

# INTRODUCTION OF SELF-MANAGEMENT IN A HOSPITAL PHARMACY

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## OBJECTIVES

In the Capital Region of Denmark we live by the values: Trust, Wholeness, Openness and Professionalism.

In the Hospital Pharmacy this means, that we trust, that all employees wish to make a difference for our patients. We engage in an open and honest dialogue and we focus on enabling all employees to think and act for themselves. The values form what we call "The leadership prism":



**The leadership prism**  
The leadership prism is based on the values trust, wholeness, openness and professionalism.

The wish to perform less management and more leadership inspired us to introduce self-management to one of our production departments.

Self-management has several definitions in the literature. It has been described as a way to empower employees and thereby create more passion and job satisfaction within the organization (Frederic Laloux, Fremtidens organisation. 1. Ed. p25 Eng: Reinventing Organizations).

We believe that introducing a self-management culture will help prepare our organization to meet future development in a proactive way.

Our take on self-management is to give employees insight into the management perspectives and processes thereby distributing part of the leadership to the group. Our goal has been to introduce, and with time obtain a culture where the employees make their experiences, expertise, observations and assessments available in relation to concrete issues and tasks in the unit. We focus on enabling the single individual to do this, but always with the goals of the unit in mind and ultimately with the patients in mind.

## METHODS

Introducing self-management in our unit included changes for both employees and leaders.

*self-management does not equal no management, but it does require a different kind of leadership*

### LEADERS

It has never been the intention to cut down in the group of leaders. Focus for the leader has been on openly and clearly setting the direction for the unit and involving employees into the processes of leadership in opposition to micromanaging. The leaders ability to give feedback and coaching was strengthened during the proces.

### EMPLOYEES

All employees participated in a workshop, where both leaders and employees listed classic management tasks and defined whether they saw potential in sharing the leadership. Employees also had the opportunity to point out topics that they found too difficult and preferably should remain with the leaders. Examples from both categories are shown in the table below:

Potential in shared leadership	Remain a leadership task
Production planning	Conflicts
Skills development	Budget and finances
Training and introduction programs	Negotiation of salary

For chosen topics, a group of employees initiated the needed changes with support from a leader or other departments in the Hospital Pharmacy.

To keep the culture developing, employees were invited and supported continuously to bring up topics where they as individuals or a group could see potential in the shared leadership e.g by weekly Kaizen meetings. Evaluating the new initiatives and giving feedback was a natural part of every day.

Our approach is, and has been through the entire process, to let all ideas and initiatives come from the employees. Thereby ensuring that the employees were included in every step.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The invitation to shared leadership within the chosen topics had the following effects:

- Employees have taken initiatives to shared leadership in several other areas than those chosen. Employees for example recruited three new colleagues to the department.
- We have experienced a clear change in the department, when it comes to engagement and awareness of ones own influence. The focus on bringing all competences and experiences to the table has influenced both leadership and production professional areas.

As stated earlier, we expected the changes to influence the overall job satisfaction. The figure below shows the results of two surveys – one before and one six months after we started working with self-management and shared leadership:



### Effect on jobsatisfaction in the unit

A satisfaction survey is conducted every three months. Two questions are given to the employees about the quality of their work and their overall job satisfaction. The employees state their answers in one of five categories ranging from "very poor" to "very high" (n=23).

A cultural change can be difficult to measure, but the results of the survey shows, that more employees score in the highest category "very high" 6 months after introducing shared leadership. The satisfaction is high in general in this department.

Being asked what changes the employees have experienced in the last six months, the comments varied:

*"It is kind of a big thing"*  
*"It feels very natural to be involved and take more responsibility"*  
*"I think, that we have always done this"*  
*"Everybody is contributing more to find good solutions"*

## CONCLUSION

The process so far has been successful and has enabled the employees to approach areas, they didn't previously. As expected, the employees embraced the changes in a different pace and approached areas of different complexity. We are changing the culture, and the transformation is an on-going process.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to conclude with a word of thanks to all colleagues in the department for their hard work in making this change a success.

