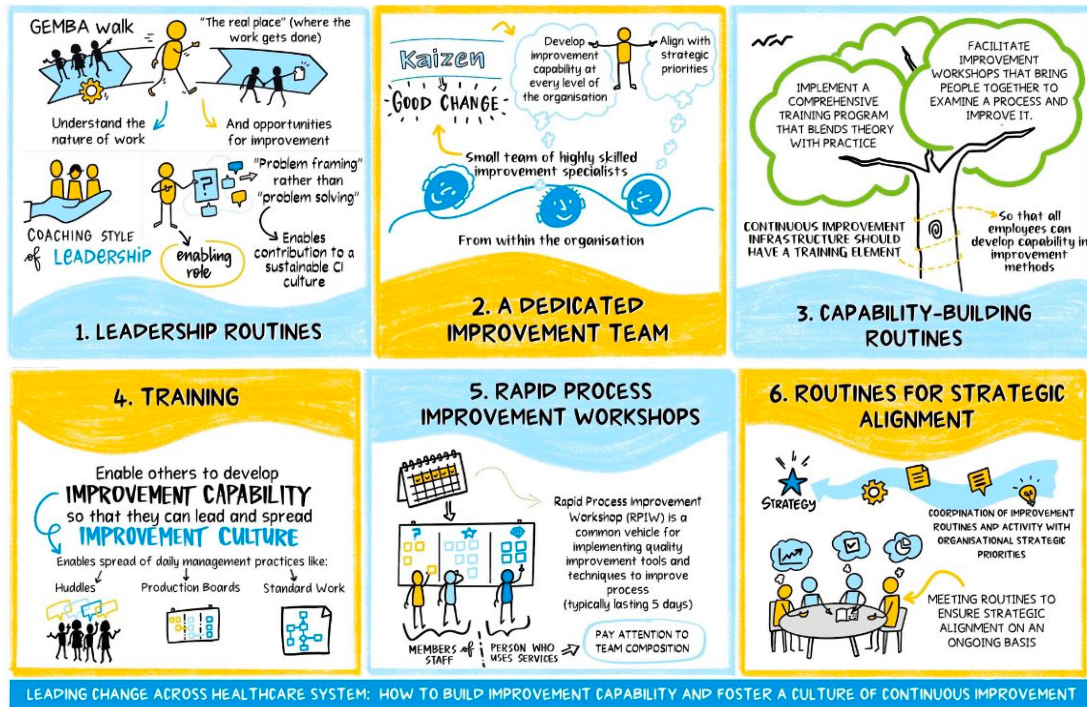How improvement infrastructure supports improvement — Embed improvement routines and practices into everyday practice — Nicola Burgess

Tweetchat Report

Lesson 2: how to build an effective infrastructure for improvement

#LeadingQI #QIHour

Contents

What's our tweetchat series all about?

In October 2022, Warwick Business School held an inaugural 'tweetchat' in partnership with #QIhour to accompany a blog entitled 'Six key lessons from the NHS and Virginia Mason Institute partnership'. Synthesising the key findings from the NHS-VMI evaluation report the blog incorporated a sketchnote as a vehicle for sharing these lessons far and wide; the result was a global conversation about how to lead continuous improvement within and across health and care settings.

The unprecedented success of our first combined 'blog, sketchnote and tweetchat' has led to a partnership with the influential @HelenBevan and @LouWaters_QI in collaboration with #QIHour to foster a global conversation via six further monthly blogs, sketchnotes and tweetchats between January and June 2023. In each blog we aim to unpick each of the 'six lessons' derived from the evaluation of the NHS-VMI partnership.

We hope these blogs, sketchnotes and subsequent tweetchats ignite a global conversation and look forward to your feedback, reflections and responses. The second in our six-part series is presented below.

February Tweetchat Report Summary

This report was produced to share the learning and insights generated from the tweetchat, which took place on 28th February 2023, on "**How Improvement Infrastructure Supports Improvement?**". It was hosted by Warwick Business School in collaboration with #QIHour alongside a panel of quality improvement leaders from the NHS and the Virginia Mason Institute. An overview of the tweetchat questions and a summary of participant responses are presented below.

Q1. Let's start with a poll!

- It was the first tweetchat for nearly 34% of participants suggesting that this tweetchat is continuing to engage with professionals who are new to the series and are interested in quality improvement.

Q2. What does an improvement infrastructure mean to you? Can you describe the improvement infrastructure in your own team, organisation or system?

- For participants, improvement infrastructure means: leadership, governance, sustainable routines, safe environments, capability- and capacity-building, and teams and networks that collaboratively support improvement which is strategically aligned and embedded in everyday practice.

Q3A. Does your organisation have a full-time, specialist team that supports improvement?

- Approximately 63% of respondents confirmed that a full-time specialist team supports improvement in their organisation.

Q3B. If your organisation has a specialist improvement team, what role do they play and what makes them effective?

- Most participants agreed that coaching, training, building capacity & capability, facilitating improvements, sharing knowledge & improvement ideas, leading & guiding improvement projects and holding others accountable were key roles of specialist improvement teams.

Q4. What (activities/routines or practices) do you believe senior leaders should be engaged in to "grow" a culture of improvement?

- Some of the activities, routines and practices highlighted are to be visible & participate in improvement, encourage learning & experimentation, engage in informal conversations about improvement, be open to change, and give staff time and space for improvements.

Q5. In your view, is there value in using Japanese terms and concepts such as "nemawashi", "gemba" and "Kaizen"?

- Sue Jenkins summed up the perspectives around question 5, as the "Marmite" question of the improvement world. The overall sentiment towards the use of Japanese terms and concepts in QI was that it depended on factors, such as whether it is inclusive and accessible and whether it conveyed meaning or encouraged action.

Q6. Last question of the night: What will/could you do to build a more effective infrastructure for improvement? The responses included:

- Promoting learning and training to make QI more accessible within departments and organisations,
- Developing Teams, help align and lead on quality improvement activities,
- Building relationships and networking with others inside and outside of their organisations (for example through the tweetchat sessions),

Figure 1 presents a summary of the themes and key words that emerged from the tweetchat responses.
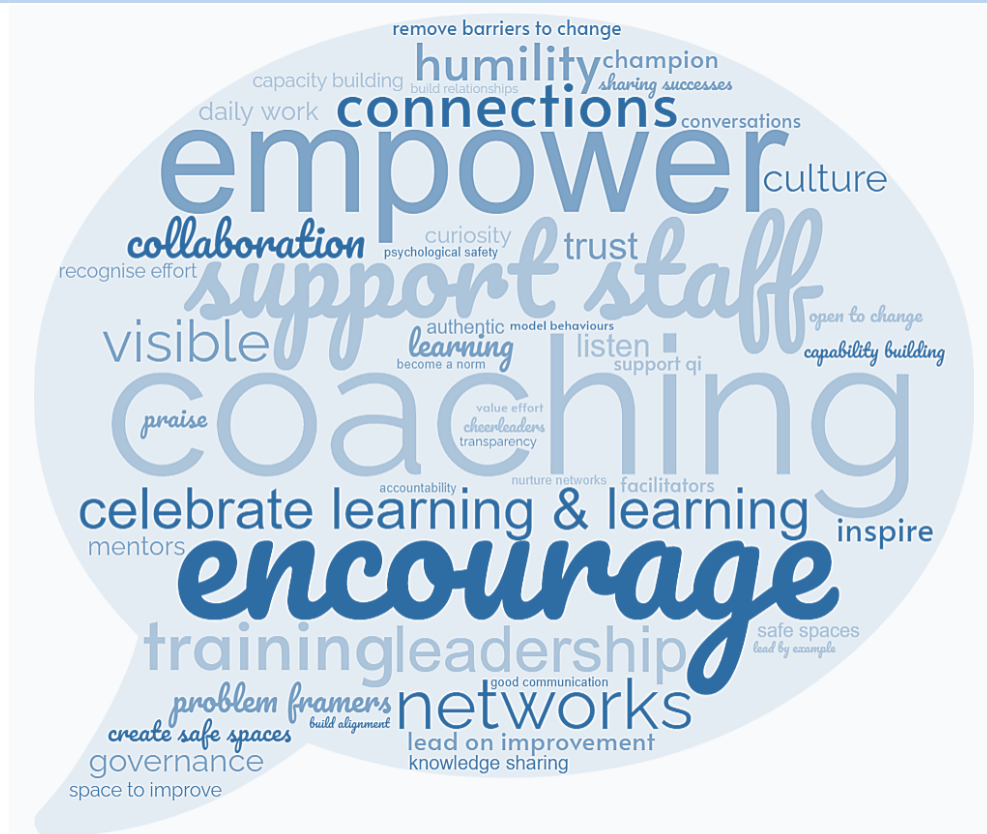
Figure 1: Lesson 2 Tweetchat Themes Summary

Tweetchat Activity Summary
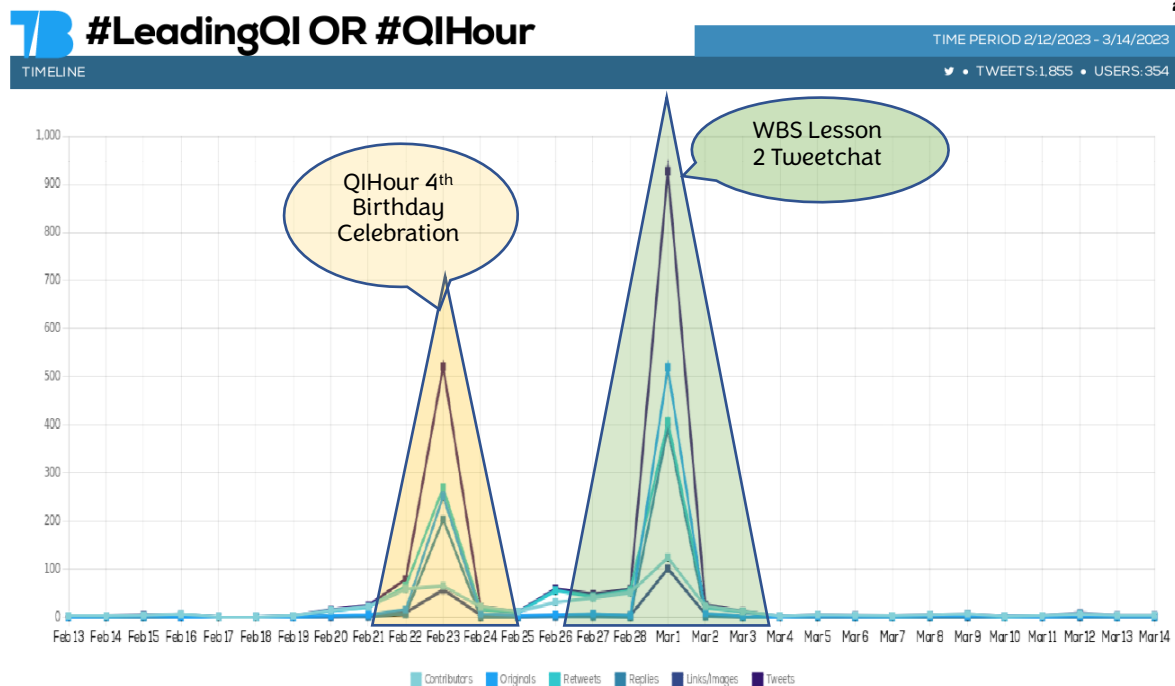
The tweetchat ran from 7.00pm – 8.00pm GMT on **28th February 2023**. The 'tweet activity' graph above for the primary #LeadingQI hashtag shows the momentum of the hashtag from the 26th February 2023, after #QIHour's 4th Birthday celebration. The WBS tweetchat had **124 participants**, who generated **520 original tweets and 408 retweets**. During the chat, both hashtags #LeadingQI and #QIHour were trending the United Kingdom.

- @Clanc99 shared that **"#QIHour is trending in the Uk. Great work guys @WarwickBSchool** 👏 👏

- @HelenBevan also commented that **"The hashtags #LeadingQI & #QIHour (from the tweetchat organised by @WarwickBSchool) trended at no.3 & no.6 in the UK tonight. This was essentially a research team engaging hundreds of practitioners in discussing themes from its evaluation. It was brilliant research into practice."**

United Kingdom trends

1 · Football · Trending
#FULLEE
Trending with #BHAFC, Bristol City

2 · Football · Trending
#FACup
8,206 Tweets

3 · Trending
#QIHour

4 · Entertainment · Trending
Peter Pan
13.4K Tweets

5 · Football · Trending
Roma
Trending with Cremonese

6 · Trending
#LeadingQI

The **most retweeted (25) and liked (66) tweet** was made by **@HelenBevan** in response to **Q3: If your organisation has a specialist improvement team, what role do they play and what makes them effective?**

Q3: One factor that makes improvement teams effective is their approach: they do change with people, or support people to do their own change. The not-so-great kind of improvement teams do change "to" people or "for" people.

See principles from @CormacRussell #LeadingQI #QIHour
https://t.co/GfKhtFmYWF
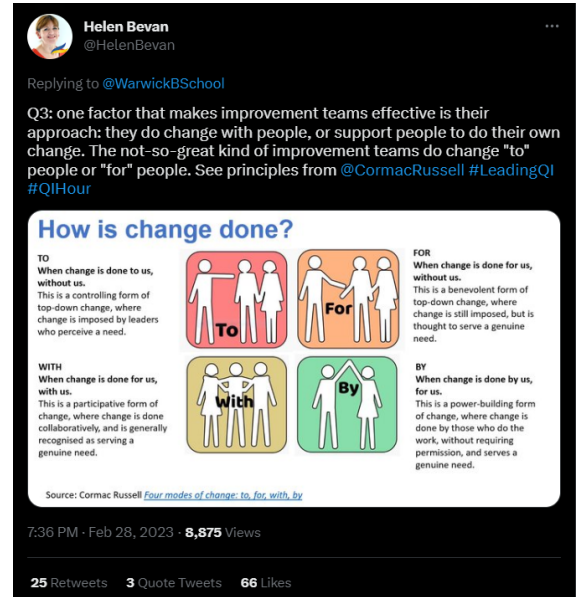
At the end of tweetchat participants shared their appreciation and drew attention to new connections...

@Nyrs_Emma commented saying, "@WarwickBSchool Thanks for a great tweet chat @WarwickBSchool ☺ #LeadingQI #QIHour"

@MichaelNHSE commented, "So many amazing points and discussions – brilliant to meet you all #LeadingQI #QIhour"

@PeteGreensmith replied to @MichaelNHSE saying that,

For @drpjdickinson it was their 1st tweetchat and they commented, "Well spent 60 minutes on my first ever #QIHour #LeadingQI tweetchat. Thanks @HelenBevan and @WarwickBSchool . Team @YSTeachingNHS it's worth searching the hashtags for anyone interested in QI @Pitstopcal @QI_YTHFT @TJamesHawkins @lucykbrown @VMulvanaTuohy @TaraFilby"

@KristinMoat shared this sentiment, further connecting to the QI community

And so did @Sutcliffe1987 saying, @KristinMoat @FlowsofChange @WarwickBSchool Have to credit @FlowsofChange for this I just followed on from his wisdom :) #QIHour #LeadingQI

Q1. Let's start with a poll!

Question 1 sought to understand Tweetchat participation:

- 25 participants (44.3%) have taken part in 3 or more tweetchats,
- 20 participants (33.9%), it was their 1st Tweetchat,
- 14 participants (23.7%), it was their second tweetchat.

Figure 2 summarises the tweetchat attendees and highlights their engagement during the tweetchat, @WarwickBSchool, the tweetchat host, has been removed.

Figure 2: February Tweetchat Participants Summary (without @WarwickBSchool)

Q2. What does an improvement infrastructure mean to you? Can you describe the improvement infrastructure in your own team, organisation or system?
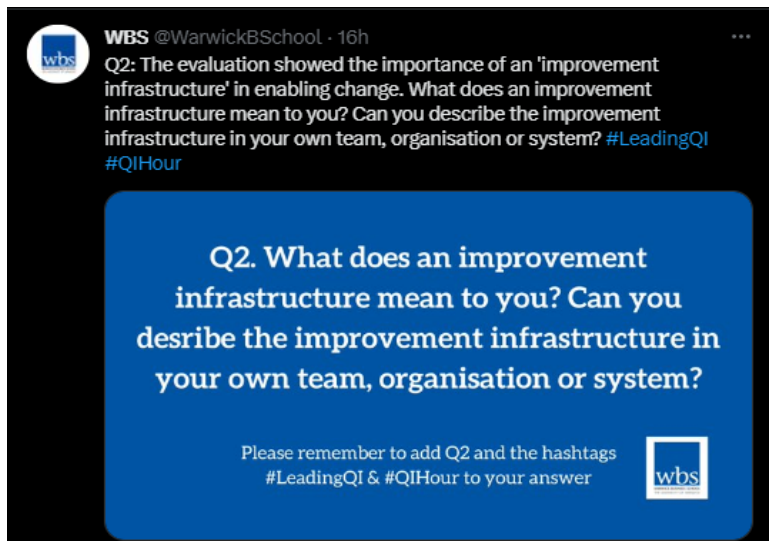
Tweetchat participants described the following as various elements which collectively constitute an improvement infrastructure:

- Leadership, Governance & Strategic Alignment,
- Sustainable Routines,
- A Safe & Supportive Environment,
- Capability, Capacity & Resources, and
- Teams & Networks.

Leadership, Governance & Strategic Alignment to support improvement ...

@BryanJns commented, "Leadership and governance – visible and focused leadership at board level accompanied by effective governance and management processes that ensure improvement activities are aligned with the organisation's vision."

@emmah_nuh shared a similar view,
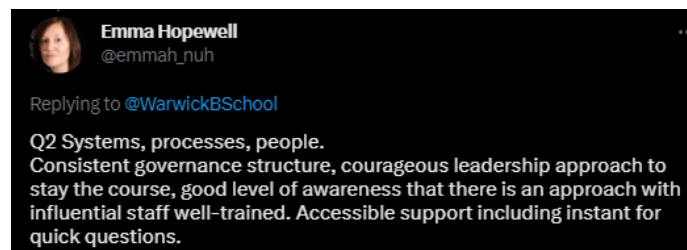
@ang_rowe saw an improvement infrastructure as a "Robust system of planning for quality, maintaining quality, targeted quality improvement and an assurance system (based on Juran's Trilogy); building QI capacity and capability at all levels (varying degrees); leadership/communication/collaboration."

@Bradders681 commented on alignment with strategic objectives saying that,
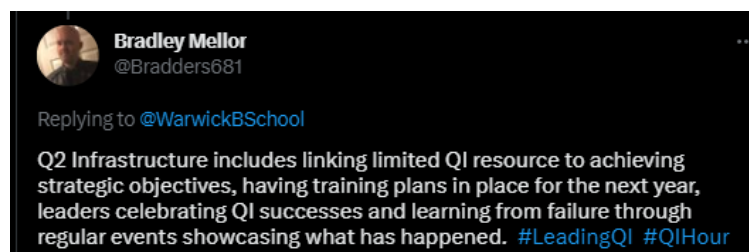
@Sutcliffe1987 replied to @Bradders681 agreeing, "That alignment to strategic goals is key, if improvement is important then we use it to do the important things."

@samanthallen shared that, "For me it is about building alignment and embedding improvement in all we do. We have made a start on this @nenc_nhs and have a long way to go – learning from what has gone before crucial & creating the space to do the work (a challenge at times)

Sustainable Routines that are embedded in everyday practices...

@DrNicolaBurgess shared,

> **Dr Nicola Burgess**
> @DrNicolaBurgess
>
> Replying to @WarwickBSchool
>
> Q2. For me, improvement infrastructure is about embedding routines and practices across the whole organisation to make improvement the way we do things around here #LeadingQI #QIHour

and added, "it's about being systematic and intentional. Improvement isn't an add-on, a luxury, or something that extra. Improvement is part of daily work."

This view was shared by many tweetchat participants, for example,

@VM_Institute replied saying,

> **Virginia Mason Institute**
> @VM_Institute
>
> Q2: Imp infrastructure has key fdn'l elements to support the evolution of a #QI culture. Obv structural pieces like training, a coaching team are key, but most importantly, embracing routines & habits to lead and practise w/QI everyday, from board to ward. #LeadingQI #QIHour

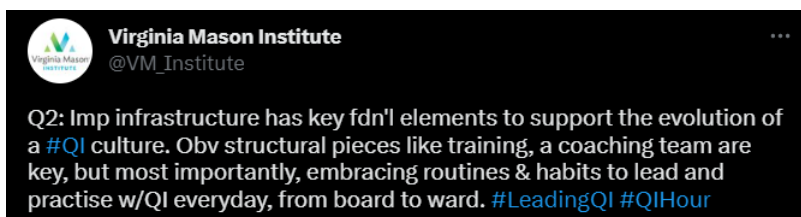**@LouWaters_QI has a similar view saying,** "It's about creating the conditions for success. The structure that enables the people, the golden thread. Improvement isn't an add on – we need to weave it into existing structures build on those to make improvement integral to how we do things."

@Sutcliffe1987 replied to @LouWaters_QI saying,

> **Lee Sutcliffe**
> @Sutcliffe1987
>
> Replying to @LouWaters_QI and @WarwickBSchool
>
> Totally agree, cant be add on, its all of our roles to know, run and improve every day, we as improvement teams just get to have the luxury of time to improve, the infrastructure needs to create that for everyone #QIHour #LeadingQI

@SaraTurle shared a similar sentiment, "...for me it's where its business as usual, embedded into practice and not a hugely onerous extra when everyone is under so much pressure already."

@HelenBevan responded in kind saying,

> **Helen Bevan**
> @HelenBevan
>
> Replying to @WarwickBSchool
>
> Q2: Having an improvement infrastructure means building in processes & routines so that improvement is built into our daily work, not an afterthought. It includes huddles, spaces & systems for learning, rapid improvement approaches & leadership for improvement #LeadingQI #QIHour
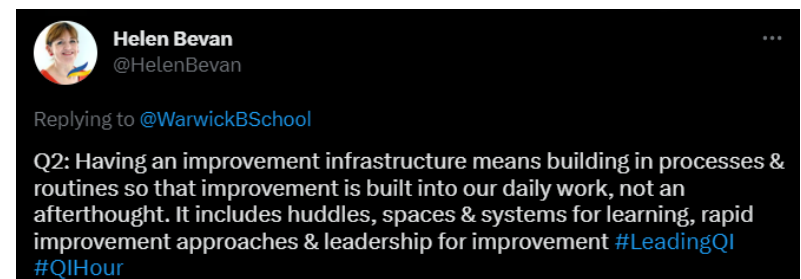
@DrEmilyRowe shared, "For me an improvement structure is having a dedicated team and set of routines that support improvement work to become a norm, rather than "another project or change initiative".

@Nyrs_Emma shared this view saying, "I think the ideal for me is essentially as simple as 'making it the normal thing to do'."

A Safe, Supportive Environment to undertake improvement ...

@FlowsofChange shared a very compelling view which sparked a conversation,
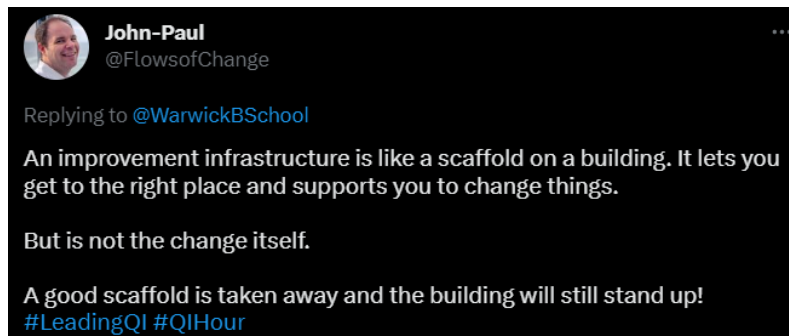

@DrNicolaBurgess replied saying, "What a brilliant way to explain why we need infrastructure to support improvement. I might steal that one!"

@Mark_Outhwaite also replied saying, "I like the scaffolding analogy. Remembering that scaffolding is built from the ground up."

@KristinMoat shared another compelling perspective regarding culture and connections saying,
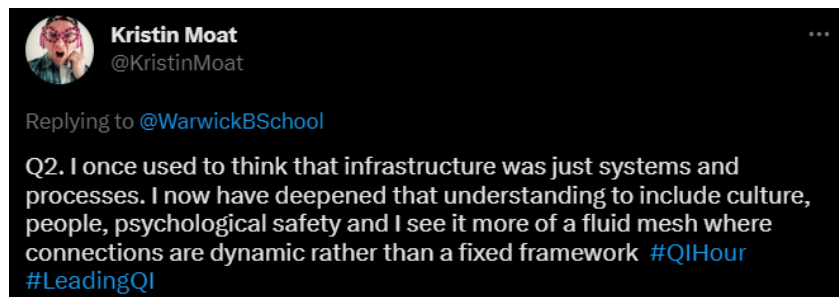
@MikeBurchellDHT shared this view saying that, "improvement infrastructure needs a culture of growth where everyone feels connected and able to collaborate and explore problems and solutions while feeling safe to do so."

And so did @BryanJns commenting that,
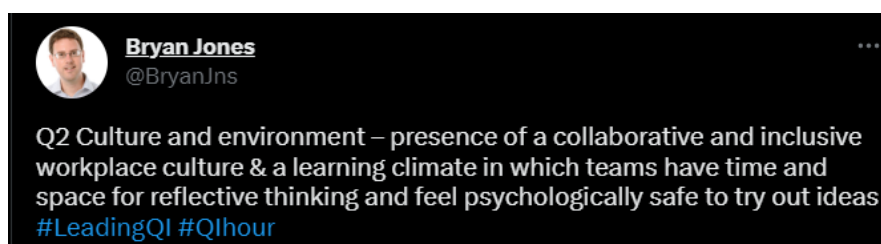
@gvhawtin commented that an improvement infrastructure included, "Building the right environment for the team you are in."

@acserrao76 also shared that improvement infrastructure is the
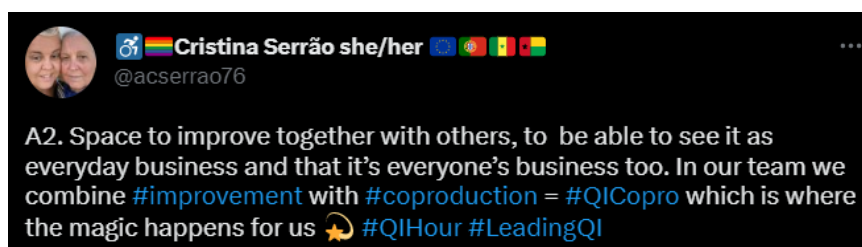
A conversation was centred on recognising efforts, as well as, celebrating success...

@PeteGreensmith shared that, "the infrastructure is all that is needed to support and drive improvement. Safe spaces, Confidence, Support, Guidance, A team, A way to celebrate success, A space to shout from the rooftops all that is being done and all that is possible, Oh and systems ;)

He also added that,
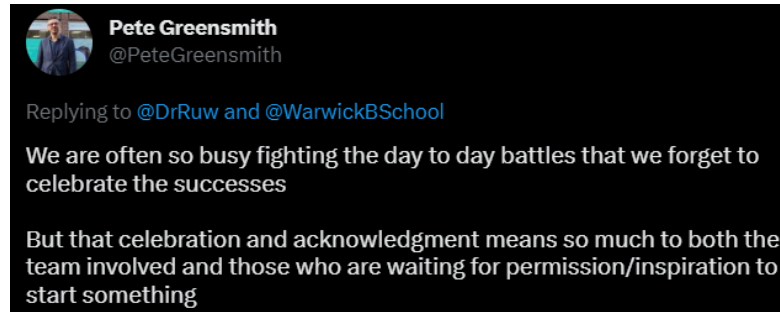
@MichaelNHSE replied saying,
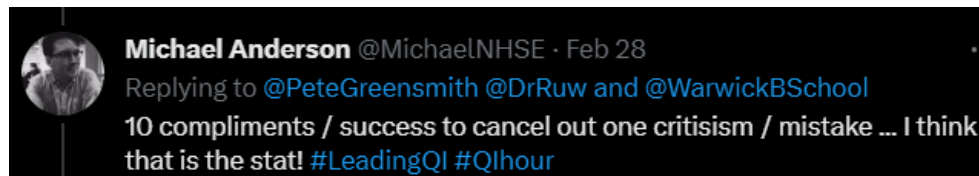
@PeteGreensmith also replied that "We need to normalise thanking people, recognising effort, praising and celebrating It really does make a huge difference to people.

@SaraTurle added to this, "So agree and when staff feel appreciated, patients feel the benefits too.

@KPOteam_SASH also agreed,
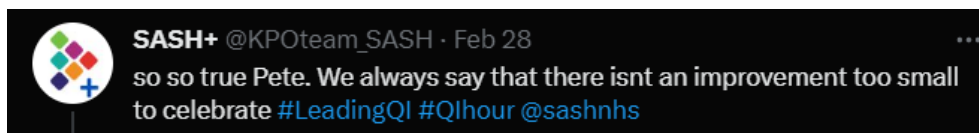
Building Capability and Capacity and providing resources to facilitate improvement ...

@LouWaters_QI commented that "Coaching...knowledge sharing....capacity & capability building....partnership working... forums for sharing successes and learning...alignment to strategic priorities... governance that enables oversight for improvement to flourish"

@KPOteam_SASH shared that, "The KPO team support 5500 staff by building CI capacity and capability and supporting staff with RPIWs, kaizen events, kaizen clinics and bespoke improvement offers."

@DrAnitaRowe shared that,
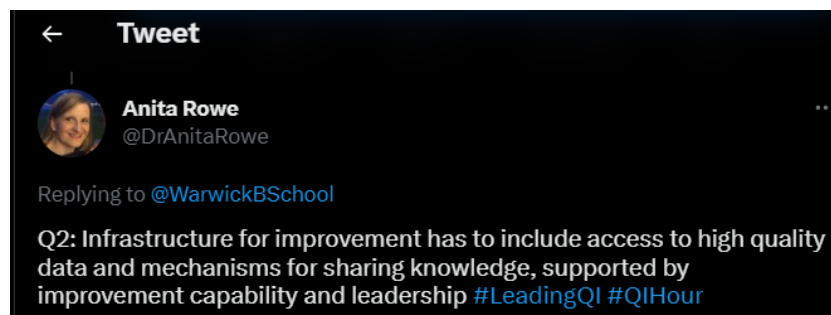
@BryanJns mentioned that "Skills and workforce – a programme to build the skills and capability of staff across the organisation to lead and facilitate improvement work, such as expertise in QI approaches and tools", **and also added that,**

> **Bryan Jones**
> @BryanJns
>
> Q2 Infrastructure and resources – a management system and infrastructure capable of providing teams with the data, equipment, resources and permission needed to plan and deliver sustained improvement #LeadingQI #QIhour

Teams & Networks as part of the improvement infrastructure...

@drpjdickinson shared that a,

> **Phil Dickinson**
> @drpjdickinson
>
> Replying to @WarwickBSchool
>
> Network of interested and enabled staff who have an awareness of and training in QI (no matter how little) supported by a dedicated team and Execs/board who can help focus on quality/QI first #QIHour #leadingQI

@KPOteam_SASH replied to @drpjdickinson, "Agree that it is so important to have exec and board leadership and commitment. All of our exec are required to complete the training that we expect all of our leaders to undertake too. Its important that they know how this stuff works."

@janet_folland shared a similar view on embedding and sustainability,

> **Janet Folland**
> @janet_folland
>
> Replying to @WarwickBSchool
>
> Great Question. Embedding QI at all levels, QI as practice, as process, through communities and networks and 'every bodies business' #LeadingQI #QIHour #AHpQI
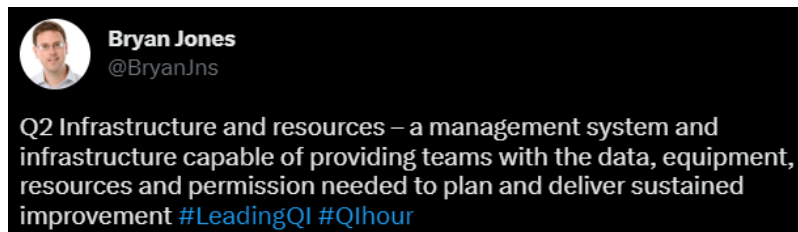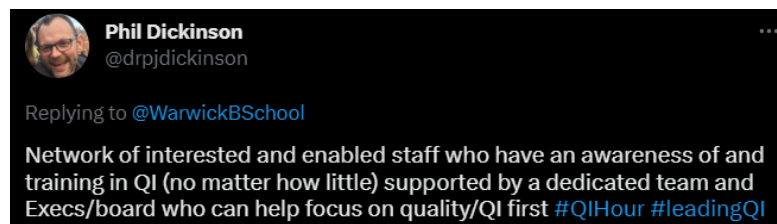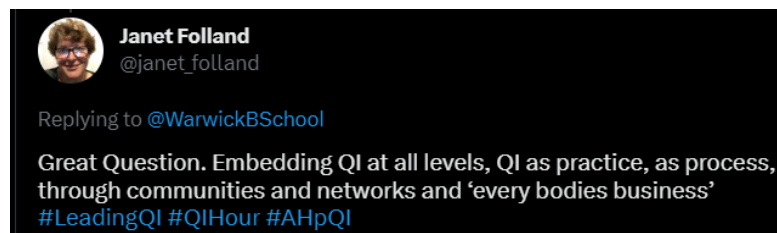
@MichaelNHSE shared, "For me it is about networking and enabling everyone to own their processes and feel like they can continually improve, it does not have to be complex just well connected."

@Sutcliffe1987 commented that "Infrastructure is the systems and people you put in place that supports embedding improvement into practice, this could be a team or a process that means people talk about, measure and improve something as part of their regular business."

@DrNicolaBurgess replied to @Sutcliffe1987 saying that, "Infrastructure brings system & people together."

And @ang_rowe replied to @DrNicolaBurgess saying, "Connectedness in an organisation it really important."

@DrNicolaBurgess continued the conversation replying to @ang_rowe saying,

> **Dr Nicola Burgess** @DrNicolaBurgess · Feb 28
> Replying to @ang_rowe
> Connectedness yes, too important to be left to chance though. I think we need to be more intentional in fostering connectedness for improvement #LeadingQI #QIHour
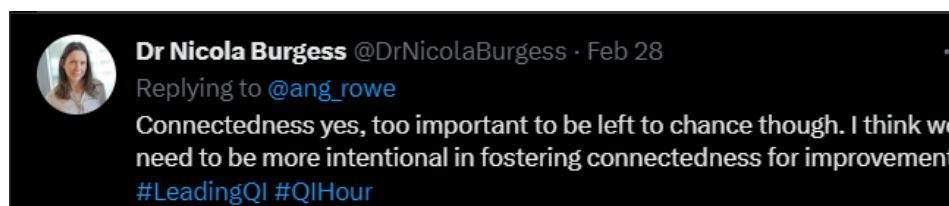
@KPOteam_SASH agreed with this saying, "@WBS research really highlighted the importance of connectedness through the social network analysis that they did."

Question 2 Summary

@MelRheum provides a nice tweet to summarise Question 2 saying that, "An 'Improvement infrastructure' is typically the principles, behaviours, people and tools which wrap around a vision and set of values to deliver change– such as putting the patient first. It isn't too prescriptive but sets the 'approach' for improvement."

Overall, the Q2 responses highlighted leadership, governance, sustainable routines, safe environments, capability– and capacity– building, and having teams and networks that is strategically aligned and embedded in everyday practice as constituents of improvement infrastructure. Over 100 responses were recorded for question 2, all of which could not be presented in this section; therefore, a summary of themes, phases and concepts have been included in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Question 2 Word Cloud

Q3A. Does your organisation have a full time, specialist team that supports improvement?

- Nearly **63%** of participants responded that a full-time specialist team supports improvement in their organisation.
- Nearly **20%** responded that there is no full-time specialist team, and **10%** were unaware of whether there was one or not.

Q3B. If your organisation has a specialist improvement team, what role do they play and what makes them effective?

Participants shared that specialist improvement teams in their organisations:

- Provide coaching, training and education,
- Build Capacity & Capability,
- Facilitate, Lead & Guide Improvement Projects
- Share Knowledge & Improvement Ideas, and
- Hold others accountable.

They also shared that prioritising and supporting improvement projects, listening to needs and connecting people are factors that make them effective.

The Role of Specialist Improvement Teams: Coaches, Trainers, Facilitators, Supporters...

Representatives of the specialist teams responded...

@Sutcliffe1987 explained that "We act as Coaches, mentors and I suppose more importantly mirrors to the organisation, What makes people effective is their ability to connect people to problems and to provide a respectful challenge."

@Bradders681 shared that,
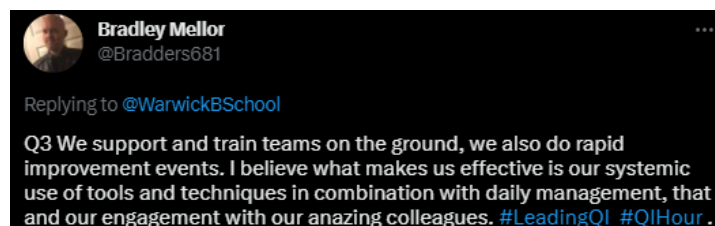
@Bradders681 also added that "We also have trainees bringing their own problems to our training so they learn to apply what they've learnt immediately. This personalised their learning."

@NinaJaspalCNP shared that

Nina Jaspal
@NinaJaspal

Replying to @WarwickBSchool

Our team @nhsuhcw is made up of clinical & non clinical staff. We engage & hopefully inspire our workforce to see how they can 'run their business' for the better. We act as coaches, provoking discussion and enabling open & honest conversations. #LeadingQI #QIHour

@RobertJMAyers responded by saying, "70% of our focus is supporting improvement programmes that address risk or strategic priorities and 30% is coaching, guiding, facilitating, educating, etc. anyone and everyone with QI."
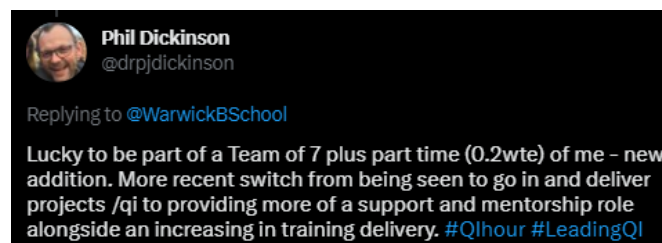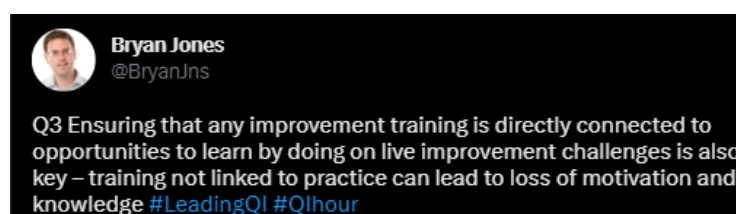
@drpjdickinson proudly responded,

Phil Dickinson
@drpjdickinson

Replying to @WarwickBSchool

Lucky to be part of a Team of 7 plus part time (0.2wte) of me – new addition. More recent switch from being seen to go in and deliver projects /qi to providing more of a support and mentorship role alongside an increasing in training delivery. #QIhour #LeadingQI

@KPOteam_SASH shared that, "They are keepers of the method and have a key role in holding the organisation to account to the management system."

And @KPOteam_SASH also added that "They also offer a range of training and education offers to all levels of the organisation and lead a range of improvement events providing specialist coaching and facilitation support #LeadingQI #QIhour."

Participants also shared their views on what specialist teams do and should do...

@gsqia replied, "It feels like the specialist team have to take on multiple functions, developing capability, designing the infrastructure, building engagement, networking, coaching and sharing."

@BryanJns shared that

Bryan Jones
@BryanJns

Q3 Ensuring that any improvement training is directly connected to opportunities to learn by doing on live improvement challenges is also key – training not linked to practice can lead to loss of motivation and knowledge #LeadingQI #QIhour

@ang_rowe responded, "Teaching, coaching, leading improvement programmes, influencing others."

@WhippetPickle commented, "Our Qi team work with staff supporting & guiding in projects & in turn help the success of these 👍"

@gvhawtin shared that,

Gemma Hawtin 💙
@gvhawtin

Replying to @WarwickBSchool
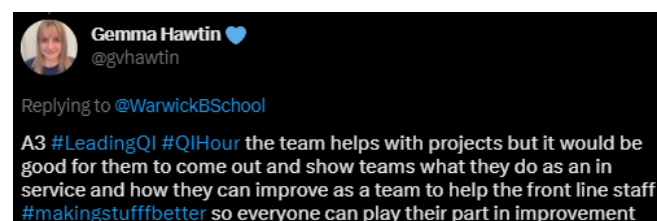
A3 #LeadingQI #QIHour the team helps with projects but it would be good for them to come out and show teams what they do as an in service and how they can improve as a team to help the front line staff #makingstufffbetter so everyone can play their part in improvement

@A_cute_medic responded and also reflected saying,

Sara Barton
@A_cute_medic

Replying to @WarwickBSchool

Q3 our QI team support teams to understand their system & carry out iterative testing of change.
I'm increasingly realising that there's no one method, & no 1 team are keeper of the method. Lots of crossover with L&OD, Governance etc. not always leveraged.
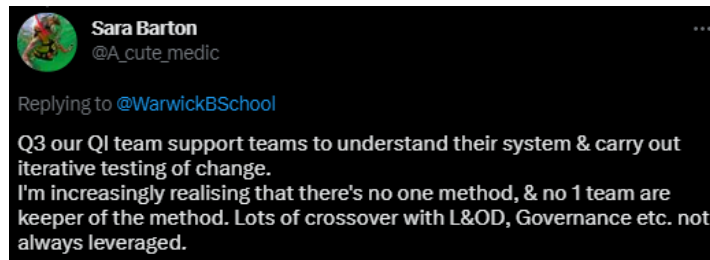
@MelRheum replied, "The role I feel they should play is #coaching people to identify #problems and supporting staff to feel #empowered to find solutions – #trainers and #facilitators too."

@helenblomfield8 also had a similar view,

Helen Blomfield
@helenblomfield8
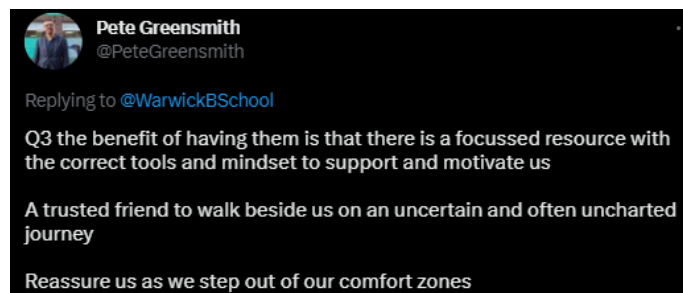
Replying to @WarwickBSchool

Q3. I would say to coach or work alongside individuals/ teams on improvement projects. They should champion those people with great ideas but without positional power. Help those to make changes, provide an open door and a platform to share improvement ideas. #LeadingQI #QIHour
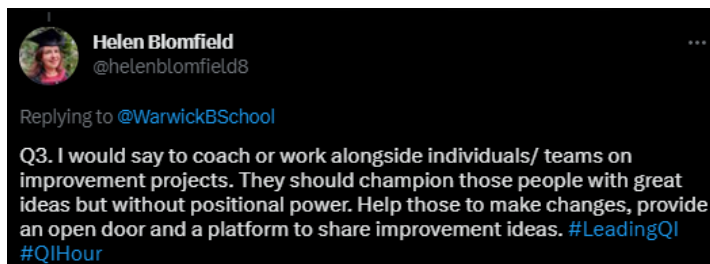
There were diverse views on what makes them effective…

In terms of effectiveness, @BryanJns shared that, "A key skill of improvement teams is the ability to take the temperature of front-line teams, by listening to their needs and judging when and how to support them and what tools and language to use." @BryanJns also added, "Another skill is knowing what to prioritise and ensuring that front-line teams do not suffer from QI initiativitis."
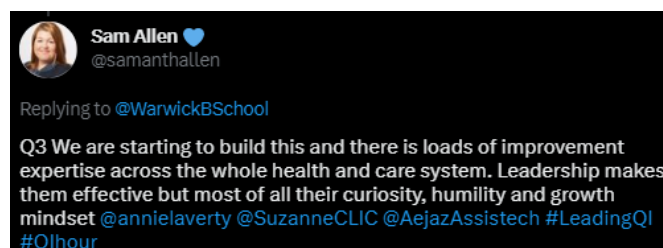
@PeteGreensmith shared that,

Pete Greensmith
@PeteGreensmith

Replying to @WarwickBSchool

Q3 the benefit of having them is that there is a focussed resource with the correct tools and mindset to support and motivate us

A trusted friend to walk beside us on an uncertain and often uncharted journey

Reassure us as we step out of our comfort zones

@ang_rowe replied to @KPOteam_SASH & @sashnhs saying, "I think holding others to account is important, keeping the central tenets of improvement and ensuring methodology is adhered to (not so rigidly that it strangles though)."

@KPOteam_SASH also shared that, "I have frequently been called a "pain in the backside " when it comes to holding leaders to account on how we apply our management system. I like the resilience and tenacity description better ;-)"

@samanthallen shared that they are in the process of creating a specialist improvement team,
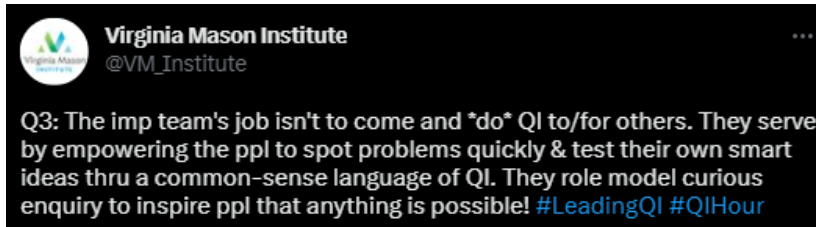

Sam Allen 💙
@samanthallen

Replying to @WarwickBSchool

Q3 We are starting to build this and there is loads of improvement expertise across the whole health and care system. Leadership makes them effective but most of all their curiosity, humility and growth mindset @annielaverty @SuzanneCLIC @AejazAssistech #LeadingQI #QIhour

Interesting conversations emerged on the role of the specialist improvement team...

The most popular tweet (likes and retweets) of the session came from @HelenBevan saying that,
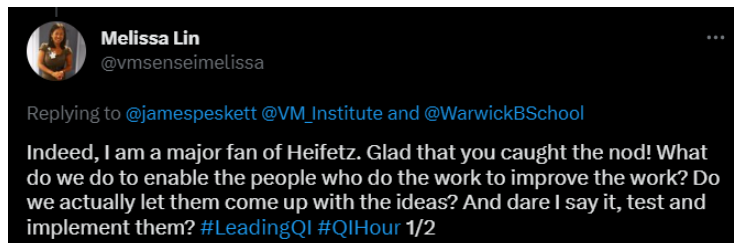
> One factor that makes improvement teams effective is their approach: they do change with people, or support people to do their own change. The not-so-great kind of improvement teams do change "to" people or "for" people.
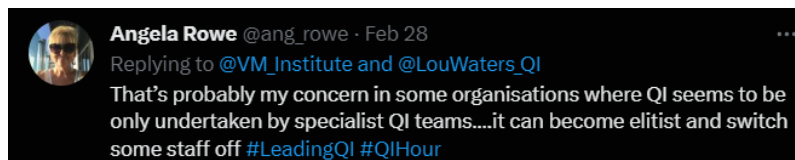
@VM_Institute had a similar view, saying that,

Virginia Mason Institute
@VM_Institute

Q3: The imp team's job isn't to come and *do* QI to/for others. They serve by empowering the ppl to spot problems quickly & test their own smart ideas thru a common-sense language of QI. They role model curious enquiry to inspire ppl that anything is possible! #LeadingQI #QIHour

@jamespeskett replied to @VM_Institute @saying, "Sounds very similar to Ron Heifetz's idea of adaptive leadership – you shouldn't take the work from people, but support (and challenge) them to keep ownership of it.

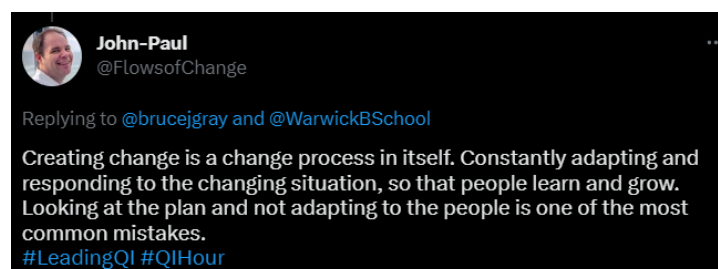@vmsenseimelissa responded to @jamespeskett agreeing,

Melissa Lin
@vmsenseimelissa

Replying to @jamespeskett @VM_Institute and @WarwickBSchool

Indeed, I am a major fan of Heifetz. Glad that you caught the nod! What do we do to enable the people who do the work to improve the work? Do we actually let them come up with the ideas? And dare I say it, test and implement them? #LeadingQI #QIHour 1/2

@ang_rowe replied to @VM_Institute as well saying,

Angela Rowe @ang_rowe · Feb 28
Replying to @VM_Institute and @LouWaters_QI
That's probably my concern in some organisations where QI seems to be only undertaken by specialist QI teams....it can become elitist and switch some staff off #LeadingQI #QIHour

@vmsenseimelissa also responded to @ang_rowe saying, "Yes! What do we gain from holding up QI/project teams tasked to fix other people's problems? Esp when the best solution often already exists in the minds of the people who are staring at the problem every single day? It only creates resentment and us/them divide."

@brucejgray has a similar view, "striking a balance between doing too much (people don't learn and work doesn't sustain), and doing too little (people don't learn and zero impact). Keep these in balance at the same time as growing and spreading capability."

@FlowsofChange replied to @brucejgray comment saying that

John-Paul
@FlowsofChange

Replying to @brucejgray and @WarwickBSchool

Creating change is a change process in itself. Constantly adapting and responding to the changing situation, so that people learn and grow. Looking at the plan and not adapting to the people is one of the most common mistakes.
#LeadingQI #QIHour

Question 3 Summary

Several diverse perspectives emerged regarding the role and effectiveness of improvement teams. While many agreed that: coaching, training, building capacity & capability, facilitating improvements, sharing knowledge & improvement ideas, leading & guiding improvement projects and holding others accountable were the primary roles of specialist improvement teams, there was some debate on their degree of involvement in improvement project and activities. Some interesting views were shared on how specialist improvement teams can be perceived. For example, @FlowsofChange, @jamespeskett and @ang_rowe commented on specialist improvement teams being perceived as "elitist", due to speaking their own language (more on this in question 5) or exclusively conducting improvement projects. However, @HelenBevan's comment regarding a co-produced and inclusive, rather than an imposed approach to improvement underscored their ideal role and resonated with many participants. A summary of themes and phases from Question 3 have been included in Figure 4.
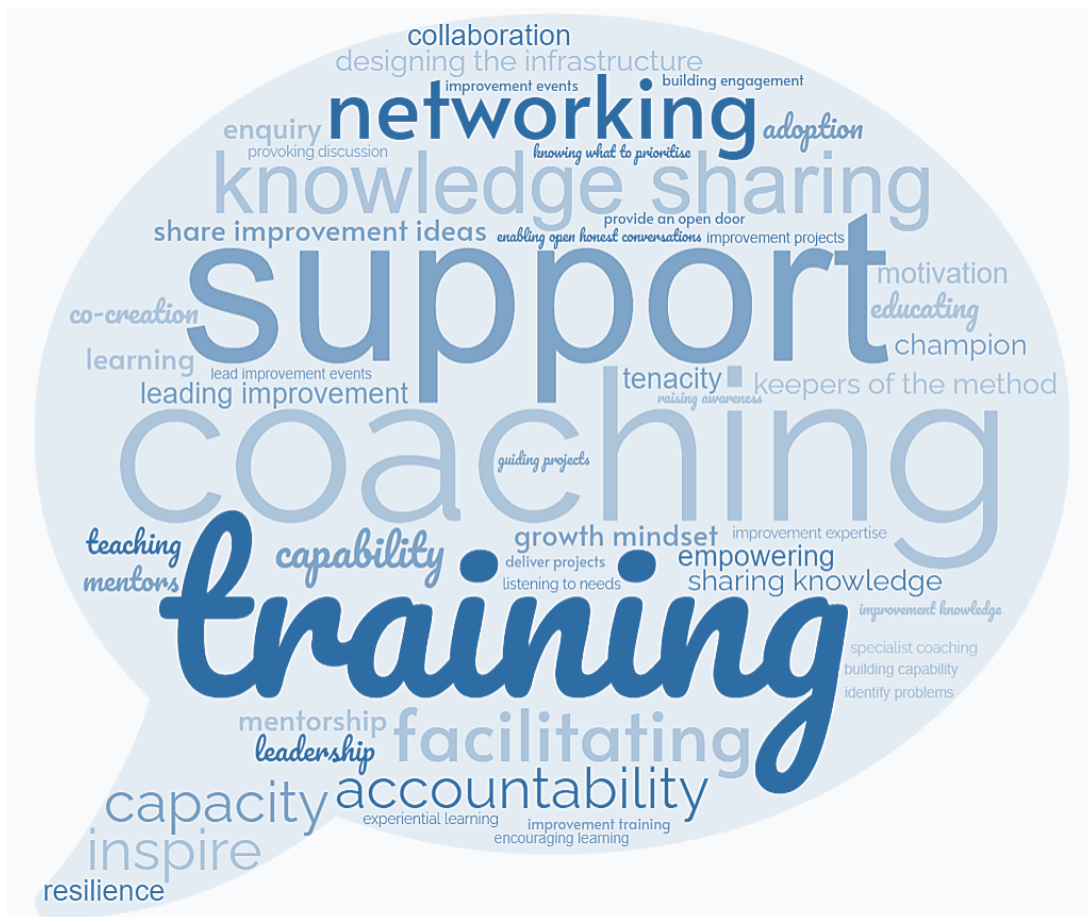
Figure 4: Question 3 Word Cloud

Q4. What (activities/routines or practices) do you believe senior leaders should be engaged in to "grow" a culture of improvement?


Some of the activities, routines and practices that senior leaders should be engaged in to "grow" a culture of improvement are to:

- Encourage Learning & Experimentation,
- Be Visible & Participate in Improvement,
- Be Problem Framers,
- Engage in informal conversations about Improvement,
- Be Open to Change,
- Exhibit behaviours such as being **Authentic, Humble, Curious & Supportive** towards QI.

Views from Senior Leaders...

@sheinazs shared that, "As a senior leader in General Practice #LeadingQI I believe we should be role modelling behaviours and also empowering our staff to undertake QI projects in their everyday work so that QI is imbedded as everyone's business."

@PeteGreensmith replied that,
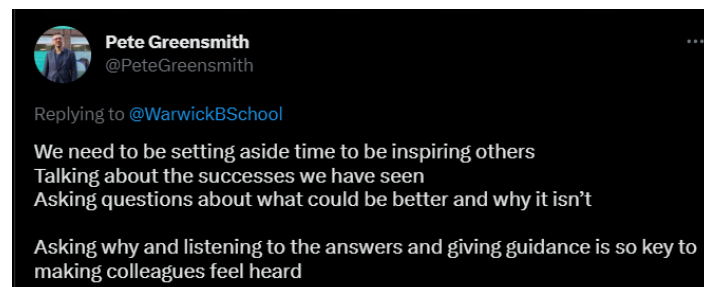
@samanthallen also commented, "Well as a senior leader I tell myself to try and 'listen & learn' more –don't always get that right & forever working on it – building improvement in to the way we do things – building alignment – improvement not connected to purpose/mission not sustainable."

Senior Leaders should be visible and engage with staff...

@NinaJaspalCNP said, "Senior leaders need to be visible! Regular rounding, coaching style questions, the ability to remove barriers to create effective change all have their part to play in growing a culture of improvement. Lead by example & guide through behaviours than just words."
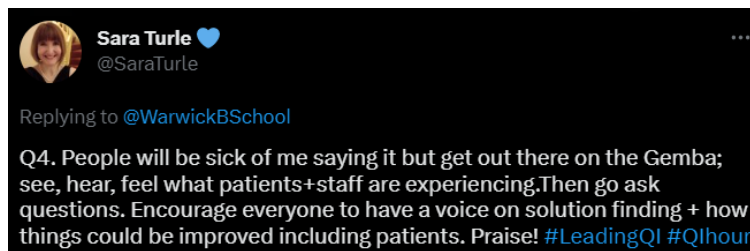
@Nyrs_Emma shared that senior leaders should have,
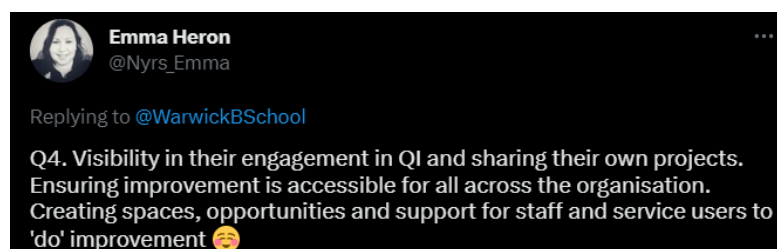
@MichaelNHSE commented that they should have, "Regular go and see visits, regular coaching conversations with all staff, run and facilitate improvement sessions, meet in huddles and do not just see improvement as a nice to have on the side."
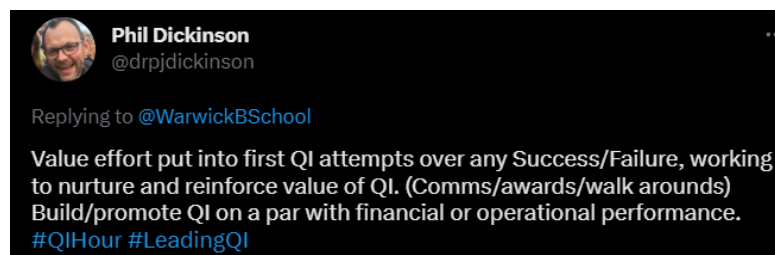
@SaraTurle replied saying,

Sara Turle 💙
@SaraTurle

Replying to @WarwickBSchool

Q4. People will be sick of me saying it but get out there on the Gemba; see, hear, feel what patients+staff are experiencing.Then go ask questions. Encourage everyone to have a voice on solution finding + how things could be improved including patients. Praise! #LeadingQI #QIhour

@MelRheum also commented on saying that, "Senior leaders need to be #visible 'on the floor' paying attention to change efforts. Also encourage #Share & #learn cultures by supporting staff communities to come together. Also, show commitment by #championing #QI and support 4 #funding 4 implementation."

Senior Leaders should encourage Learning & Experimentation...

@VM_Institute shared that, "The simplest thing senior leaders can do is invite people to try. Learning from success/failure is only possible if one actually tries a new way of doing things. This act of giving agency back to the people changes the paradigm of who has the best solutions."

@drpjdickinson shared that they should,

Phil Dickinson
@drpjdickinson

Replying to @WarwickBSchool

Value effort put into first QI attempts over any Success/Failure, working to nurture and reinforce value of QI. (Comms/awards/walk arounds) Build/promote QI on a par with financial or operational performance. #QIHour #LeadingQI
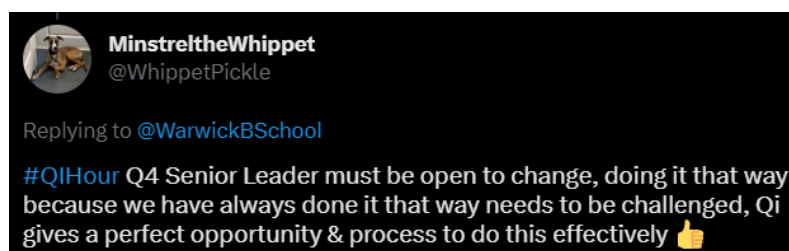
@brucejgray replied, "Networking with peers about how to approach the challenge of learning how to be improvement leaders/coaches as well as senior managers."

@acserrao76 also shared that,

♂ 🏳️‍🌈 Cristina Serrão she/her 🇪🇺 🇵🇹 🇸🇳 🇬🇳
@acserrao76

A4. Senior leaders who show humility, take time to listen, invite others into the space who wouldn't usually access those spaces that can seem 'elitist', sharing their own learning and open to learning from others too. Leading by example to help remove barriers #QIHour #LeadingQI
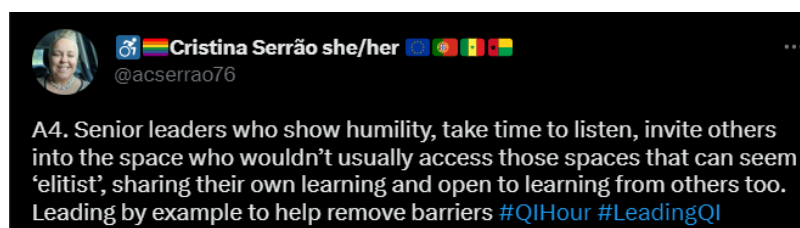
@MikeBurchellDHT commented that "for leaders to grow a culture of improvement they show they are also learners and are curious. They encourage others to challenge the status quo and create trust to explore amend innovate new approaches and ideas."

**@WhippetPickle shared a similar view,**

MinstreltheWhippet
@WhippetPickle

Replying to @WarwickBSchool

#QIHour Q4 Senior Leader must be open to change, doing it that way because we have always done it that way needs to be challenged, Qi gives a perfect opportunity & process to do this effectively 👍
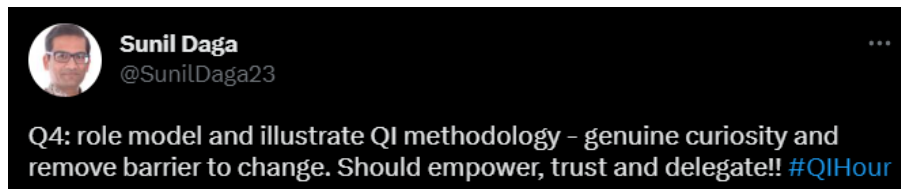
Senior Leaders should model the standards and behaviours they wish to see...

@FlowsofChange shared that,
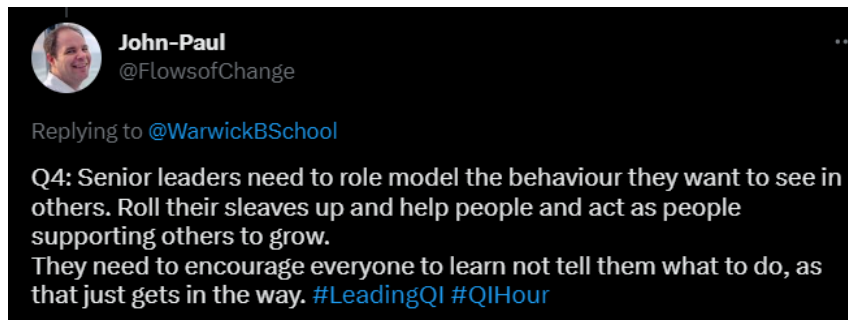
@Re__Thinking shared a similar comment saying that senior leaders should, "Model the standard or change you want to see; use six restorative practice habits to grow your culture of improvement."
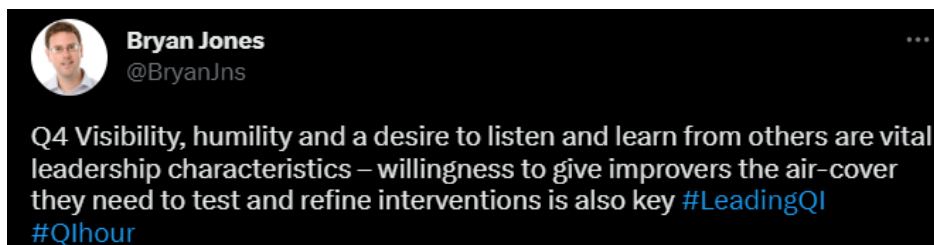
@SunilDaga23 went a step further saying that senior leaders should,

@janet_folland had a similar view as well, "Using every opportunity to model curiosity, hope, freedom to fail and encourage networks and connections."

Senior Leaders should be humble and create safe spaces for improvement...

@BryanJns touched on many areas saying that,

@DrNicolaBurgess agreed and replied to @BryanJns saying, "Visibility and humility two very important leadership qualities.

@ang_rowe also shared a similar view to @BryanJns saying
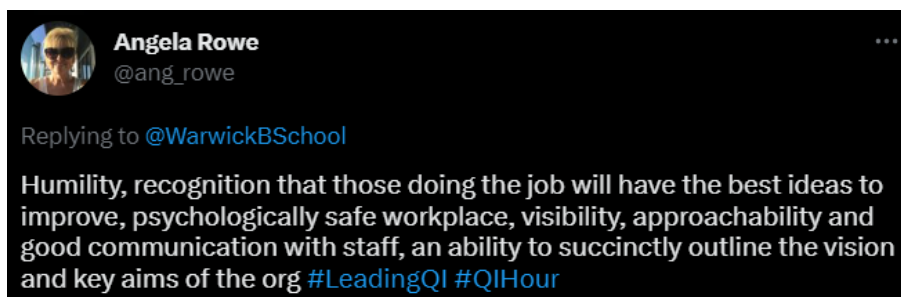
@RobertJMAyers also shared this sentiment, "Create safe bases (team), so our people can be bold and courageous in their efforts to change the world for the better. Having a safe base to return to refuel, get perspective and find enablement."

Senior Leaders should be Problem Framers...

@gsqia shared that, "Leaders need to think about their language and understand how to coach and facilitate framing problems and creating an environment where teams can test and learn."

@KPOteam_SASH commented that senior leaders should, "Go to the genba, ask why, show respect. Become problem framers rather than problem solvers. Support the staff who do the work to improve the work."
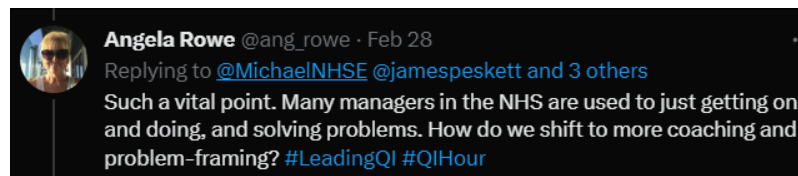
A conversation about problem framing emerged from @DrEmilyRowe's response,

Emily M Rowe @DrEmilyRowe · Feb 28
Q4 Make a greater effort to have more informal interactions across the organisation, connect with people where they are, ask where they need support, don't let the only place you are seen be the meeting rooms.
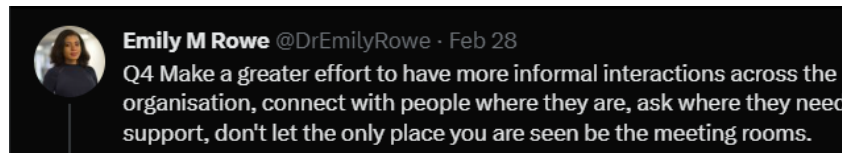
@jamespeskett replied to @DrEmilyRowe, "Senior leaders need to use their positional power, without becoming heroes or tyrants. Reflecting on your own beliefs, feelings, and behaviours; with yourself, your team, your organisation, and your wider environment, is a good start."

@MichaelNHSE replied to @jamespeskett @DrEmilyRowe saying, "In the words of the great @DrNicolaBurgess a lot of managers started as problem solvers but now need to become problem framers.

@ang_rowe joined the conversation agreeing but also questioning,

Angela Rowe @ang_rowe · Feb 28
Replying to @MichaelNHSE @jamespeskett and 3 others
Such a vital point. Many managers in the NHS are used to just getting on and doing, and solving problems. How do we shift to more coaching and problem-framing? #LeadingQI #QIHour

@PeteGreensmith may have one answer to @ang_rowe's question, "Talking about it as part of normal conversations and interactions Not just at specific times or as part of a presentation Discussing with people improvement and empowering them to deliver on it We need to live the change we want to see."
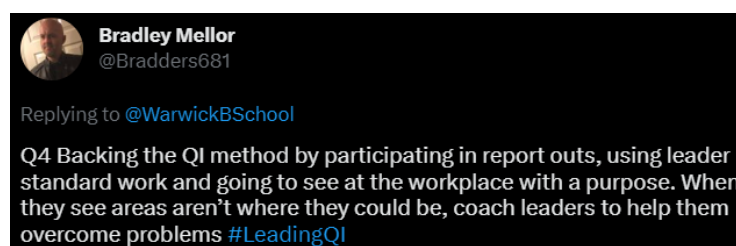
@Sutcliffe1987 further added to the debate by replying, "We have to change the practice of rewarding problem solvers, hard to do in tough times definitely a wider challenge."

@A_cute_medic also joined in and added,

Sara Barton
@A_cute_medic
Replying to @Sutcliffe1987 @ang_rowe and 5 others
yes, covid & subsequent challenges did rather help the command & control mentality. I found it personally really challenging to think and frame, rather than just do at times
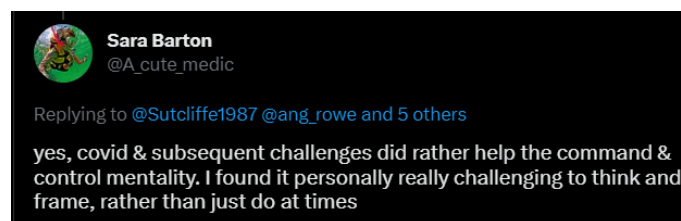
@helenblomfield8 highlighted that "Senior leaders should reflect on who they invite to improvement meetings. Are the right people in the room, is it representative of the workforce, are there diverse ideas, different perspectives. Are those present which the change affects?"

@Bradders681 responded that,

Bradley Mellor
@Bradders681
Replying to @WarwickBSchool
Q4 Backing the QI method by participating in report outs, using leader standard work and going to see at the workplace with a purpose. When they see areas aren't where they could be, coach leaders to help them overcome problems #LeadingQI

Question 4 Summary

Many perspectives and themes emerged as activities, routines and practices that senior leaders should engage in to "grow" a culture of improvement. In addition to, being visible, humble and engaging with staff, encouraging learning and experimentation, creating safe spaces for improvement, modelling standards and behaviors, and becoming problem framers; the tweetchat participants also recommended more informal and relational practices and routines. For example, **@doccallanan responded, "Coffee/ lunch/breakfast in the canteen with staff – cancel the perception of "them and us".** Another view shared by **@brucejgray** was that "**For senior leaders, almost every conversation can be a coaching conversation, if they want it to be."** Some participants emphasised that in addition to being open to and removing barriers to change, that senior leaders need to be approachable, and share their projects and improvement experiences. Many valuable responses were provided, all of which could not be presented therefore, a summary of phases have been included in the word cloud below.
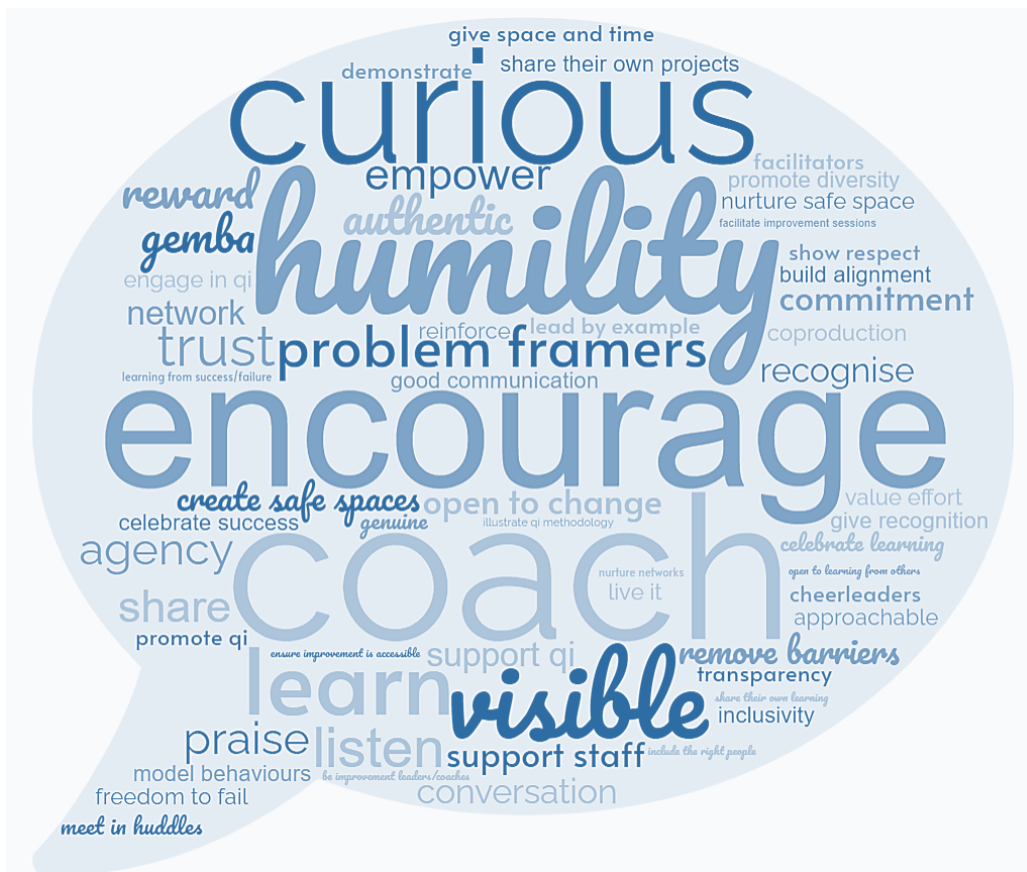
Figure 5: Question 4 Word Cloud

Q5. In your view, is there value in using Japanese terms and concepts such as "nemawashi", "gemba" and "Kaizen"?
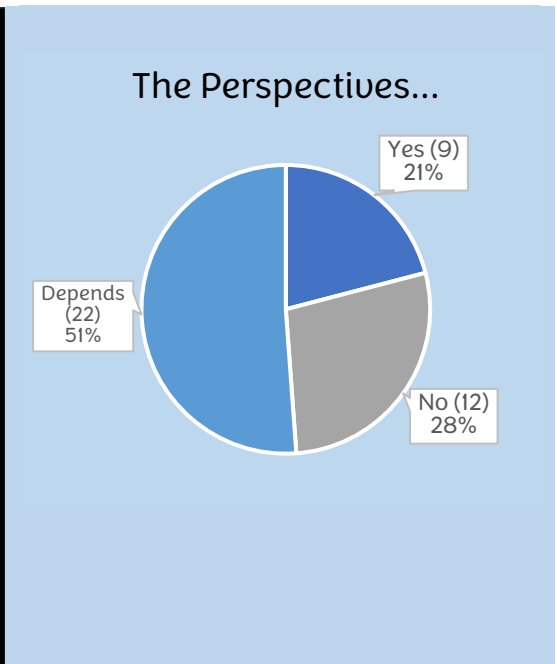
For some, there was value in using Japanese terms and concepts...

@PeteGreensmith remarked, "Absolutely, I think the words and origin aren't overly relevant I think it is more about using language differently. Talk about things using terms that aren't mainstream/normal as that sparks interest and curiosity which drives engagement."

@KPOteam_SASH also agreed,
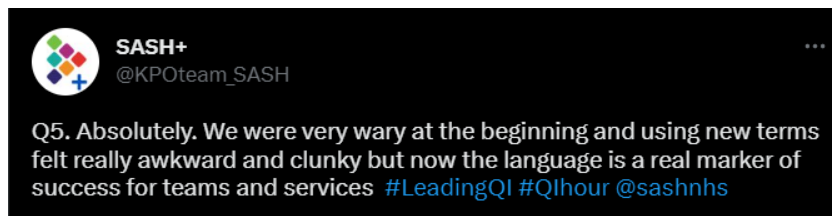
@NinaJaspalCNP commented that "I have recently learnt this new vocabulary and I love it! I think it depends on the environment and what sticks with people. For me the concepts of Kaizen and Lean healthcare are far more important than using the correct terminology! Go with what lands 👣"

@SarahP2k shared,
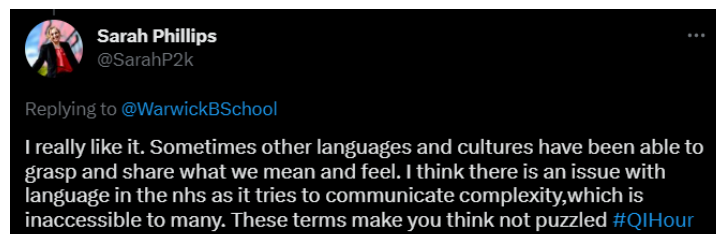
@Sutcliffe1987 agreed that it does add value as "We used it to make this feel like something different, we had change approaches before so it served us well to make this feel like something new, some words have become embedded in the organisation like Gemba others haven't."

For some, they see no value in adopting Japanese terms and concepts...

@drpjdickinson commented, "Thanks for the quick Japanese lesson! Not personally a fan of anything that makes QI seem inaccessible or Elitist. Minimal new terminology, simple language, ideally with some Jon Van-Tam metaphors / real examples to aid understanding."

@A_cute_medic had a similar view,

> **Sara Barton**
> @A_cute_medic
>
> ...
>
> Replying to @WarwickBSchool
>
> Q5 I'm not a fan. Lean was influenced by Deming, using Japanese words doesn't make it "more true" & probably makes it less accessible. I'd rather create narratives in my oldham accent with language appropriate to those I'm connecting with. Sorry not sorry!
> #QIHour #LeadingQI
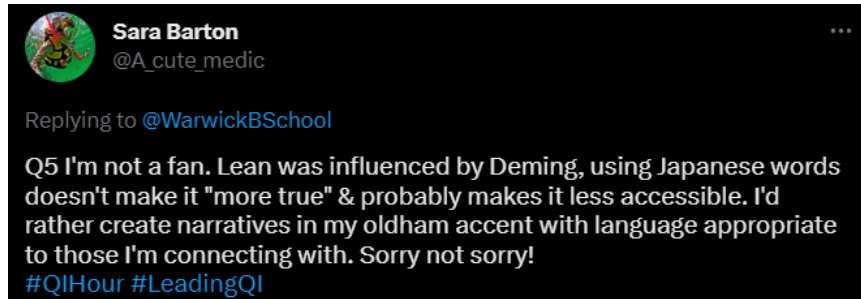
@DrBalsamAhmad said, "No. I have no clue what these terms above mean. I spend a lot of time looking up abbreviations & trying to simplify complex language. There is value in keeping language simple and to the point."

@MelRheum found that "From experience, I found people didn't engage with the Japanese terms. #Gemba or 'going to where the work is done' or 'shadowing' or 'observing' – whatever you use it needs to be #simple and #understood as something anyone could do. (Hence my answer to Q5)

@FlowsofChange remarked that,

> **John-Paul**
> @FlowsofChange
>
> ...
>
> Replying to @WarwickBSchool
>
> q5 I think the danger is that it creates an in 'clique' who understand and use the words. An outer group who just scratch their heads.
>
> I struggle to understand the practical use of giving things funny names that people can't pronounce. #LeadingQI #QIHour
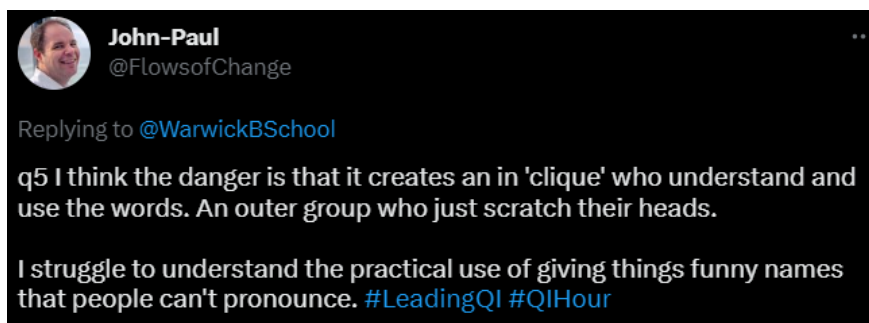
@KristinMoat shared this sentiment and added, "I must admit, I really struggle with these words/ideas. As we aspire to make things more relatable for patients (plain english letters, writing directly to patients), we should be making QI more relatable to staff. This has the opposite effect for me."

For the majority, it depended on multiple factors, for example...

Is the language and concepts inclusive & accessible?

@SaraTurle observed, "Now that's a good question. I struggled to remember in the beginning but liked it + took pride in using thereafter. The key point is that it has to be a language that is understood by all. Can we ever be certain that it is? Has to be inclusive + not a barrier."

@Bradders681 said that this is,

> **Bradley Mellor**
> @Bradders681
>
> ...
>
> Replying to @WarwickBSchool
>
> Q5 Very contextual, we have to make sure whatever language we use, learning is accessible. #LeadingQI #QIHour
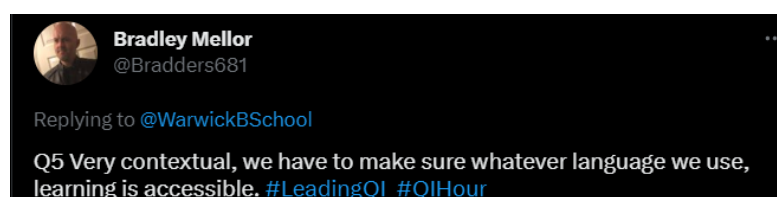
@DrNicolaBurgess agreed, "You make an important point there @Bradders681 whatever language we use, it needs to be accessible. Way to avoid the elitism trap mentioned by others."

@HughMcCaughey also commented on accessibility saying,


@samanthallen agreed that concepts add value... "but 'Improvement' language can be exclusive and needs to be inclusive across health & care."

Do language and concepts create a connection, convey meaning or encourage action?

@ang_rowe explained that "If those words convey meaning to some staff – great. If not, and they disenfranchise, then they're not helpful. I wouldn't want people to feel it's an elitist club..."

@WhippetPickle queried and also commented on elitism, "Does your "general nurse" understand these expressions don't frighten them & make QI an elitist group. Start with the basics & build these in early sessions 👍"

@Nyrs_Emma had a conditional yes saying,
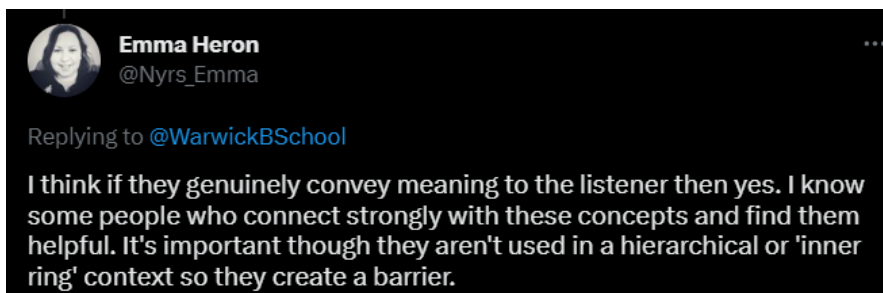
@Mark_Outhwaite replied to @VM_Institute's comment saying that we, "... need to ensure that it just not some form of talismanic incantation. Must be grounded in the 'doing'"

@vmsenseimelissa replied saying, "Agh, don't get me started on daruma dolls littered everywhere! Yes, it's a good signal that we may be talking the talk, and gives you easy direction to "go to the genba" where people use said QI language & see what it means in action. Are we walking the walk?"

Others found that Organisational Culture influenced perceptions of value...

@GSQIA replied "I think this depends on whether the organisation has completely adopted the philosophy or whether as in most organisations have just adopted tools then it becomes elitist."

@MichaelNHSE observed that,

@DrNicolaBurgess found that "People are often appear resistant to using the language! In my experience the language can be a useful mechanism for thinking intentionally about improvement activity. But others are immediately turned off by it!"

@sheinazs found, "this language is complex and whilst suitable for large scale change – in small practices it is prohibitive. #LeadingQI – different approaches to QI are needed for different organisational need – and therefore some moderating of language."

@KPOteam_SASH commented,

SASH+
@KPOteam_SASH

We even had a whole debate about whether we should use the term waste at the beginning of our journey but now the language is a marker of success and visitors to our open day comment on the language that they hear all the staff use #LeadingQI #QIhour @sashnhs
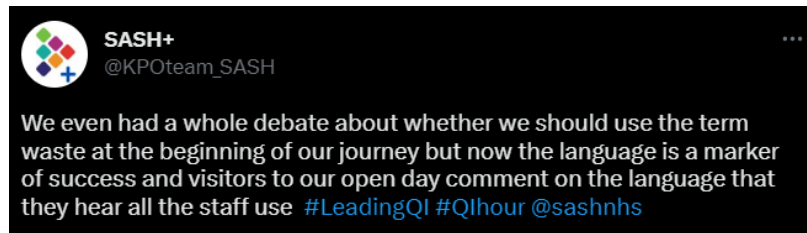
@VM_Institute commented that "We've never forced our clients to use these; yet they choose to use them because the novelty of "genba" or 'kaizen' challenges the status quo we take for granted in healthcare QI – new terms often act as early, trackable signals that org culture's changing!"

@vmsenseimelissa clarified,

Melissa Lin
@vmsenseimelissa

Replying to @KristinMoat @KPOteam_SASH and @sashnhs

I'll chime in and say that it depends on diff org cultures. New words can be quite effective in signaling change in culture, but I've seen it swing wildly from lack of usage consistency resulting in confusion to usage to weaponise and exclude others. 1/2 #LeadingQI #QIHour

@vmsenseimelissa further added saying, "Both of those extremes speaks volumes about the users than the words themselves. And while the language here is foreign in origin, we're really good as humans at using English words poorly to alienate others, intentionally or otherwise. 'Synergy', anyone?"

Question 5 Summary

> "The language question is the Marmite question of the improvement world."
> – Sue Jenkins, Director of Kaizen at Surrey & Sussex NHS Trust

The overall sentiment regarding the use of Japanese terms and concepts such as "nemawashi", "gemba" and "Kaizen" was that it depended on factors, such as inclusivity and accessibility, whether it creates a connection, conveyed meaning or encouraged action. Many found that perceptions of value were considerably influenced by the organisation's culture and people. For those who agreed that it added value, they found it created connections, could drive engagement or was more meaningful because it gave them "something new" or "something different" to incorporate into their improvement approaches. For those who found no value in adopting these concepts, they commented that it was inaccessible, elitist or that they struggled with understanding, adopting and using the language, when simpler language could be used. Over forty responses were sent, all of which could not be presented in this section; therefore, a summary of themes, phases and concepts are presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Question 5 Word Cloud

Q6. Last question of the night: What will/could you do to build a more effective infrastructure for improvement?

Some of the proposed actions to build a more effective improvement structure are aligned with this lesson's key themes:

- Strategic Alignments
- Leadership Routines
- Building Improvement Teams
- Training
- Capability-Building Routines
- As well as Personal Routines

Strategic Alignment activities to build a more effective improvement structure...

@janet_folland is, "currently writing in QI into our AHP workforce programme as one of our 'golden threads'"

@gsqia is...

@DBuddie1987 also mentioned that "this a developing area for NHS Finance ...Great opportunity for Future Change @MYHTFinance @OneNHSFinance Key to share the in-house knowledge of NHS staff supported by Quality Improvement Staff and IT to utilise systems and process"

@brucejgray aims to "Iterate towards a Quality Management System Approach, i.e. Quality Planning, Quality Control/assurance, Quality Improvement, and keep them in balance, and don't let external factors make you focus solely on Quality Assurance"

Leadership Routines & Improvement Teams to build a more effective improvement structure...

@samanthallen said that...
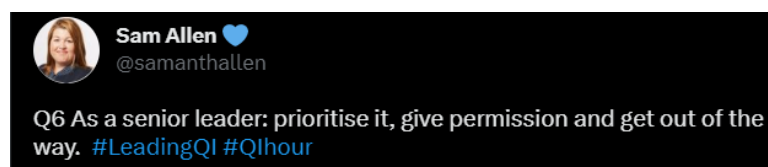
@SaraTurle reflected, "Again tricky one for me. Keep highlighting power of Gemba and using patients/people with lived experience in everything you can. Keep cheerleading when I see good things. Working together to improve.

@SarahP2k focused on improvement teams saying that,
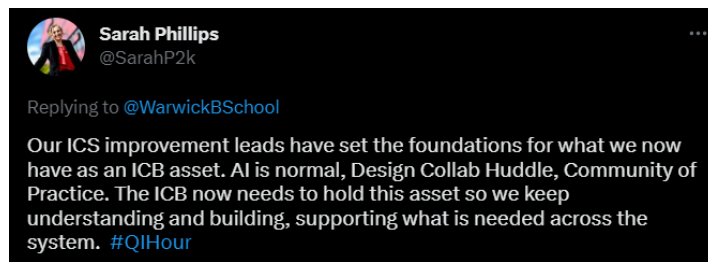
Training & Capability-Building Routines to build a more effective improvement structure...

@drpjdickinson said that they would...
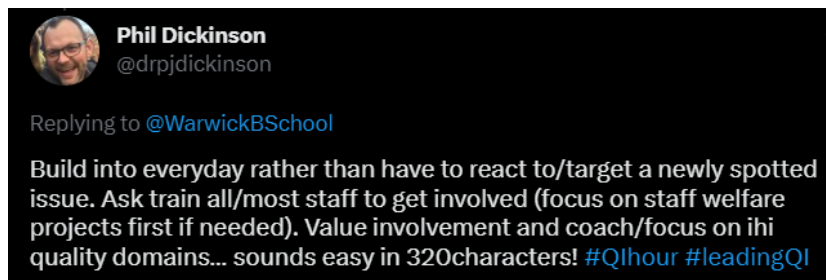
@helenblomfield8 focused on, "Developing teams who recognise their own strength and trust each other to suggest and lead on improvement. Each person taking a lead on different tasks. Time to reflect and celebrate success. Always give credit to others for their work."

@A_cute_medic has a different view saying, ... "So rather than the QI team ""own improvement"" how do we coach other potential improvement stewards and fit it all into one glorious system, rather than competing initiatives. Almost metacognition of QI coaching QI. But so hard to do in a huge organisation!

@jamespeskett has another view to...
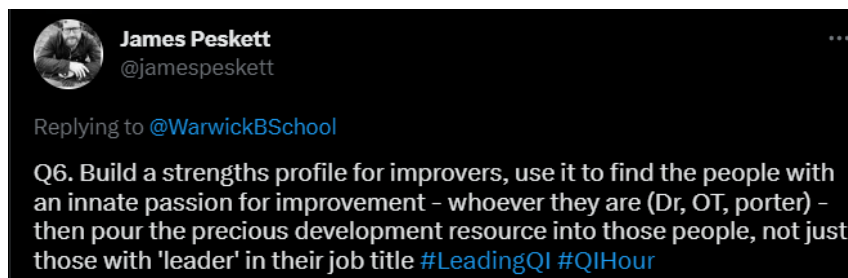
@janet_folland went beyond the team to "co-developing the #NEYAHPQI network as 1 of a whole network of networks across the U.K @ahpqi – alongside fabulous and inspirational colleagues"

@gvhawtin had several aims to "make sure everyone is able to improve no matter who they are or what level they are and should be embedded in the systems for a better QI all round" as well as...

And also "...show frontline a culture or improvement #LeadingQI #QIHour and available training to grow your own and find those interest in QI as we can all have a squiggly career path".

Personal Routines were also considered to build a more effective improvement structure...

@brucejgray commented that "Networking for sharing and learning. Don't go it alone. Build relationships with and link up with the improvement teams across Provider Collaborative's across systems, across regions."

@PeteGreensmith said...

> **Pete Greensmith**
> @PeteGreensmith
>
> Replying to @WarwickBSchool
>
> Q6 I will continue to be an enabler, a cheer leader, a connector, a door opener, someone who says yes, an encourager
>
> More importantly a celebrator and someone who (hopefully) models the behaviour of some who empowers, inspires and supports others to improve
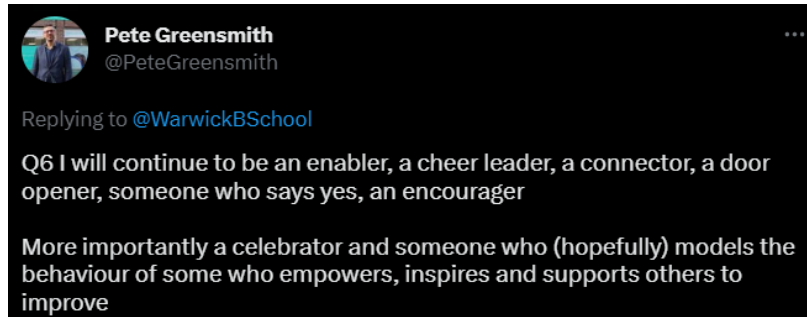
@DrBalsamAhmad shared that, "In my role I facilitate improvement work by generating/contributing ideas; facilitating knowledge mobilisation; connecting people across the system/organisations; supporting funding proposals; embedding a culture of research into practice."

@ang_rowe commented that she would,

> **Angela Rowe**
> @ang_rowe
>
> Replying to @WarwickBSchool
>
> Q6 Hold the key principles of QI, encouraging others to do the same, influence and support others to see the value and worth in QI. Try and spread use of the methodology, even where the focus seems to be on performance #LeadingQI #QIHour
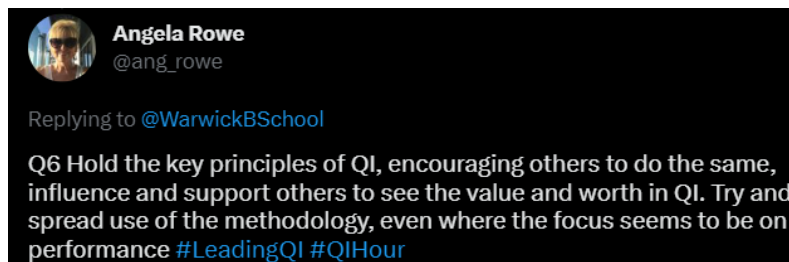
@emmah_nuh also shared that they would, "Collaborate better with other parts of the organisation that have a link to improvement & demonstrate to staff how that can work more effectively for them in practice."

@RobertJMAyers said they would, "Listen and continue to learn. Plus collaboration more beyond the four walls of an acute hospital #QIHour #QILeader. Thank you for the opportunity to learn from you all this evening 😁"

Question 6 Summary

Many responses were shared about what healthcare professionals would or could do to build a more effective infrastructure for improvement. This included:

- Supporting and encouraging others at all levels to do improvement work,
- Promoting learning and training to make QI more accessible within their departments and organisations,
- Developing Teams, help align and lead on quality improvement activities,
- Building relationships and networking with others inside and outside of their organisations (for example through the tweetchats),
- Building networks better to support collaboration within and across organisational networks, and
- Continuing to learn and inspire others by "doing" improvement work, giving credit and sharing successes.

There were over fifty responses to this, all of which could not be presented in this section; therefore, a summary of themes, phases and concepts are presented in the word cloud below.
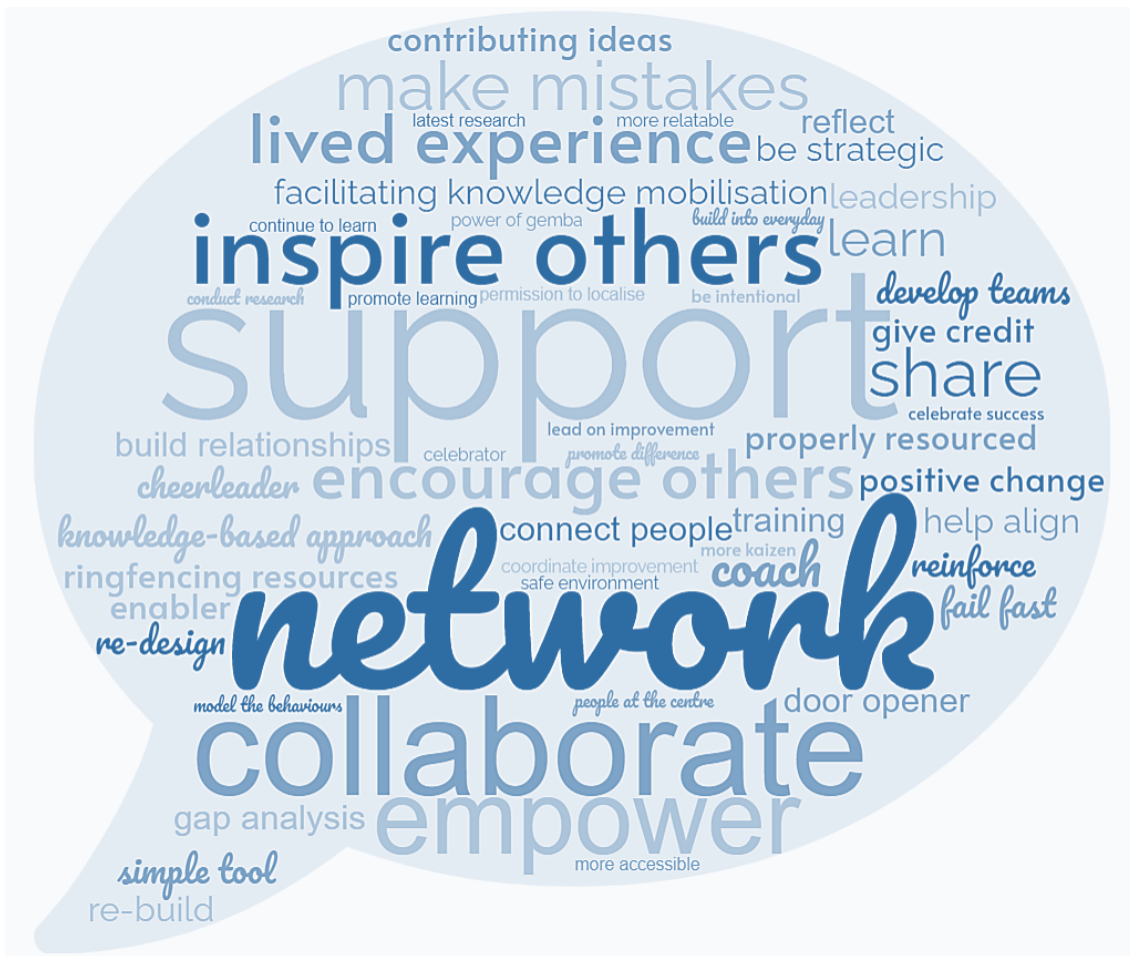
Figure 7: Question 6 Word Cloud

Coming Up Next...

Lesson 3:

The third tweetchat in this series will be held on **Tuesday 28th March 2023** from 7-8pm GMT.

A blog, **Leaders show the way and light the path for others**, written by Dr. Nicola Burgess has been posted to start the conversation.
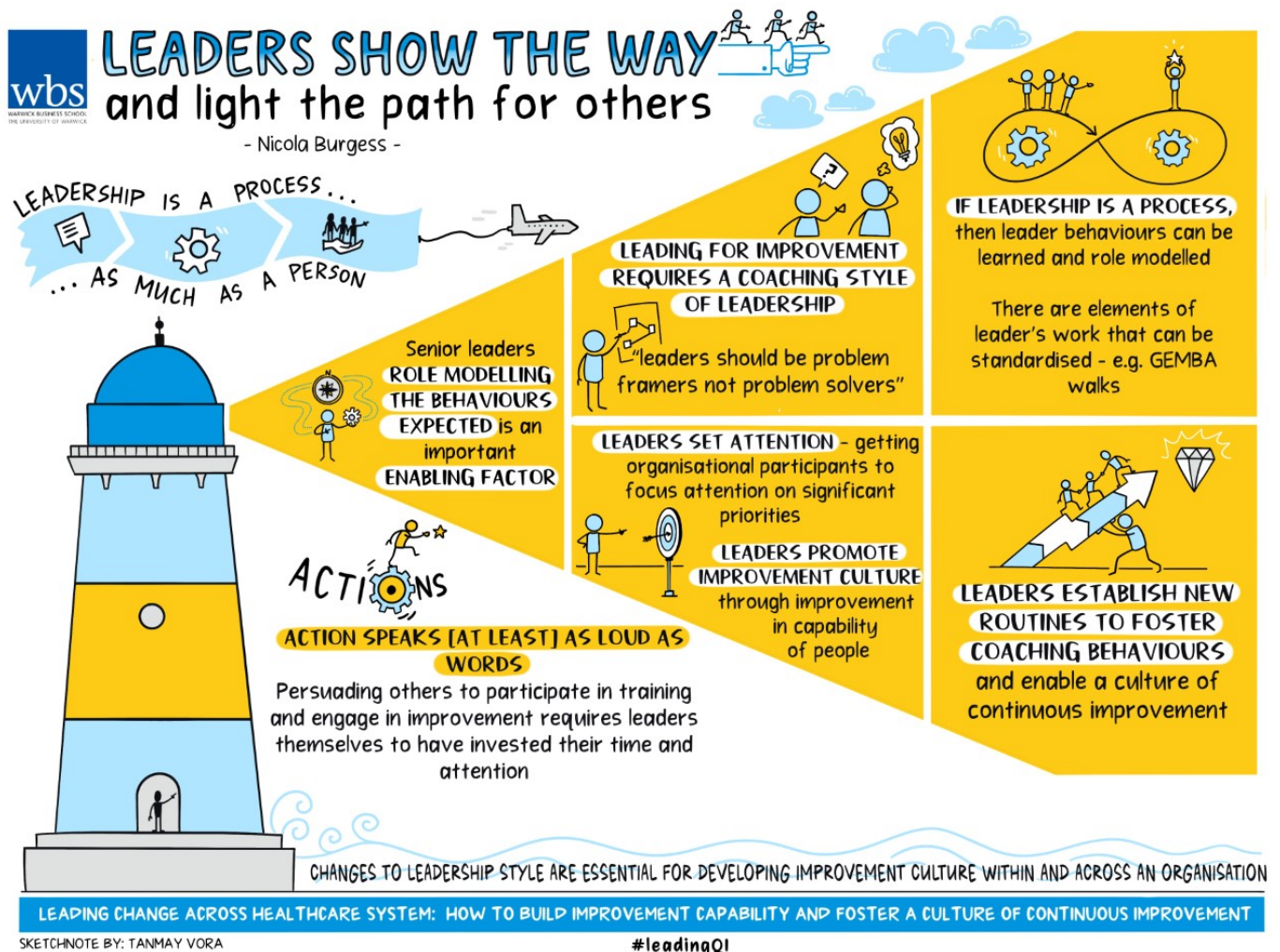
Figure 8: "Leaders Show the Way & Light the path for others" Sketchnote by Tanmay Vora (March 2023)

Interview Invitation

> **Would you like to share your views on building improvement capability in healthcare teams, organisations and systems?**
>
> Please contact Dr. Nicola Burgess at Nicola.Burgess@wbs.ac.uk to arrange an interview.

Core Resources

Reports

- NHS-VMI Evaluation Report, Burgess N (2022), Warwick Business School, "Leading change across a healthcare system: How to build improvement capability and foster a culture of continuous improvement: lessons from an evaluation of the NHS-VMI Partnership".
- Tweetchat Report, Waters, L (2022), "How to build improvement capability and foster a culture of improvement".
- January Tweetchat Report, Rowe, E & Burgess, N, Warwick Business School, Lesson 1: Building cultural readiness as foundation for better QI outcomes.

Blogs

- Burgess, N (2022), Warwick Business School, "Six key lessons from the NHS and Virginia Mason Institute partnership."
- Burgess, N (Jan 2023), Warwick Business School, "Build cultural readiness as the foundation for better quality improvement"
- Burgess, N (Feb 2023), Warwick Business School, "How to build an 'improvement infrastructure' in an organisation."
- Burgess, N (Mar 2023), Warwick Business School, "Leaders show the way and light the path for others."

Follow #QITwitter for more from the improvement community.

Tools & Resources Used: The analytics are provided by Twitonomy and Tweet Binder for the #LeadingQI and #QIHour hashtags during the period of 7pm-8pm BST on Tuesday 28th February 2023.

Shared Resources

Shared by: Resource:

@WhoseShoes

@WhoseShoes

@HelenBevan

@gvhawtin

@AklakC

This report was produced by Dr Emily Rowe for Warwick Business School.