



Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Programme

# Reflective Journey through the EGA program

## My Organisational Context

My organisation provides a range of healthcare services and is embedded within a busy, multicultural district in London. As part of the vascular service, my department uses ultrasound to aid in the diagnoses of several diseases, such a stroke, blood clots and kidney failure.

My role as a senior vascular sonographer includes diagnosing complex vascular diseases, training and managing junior members of staff and leading patient and staff engagement. To develop my leadership and ultimately improve healthcare outcomes, I began the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson (EGA) programme in September 2019. The course gave me the tools to create change and inspire inclusivity, but challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic and differences in staff cultures made implementing change difficult.



In 2021, the leadership skills I had developed from the EGA program provided me with the opportunity to apply for a more senior post at another busy London teaching hospital. I was successful in my application, and I was able to explore my leadership at a different hierarchical level.

## Evidence of Impact

Whilst working as a Vascular sonographer, I shared my learning from the EGA program with my colleagues. This was an enjoyable way to collectively understand the important aspects of healthcare leadership as we were able to reflect and question aspects of leadership theory with respect to our practice.

To begin with however, I found sharing and exploring leadership as a collective team rather difficult given the heterogenous set of personalities within my department. However, I quickly learnt that if colleagues understood the importance healthcare leadership and its relationship with better healthcare, they were more likely to apply concepts. Furthermore, I began to appreciate the importance of engaging a diverse network of ideas which resulted in outcomes that were representative of the communities we serve. Tools I had learnt about from the EGA course such as the Affina Team Journey helped me identify and measure these changes.

As part of EGA module 3 (Making sense of values, engagement & service delivery), I explored the importance of patient centred care and how story telling can be an important method in capturing qualitative data to improve engagement and healthcare. The module provided me with ideas and tools, such as interviews and patient engagement posters, to capture important data. Information gathered from patients demonstrated that their healthcare journey and complexity of needs were far different than once presumed. This allowed me to explore the important role I must play to influence the complex network of care involved in managing patients with vascular disease.

## Learning for the system and myself

I have learnt through the EGA program that inclusivity and engagement are incredibly important to improving healthcare. My dissertation explored how my leadership as a middle leader could influence and engage colleagues to improve patient centredness. This involved interviewing key stakeholders and assessing which of my leadership behaviours had a positive and negative impact in making change. This provided interesting learning. I felt that by exploring and discussing my own leadership weaknesses, this allowed my colleagues and the wider team to reflect upon their own leadership behaviours. For example, whilst exploring what I could have improved on in engaging patients with their care, colleagues wanted to help and explore how they could improve the service to further maximise patient centredness.

Furthermore, the EGA program has enabled me to understand the importance of values and working culture. By exploring these factors, it has enabled me to review why these are important and ensure the department abide to key principles that govern the NHS by speaking about and sharing experiences in a transparent and open environment. Through patient feedback, I believe this has resulted in a better patient experience and improved patient outcomes. Over time I hope to measure these outcomes more accurately as I continue to reflect upon my own and departments leadership practices.

### Improving your experience at the Vascular Lab Tell us your story

1. Questionnaires and surveys can only tell us so much.

2. Tell us when you / how old you were when you got your symptoms. How did this make you feel?

3. Tell us how you got to us.

4. Tell us how your scan went. What did we do well? What can we do to improve?

5. Tell us about the other departments you visited before/after us. Were our services well connected?

6. Email your story to [nzakikhani@nhs.net](mailto:nzakikhani@nhs.net) or write it down on the paper provided. Your feedback will help us improve.

## What I now know about leadership and my behaviour and practices

I believe the content I have learnt and practiced from the EGA program has shaped both my behaviours within and outside the healthcare setting. For example, I have begun to observe situations from other peoples lenses and now appreciate looking into why an individual behaves in a certain way rather than focusing on what they are doing. This has helped me approach and tackle wicked problems. Furthermore, by understand theoretical principles such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs, I now appreciate that depth and complexities involved in trying to change behaviours. Previously, I believe I looked at challenges in a very superficial sense, however now I try and analyse situations in more depth and try and acknowledge the opinions and perceptions of others. Rather than acting impulsively, I try and reflect and understand why something has happened. This has felt rewarding as I have received feedback from colleagues stating that they feel that I listen to their problems and concerns. These behavioural changes also allowed me to gain a promotion as a senior manager within another department. I therefore hope to continue my leadership development in my new role. I am certain I will face similar and new challenges, but I will continue to reflect and explore my leadership to ultimately improve healthcare outcomes.

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