

## Helping a leadership team get the best out of each other using MBTI® type

The senior team of an adoption and community charity performs well together but starts to show signs of pressure due to increasing workloads in a high-pressure environment. Can they undertake pre-emptive development work to preserve the team's optimistic spirit?

PACT (Parents and Children Together) is an adoption charity that operates in the south east of England. It helps to approve couples or single people to adopt, it places UK children with its approved families, and it provides families with therapy from their range of support services. These include an online community The Adopter Hub, and the award-winning Family and Children Therapeutic Support (FACTS) service.

The eight-person executive team has a mixture of experience at PACT. Some are established at the organization, and some are relatively new to both the team and the organization.

The team has a great energy working together but its optimistic, can-do approach means it sometimes takes on more work than is optimal. This has shown signs of creating undue pressure and the emotional complexity of some of their work tends to intensify this. Team members can get tired due to the increased pressure, meetings get cancelled

### Business Challenges

- Increasing workloads and pressure for the senior executive team
- Integrating new members into the team

### Company Profile

Established in 1911 by the then-Bishop of Oxford, Bishop Francis Paget, PACT is one of the UK's leading adoption charities. It builds and strengthens families through community projects across London and the South-East of England, including the award-winning Alana House project for vulnerable women.

# PACT

when availability suffers due to the heavy workloads, and this can have a negative impact on how team members understand each other at times.

PACT's Head of HR & Facilities Debbie Hardy is a member of the executive team and a recently qualified MBTI® Step I™ practitioner. She and Jan Fishwick, PACT's CEO, saw the current team situation as an opportunity to do something constructive. Introducing the MBTI framework and helping people understand each other better could maintain the team's can-do optimism and, ideally, prevent burnout or conflict.

Our consultants stepped in to design and facilitate a team day for the PACT executives.

## Solution

The aim of the development was for the leaders to understand each other better, so we created a session that focused on awareness of type differences, appreciation of strengths, and recognition of blind spots. It was also a chance for the team to take time out from the hectic day-to-day environment and reflect together on how they work and on how to get the best out of each other.

Debbie had already delivered one-to-one feedback sessions with team members, so they had some MBTI awareness before the development day.

The session started with preference pair activities. This helped people to really get to know what different preferences looked and felt like, especially in the context of their work together as colleagues and as leaders of the organization. These activities stimulated engaging and in-depth discussions. They also sparked insights about some of the unintended effects on others of the behaviors associated with their different preferences.

## Solution

- Explore awareness and type differences
- Focus on resilience and stress

“ A better understanding of my peers' preferences and what situations look/feel like for them... has reinforced my sense of engagement to PACT (which was already high) and how lucky I am to work with such a fantastic group of people.

**Debbie Hardy,**  
Head of HR &  
Facilities, PACT

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The team also got a lot out of a rotating pairs activity using our Flip A Type Tip resource. This helped them to focus on the strengths and blind spots of their respective types and explore how they could use these insights to take their team working from good to great.

Building on their insights about the different types, the team learned about what happens to different types under pressure. With this knowledge, they saw how they could spot the signs of team members being under pressure. They could support each other to build resilience.

## Results

The activities and discussions enabled team members to recognize and appreciate the different and complementary styles in the team. Key session outputs included:

- identifying ways to make the most of these complementary styles, including how to make decisions in a more rounded way together
- raised awareness of when and how to adapt their styles to get the best out of each other and their teams
- being committed to take the session insights and turn them into a team charter

They also took away a number of actions focused on working even more effectively as a team. This included actions to:

- enable them to ease workloads
- delegate more proactively to the leaders in the wider leadership team
- continue to manage pressure and workloads going forwards

## Results

- Better understanding of stress reactions leading to improved interactions under pressure
- Increased motivation and inspiration among team members

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Chief Operating Officer Natausha van Vliet said, “The team had a really productive day...the consultant helped us understand each other more and we learned a lot.”

PACT CEO Jan Fishwick said, “We really appreciated our learning, insights and heightened awareness, all of which will serve us well as we continue to work together and lead this wonderful charity that we’re so proud to represent.”

“A better understanding of my peers’ preferences and what situations look/feel like for them,” is how Debbie Hardy described what she gained from the session, adding, “It has reinforced my sense of engagement to PACT (which was already high) and how lucky I am to work with such a fantastic group of people.”



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