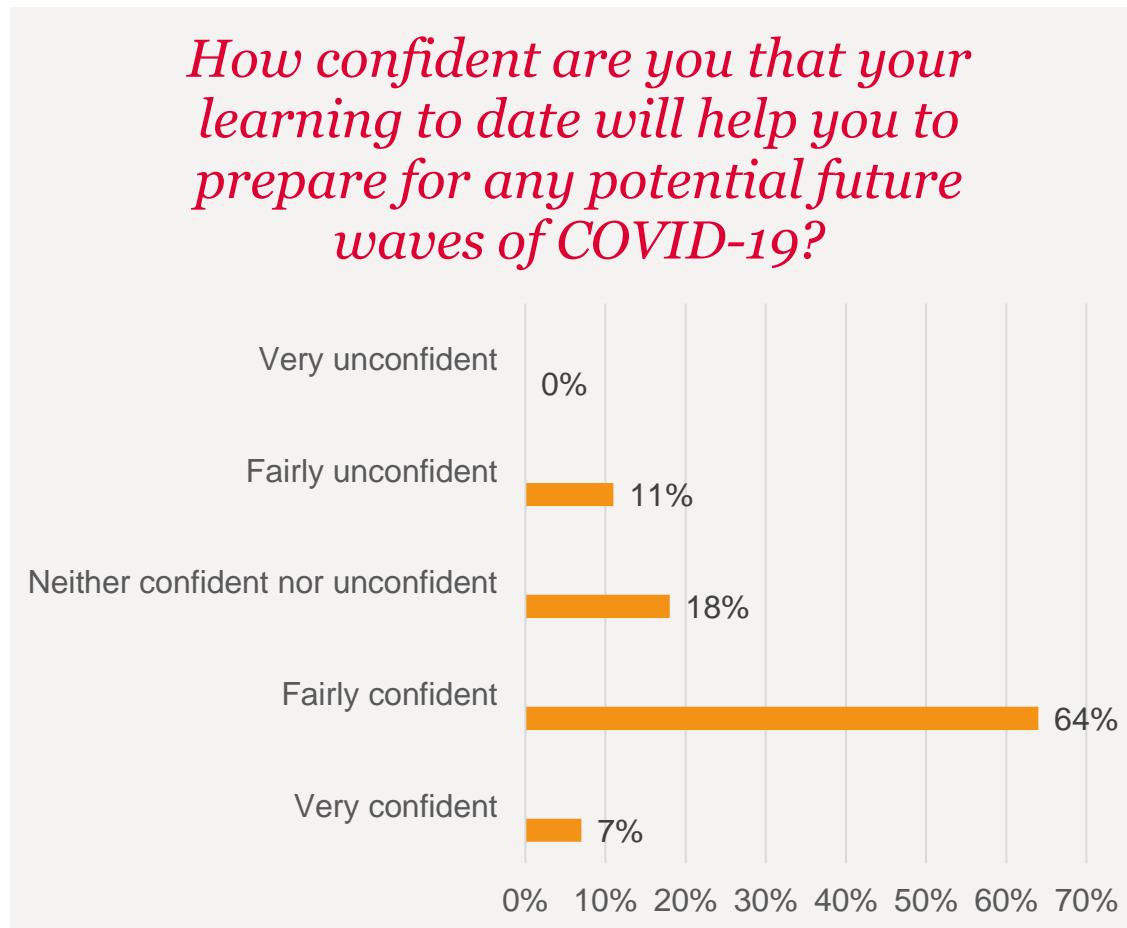
The workshop supported participants to draw out their main points of learning from the pandemic so far. We focussed on learning that may help to manage any potential future waves of COVID-19, as well as learning that will support the health and care system to recover and improve after this experience.

In this write up we have included:

- A summary of Q&A session with two Q members about their experiences of learning during COVID-19
- A write up from break out group discussions using the Conversation Café method from Liberating Structures
- Information about how Q can continue to support your work on rapid learning and improvement

This write up is for people who did and didn't attend the workshop.

We began the session asking participants to share how they are feeling about the future. Responses were collected using Sli.do.



*When I think about the future, I'm feeling...*

Excited  
Stressed

Apprehensive

Positive Old Optimistic

Unfettered neutral

apprehensive

Anxious energised

worried

Connected

Unenthusiastic

Inspired

Humanity What's the future?

confident Prepared

Hopeful Unsure

confident Prepared

uncertain

Brave

Nervous

## *Something that I know now, that I didn't know in February is...*

A shared purpose can trump all

The extreme resilience of staff

That significant changes/ improvement in the NHS can happen at scale and pace when there is a need for it.

Systems can be more flexible than we imagined

Very rapid implementation of digital solutions in the NHS is achievable and can be successful

No matter what sector you work in, challenges are the same

How quickly we would be able to adapt to home working, distance consultations & IT solutions

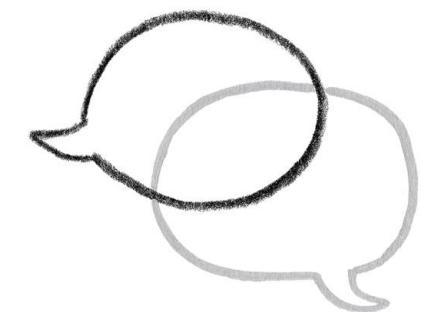
That the mental impact on myself and others of such a pandemic is not to be underestimated

How to work Zoom/MS Teams

We weren't as prepared as we thought for a major pandemic

People work better together when governance is loosened

The art of what's possible through webinars and virtual working





# *Hearing from Q members*

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In this session we interviewed two Q members about their experiences and learning during COVID-19. A summary of their responses is shown on the following slides.

*Hesham Abdalla*

*Clinical Lead for Quality Improvement,  
Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust*



*Jo Murray*

*Patient Safety Programme Manager,  
Oxford Academic Health Science Network*



## *How has the work that you do changed?*

“

I've been a consultant paediatrician for 10 years and my personal experience as a clinician has changed more radically and rapidly over the past few months than ever before. There's been an unprecedented speed of reading, **and translating research into practice.**

The effect on staff and colleagues has been **profoundly hard.**

Hexitime, a skill exchange and timebank for improving the quality of health and care services across the UK, has transformed radically over this period.

There's been a campaign to **help support colleagues from ethnic minorities** through the platform, and that's been a really satisfying and fulfilling change in our focus over the last few months.

*Hesham Abdalla*

”

## *How has the work that you do changed?*

“ I'm a clinician by background, a respiratory physiotherapist, but I haven't worked clinically for 12 years now, so for me personally, there's quite a lot of **guilt** about not working clinically.

We normally work with frontline clinicians, across pathways, so our normal work stopped as clinicians were following guidelines, and rapidly learning.

I switched from all my normal network meetings, linking in with and engaging with colleagues, to **Twitter, newsletters**, etc. All those things I used to skim became my **primary source of information**. This way I'm finding new information, new projects, and new colleagues who I can link in with.

I got a new piece of work on tracheostomy but **it was really hard setting up a new network in this time**. It was a challenge to connect with new people.

*Jo Murray*



## *What have you taken away from the workshop series so far and how have these impacted on your work?*

“

From the first workshop there seemed to be a communal need to understand and make meaning of what had happened and use it for the good.

I liked the **ladder of inference** which showed us the importance of a systemic approach to capturing what had happened at an organizational level. I also recognised the need for staff to **make sense of their own traumatic experiences**.

We developed an **evaluation framework** at Walsall and we purposively sampled the ‘hard to reach’ - staff groups who weren’t responding to the questionnaires - to understand why.

The evaluation culminated in the **COVID Reflection Summit** in Walsall, where we used many of the ideas and principles that I learnt in your workshops .

We collaborated with other improvers and Q members, in the delivery of the summit itself. We recruited experienced "Liberating Structures" facilitators using Hexitime to facilitate some of the sessions, which led to people offering their time and expertly running what were sensitive discussions on Teams.

This was a highlight for me in terms of our understanding of COVID and having a large number of staff come together and have really **productive conversations, understanding different perspectives** but also expressing their **hopes, desires and fears for the future**.

*Hesham Abdalla*

”

## *What have you taken away from the workshop series so far and how have these impacted on your work?*

“

Alternative ways to measure impact, focusing on wellbeing, and appreciative inquiry. We've used the **RSA Future Change Framework** to look at things we want to stop, start and continue.

One of the main things is just being mindful of where people are on the **corona-coaster of emotions**.

People will definitely be up and down and I've learnt to be mindful of that and to perhaps pause and reengage with people at different times.

It's been hard to start new networks virtually, but looking at **different ways to connect with people** and thinking about the **positive approach** to things has been something I was working on anyway, and has been validated in this time that it's an important way to work with people.”

*Jo Murray*

”

## *What are your biggest learnings over the past few months, and what are the implications of these for the future?*

“ Changes in **command and control**. We have had **frictionless working**: lots of decisions to achieve an aim being made very quickly. This was wonderful, but meant we didn’t have all the safety mechanisms, so there’s a fine balance we need to strike. In a way we have had command without the control.

Another positive thing we’ve all felt is **fraternity**. Our organisation is divided into divisions, and to some degree all of those have suddenly evaporated away. We were able to find **mutual benefits**. Partly because money wasn’t an object, it allowed us to have conversations we would never have had before. Because it wasn’t an obstacle, it suddenly became possible.

We started seeing **colleagues as people**. Using Zoom and Teams, I’ve seen most of my colleagues’ houses, children and, suddenly, you see people at their **most vulnerable**, and you **empathise** with this.

Suddenly we’re **connecting on ways we’ve never connected before** and I think that’s allowed us to **overcome some of the professional or organisational boundaries** that have previously been a real impediment to making change at the pace and scale that we’ve all seen over the past few months.

*Hesham Abdalla*



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*What are your biggest learnings over the past few months, and what are the implications of these for the future?*

“

**Learning the art of what's possible through webinars!** For example, the ability to access a more diverse group of people than what may have been possible through more traditional methods.

They can be really effective if facilitated well, and that's a skill in itself that we need to keep practicing and learning and trying different things.

The **command and control vs local innovation**, and how we work together generally, needs much more exploration and unpicking.

The **linking of health and social care**, the **raising of inequalities**, and sadly the **loss of patient voice**: these have all been common themes and a bit of a wake up call over this time, which has been challenging. We need to address this.

*Jo Murray*

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## *What are you hopeful for, for the future?*

“

My optimism comes from the fact that **we can build a learning organisation, where people are able to look at failure as opportunities to learn.**

One of the delights and also problems with healthcare in general and the NHS specifically is that it's sacred to us: we can't admit that it's been defiled.

But I think suddenly we've shown that the emperor's new clothes are transparent and **we can admit to our own personal and organisational scars.** And therefore having called it out, we're ready and prepared to treat them.

**So building those learning organisations, understanding and accepting failure as opportunities to learn.**

”

*Hesham Abdalla*

## *What are you hopeful for, for the future?*

“

To **continue with the positives**: shorter, more frequent engagement, personally developing my online skills, incorporating more Liberating Structures (which you can do virtually), working with the care system as opposed to health and social care, and volunteers, and **using this opportunity to really enhance our work.**

*Jo Murray*

”



# *Reflecting on your learning during the pandemic*

Clarify your thinking and consider the actions you  
need to take

Conversation café

Delivered by



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## Background to this session

- We held small, group discussions using a Liberating Structures method Conversation Café. The purpose of this activity was to encourage people to think out loud, and share openly with others in their group, in order to make sense of the situation together, and give more clarity on what comes next.
- This method invites people to hear and understand other people's perspectives, without the need to persuade or judge. Crucially, they should spend more time listening than speaking (see **Group agreements**)

The question we reflected on was:

*“What is your biggest learning from the pandemic, and how are you applying this now and in the future?”*

### Group agreements:

- Suspend judgements as best you can
- Respect one another
- Seek to understand rather than persuade
- Invite and honour diverse opinions
- Speak what has personal heart and meaning
- Go for honesty and depth without going on and on

# *Takeaways from discussions*

We asked attendees to share what they were taking away from the breakout group discussions.

This is a summary of the key themes:

**Including patient voices** more consistently and meaningfully

*“Really paying attention to participation with patients directly in QI work”*

*“How we include service users voice in improvement programs and decisions about future care/services.”*

**Using Liberating structures** in their work going forwards

*“Using Liberating Structures to benefit fully from the level field which online working gives us.”*

*“Re-acquaint myself with Liberating Structures to add to tool box for running successful virtual events.”*

The importance of **reflection and learning** and **learning from failure**

*“Creating a learning environment for all - patients, staff, senior leaders, across pathways, systems, health and social care.”*

*“Recognise our own and each other's human fallibility.”*

**Making use of the Q Community and other valuable networks**

*“I am not alone and need to make better use of the knowledge, skills and linkages of fellow improvers and Q Community members.”*

*“Working with the Q Community more to learn and share.”*

# *As well as...*

The importance of **care and kindness** over the last few months

*“We are not alone - all of us are going through this together and we need to continue to be kind and supportive of each other.”*

*“Kindness has also been the glue that has underpinned the humility and respect Hesham was talking about and collaboration and collegiate approaches.”*

*“The experience of staff across different services is so different - assumptions needs to be carefully managed.”*

*“Continue to be kind and continue to be brave...”*

*“We need to actively remember to be kind. It isn’t a passive activity.”*

*“Need to keep in mind that everyone's situation is different and people may be facing unseen challenges - being kind and considerate.”*



# *Looking ahead*

How Q can continue to support your work

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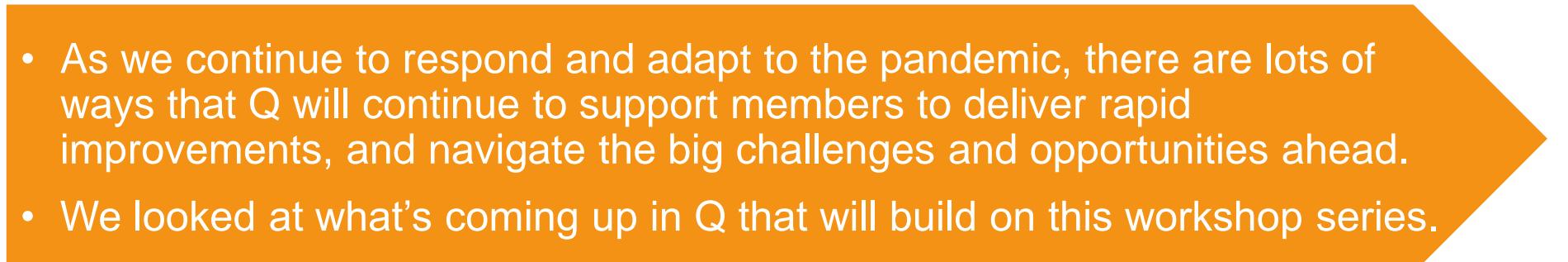
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# Join Q

- **40%** of the people attending this workshop series are not yet Q members.
- Joining Q will enable you to connect, share and learn with people from different disciplines and sectors, from across the UK.
- Q offers collaborative spaces to exchange ideas, learn and gather insight quickly, saving time and reducing duplication. Q also provides offers and benefits that can help you develop your improvement skills.

[Find out more](#)

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- As we continue to respond and adapt to the pandemic, there are lots of ways that Q will continue to support members to deliver rapid improvements, and navigate the big challenges and opportunities ahead.
  - We looked at what's coming up in Q that will build on this workshop series.

## *How Q can support your work*

- 1** Apply for funding through **Q Exchange** from 1 September
- 2** Build our **collective insight** about improvement expertise and COVID-19
- 3** Attend our first virtual **Q community event** 18-19 November
- 4** Look out for more **learning and insights** from this workshop series.

# *Thank you*

Share your experiences on Twitter [@theQcommunity #RapidQI](#)

Get in touch with feedback to [QLab@health.org.uk](mailto:QLab@health.org.uk)

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