

Conversations for Kindness

The Kind Organisation: A people centered organisation

February 2025

Contents

Context	3
Who did we hear from?	5
What did we hear?	6
Group discussion	9
Closing reflections	11

About the movement

Conversations for Kindness is a monthly virtual meeting that was set up in the summer of 2020 by eight colleagues and friends working in healthcare across Sweden, the UK and the USA: Bob Klaber, Dominique Allwood, Maureen Bisognano, Goran Henriks, Suzie Bailey, Anette Nilsson, Gabby Matthews and James Mountford. The purpose of the meeting was to have some time together to continue some initial conversations around kindness, and its role at the 'business end' of healthcare, and to plan interactive workshops on this topic.

Conversations for Kindness

- Monthly Zoom call on the third Thursday of every month (6-7pm UK time)
- A focus on listening, learning, thinking differently and mobilising for action
- An open culture of sharing of resources, energy and ideas

If you would like to join the conversation for kindness, please complete this **[contact form](#)**

Joining the Conversation from across the world

More than **60** Kindness in Healthcare community members came together from all over the world for this Conversation for Kindness. Once again, we had new faces join us for the first time!

Where were
our
participants?



United States



Saudi Arabia



United Kingdom

Who did we hear from? Dr Stephen Swensen

Our speaker today was **Dr. Stephen Swensen**, Senior Fellow of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement and Transformational Fellow at The NARBHA Institute. He is a recognised expert in leadership, organisational development, and professional well-being, with a focus on cultivating fulfillment and healthspan.

He has been dedicated to improving healthcare for over 35 years, notably at the Mayo Clinic, where he led initiatives in leadership development and quality improvement. Dr. Swensen's work centers on evidence-based strategies for workplace improvement, culminating in his core message: **leading with kindness**.



This insights pack summarises the session, but you can also [watch the Youtube video](#)

What did we hear? The Kind Organisation

Steve started his talk by introducing the concept of **The Kind Organisation**, emphasising that the ideal organisation is a **people-centered** organisation dedicated to ensuring staff wellness as the essential foundation for patient care and wellbeing.



*“We cannot
give what we
do not have”*



What did we hear? The four elements of the Kind Organisation

Years of research and studies showed that **four fundamental elements** constitute the Kind Organisation:

Agency

The capacity of individuals to have control over their work and act independently

Belongingness

Social connection and a common sense of belonging to a community

Collective Effervescence

The coming together in groups with a shared purpose

Positivity

Disposition to optimism with a mindset that recognises learning opportunities

What did we hear? Translating principles to action

For each of the four elements, Steve provided one method/action to take in order to bring these principles to life in the workplace.

Listen-Sort- Empower to promote agency

A participative way of leading that engages staff in the process of problem solving.

You can find out more via [this link](#).

Commensality to promote belongingness

The simple act of sharing a meal and a conversation with others is one way to build community.

Life Crafting to promote collective effervescence

The process of enhancing one's alignment with personal goals and fulfillment through work.

You can find out more via [this link](#).

The five kindness behaviors to promote positivity

Seeking to understand, fostering belonging, showing appreciation, being transparent and mentoring.

Group discussion

The provocation for our breakout discussion was:

“Considering the valuable insights from Steve, how can we, both individually and as leaders, thoughtfully apply them to cultivate greater kindness within our teams, organisations, and the wider systems we operate in?”

Naseem

“In Saudi Arabia, we share the same healthcare concerns as others globally. While there's this drive toward monetisation and AI technology sweeping healthcare—sometimes it's scary with all the competition and information overload—we're fortunate that caring is deeply embedded in our culture. We naturally care for each other, and families support one another. But I worry that if we don't standardise and normalise these compassionate practices, they might get lost in all the technological hype.”

Sara

“Leaders and everyone in the organisation should walk the floors, speak to their staff, speak to patients and show kindness and that they care.”

Group discussion

The provocation for our breakout discussion was:

“Considering the valuable insights from Steve, how can we, both individually and as leaders, thoughtfully apply them to cultivate greater kindness within our teams, organisations, and the wider systems we operate in?”

Bimbi

“We touched upon how we can actively role model kindness and build belonging for our trainees and medical students. For instance, during ward rounds, teams could make a point of reintroducing themselves to anyone new. Within a few days, this can create a comfortable environment where everyone feels included and conversations can become more substantial and interesting.”

Catherine

“I work in an operating theatre and now we’re using humor to make everyone feel welcome, and honestly it’s been so lovely and has helped us bond and trust each other making us a much more efficient and safer team. ”

Closing reflection

Steve Swensen

“I'm filled with optimism that we can make progress and make this world a better place, step by step – one unit, one team, and one organisation at a time. The good news is, we have a dozen evidence-based improvement methods proven to work. Whether we start with something like shared meals, or perhaps fostering agency, or even just appreciation notes, the important thing is that we know we can make a difference and change the culture one behavior at a time.”

Acknowledgements

This insights pack has been co-produced by
Nicki Macklin and the team at **Kaleidoscope Health and Care**

For all enquiries please contact us [via the Kindness in Healthcare website](#) or email
bob.klaber@nhs.net

See you next month for another great Conversation.

[Check out resources from our previous sessions on our website](#)

Thank you for joining, thank you for reading.

We'll see you next month!