

# Creating a Learning Culture



The wider organizational culture is of critical importance to the success of learning circles within a continuing care site. The creation of a ‘learning culture’ within organizations is gaining popularity and would be a beneficial organizational culture for learning circles, and which learning circles also contribute to. The term ‘learning culture’ can be interpreted in many ways. The following list provides key components of “a learning development culture” within healthcare organizations<sup>1</sup>:

- *Lifelong Learning*: Learning is an ongoing process. Even senior staff with years of experience are still learning. It is important that lifelong learning is portrayed not just in policies but in actions.
- *Integrated Learning*: All workplace situations, not just training or classroom events, are potential learning situations. Learning as integrated within work is highlighted.
- *Opportunities for Growth*: Learning requires a culture where it is safe for learners to take risks. When problems arise or mistakes occur, they are considered to be growth opportunities.
- *Experiential Learning*: Good practice emerges from a culture which highlights and balances all components of the learning cycle, including the importance of action with guidance provided by theory.
- *Reflective Practice*: Knee-jerk solutions to ongoing problems are avoided. Instead, the use of reflective practice is supported, where acting on new insights and further reflection on new actions are key components.
- *Value of Learning*: Learning is seen to have value in and of itself. This helps to create open perspectives for learning to be supported.
- *Team Development*: Team support and cooperation between staff are encouraged and team development approaches are established and maintained.
- *Appraisals*: Assessment is formative and directed towards process as much as outcomes. Appraisals are ‘360 degree’ – a multi-layered form of assessment – involving self and peer assessment, ongoing coaching, client feedback as well as grading from senior staff.
- *Attention to Transitions*: Time and attention are paid to staff transitions such as orientation, welcoming of new staff, shifts in status, and staff leaving.
- *Staff Roles*: Learning potential is a key framework applied to the negotiation and review of staff roles.
- *Built into Organization*: The learning culture of the organization does not sit only with certain staff members but is built into the organization itself and is maintained through organizational life and documentation.

<sup>1</sup>These have been adapted from the much more detailed list provided in the following book on p. 235:  
Hawkins, P. & Shohet, R. (2012). *Supervision in the Helping Professions* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Open University Press: New York.