

FROM THE DESK OF

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Someone asked me recently, what's the DNA behind the many innovations taking place in the 'heat of COVID-19 by the Centre of Healthcare Innovation.

What's the CHI behind CHI?

That set me thinking as I reminisced. Our agile approach to improvement and innovation did not happen by chance, it happened by design (pun intended).

In Conversation

It started 12 years ago with the adoption of Lean methodology in process improvements.

We did not jump in with tools, but by starting a conversation with staff on utility of Lean in process, service and clinical outcomes. At the same time, we were acutely aware that Lean is an approach strongly vested with ground up improvements and innovation undertaken by engaged staff.

Thus, we were also curious to understand and unleash the bigger WHY? That is, why do our staff stay and strive with us?

These staff conversations allowed us to go under the skin of the hospital to understand, nurture and support values that encouraged discretionary effort. Values like, dialogue, integrity, equity, clarity and respect became synonymous with innovation.

This was a huge takeaway for us. For improvement and innovation to take root in an organisation, you must acknowledge the operating norms and values of an organisation. Edgar Schien called this the zone of unconscious competence or exposed norms and values that drives our behaviour.

Capability Development

Understanding, nurturing and delivering on values was only half of why innovation is part of our DNA.

The other piece is capability development. Over the years, we systematically equip our staff with improvement and innovation tools. Every new staff, regardless of rank or position, learnt Lean as part of the hospital induction programme.

A Just-In-Time (JIT) micro-learn package on improvement tools was recently developed for our people to learn socially with each other anytime, anywhere. Today, more than 90 percent of our staff are trained in Lean.

A Balancing Act

As we matured in our Lean approach, we realised we were LEFT brain heavy...that is, we are too process oriented and needed balance.

Developing a whole brain approach meant cultivating and harvesting the RIGHT, ie: Creative Brain.

We worked with our Lean community of practitioners to explore design thinking guided by what staff and patients value.

Today our lean curriculum and approach is integrated with design thinking, team coaching and collective leadership.

So there you have it, if innovation is not empowered by engaging staff, unleashing their creativity and tooling them systematically with opportunities to create meaningful work that delivers what staff and patients value, there will be no impact on the organisation's DNA.

Indeed, I think Khalil Gibran says it best, 'work is love made visible'.



Look Out

This week, we will share with you two innovations by staff for staff, each developed with the intention to protect frontliners.

The first feature will be the FaceShield, a collaboration by our team at the CHI Living Lab with NCID and TTSH.

We will then share with you an exclusive interview with our partners, Siriraj Hospital, who conceptualised and developed the face mask they named WIN-Mask.

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