The LIHNN AGM in Liverpool, 6th June

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I'm really pleased to be sharing my experience of the recent LIHNN AGM in Liverpool, my first event of this kind. I was amazed by the generosity of the event; pastries, an endless supply of tea, a fantastic lunch and the warm welcome from the organisers.

Prior to the event, we were each sent a couple of sample *Community Builder* activities to try out, from a deck of 52 cards designed by Julian Stodd. These cards, intended for team-building, aim to stimulate a conversation or a personal reflection, or offers an invitation to action.

I was at first a little perturbed by this seemingly "tick-box" community engagement exercise. However, one of my cards invited me to reach out to a colleague and tell them what I value about them. Finding myself writing an email to a member of my team, I became aware of how vulnerable I'd felt in composing it, so I brought this response with me to the discussion on the day. The conversation at the table allowed many people to share the awkwardness of the prompt they'd been given and highlighted the unseen barriers we experience between ourselves and others.

I then appreciated the purpose of the cards; if you engage with them, they push at your edges, showing you the peripheries of your comfort zone. So, it's no surprise to see them described on the Sea Salt Learning website as, "offering an action or provocation to guide you into new spaces of conversation".

Sea Salt Learning, I discovered, promotes a social leadership model, and Julian Stodd talks about us being in a 'social age'. This is very different from the post-industrial 'information age' or 'digital age' which I've recently been exploring through my Aberystwyth library course. Now, having come to the end of the Management Studies module, social leadership weaves lots of the old familiar threads together; those of "emotional intelligence", "self-awareness", "resilience" and "grit" creating something more intentional and meaningful. This exercise made me wonder whether "team" and "team building" and their token gestures have fallen out of fashion, to be replaced with "community" and "connection" in the most pragmatic sense.

So perhaps some of us may have received our community builder activity as a task to accomplish before the AGM, or maybe it sat, barely acknowledged, in an inbox - and that's okay. The discussion across the tables revealed that creating a supportive network neither happens overnight and nor is it easy: Taking courage to have open and honest communication, learning from feelings and being ok with vulnerability were the real, living themes that are echoed in current leadership and management literature.

This is a reminder that self-awareness is far more than navel-gazing – it's a series of small, daily acts that focus not just on the operational tasks or strategic goals, but the individuals and relationships involved in achieving them. In this time of ever-increasing connectivity to others,

Stodd says, we need to reconsider our interactions. Good advice, given that a third of our lives are made up of our work (if my very quick Google search is anything to go by).

By the way, it's worth checking out Julian Stodd's TED Talk, even if it's just to admire his rather magnificent beard:

Into The Social Age | Julian Stodd | TEDxQMU - YouTube

If this community builder reflection was focused on soft skills and right-sided brain activity, Dr Alan Davies' introduction to an emerging postgraduate certificate course on *Clinical Data Science* certainly balanced things out for the more quantitative among us. It is a three-year, part-time programme and with ten KLS-funded places, is a fantastic CPD opportunity.

This 60-credit applied data science blended learning programme is intended to empower healthcare professionals across the workforce, translating data and working better together for the benefit of patients. Having limped through secondary school Maths, Dr Davies' presentation had the potential to make me fall off my chair. His passion for statistical data was far removed from my own relationship with numbers, but it did make me reflect on our role in managing information and utilising data.

While information can be considered the facts offered or learned about a given thing, data is the raw material collected, examined, processed and transmitted to aid decision-making, so it was interesting to consider our role within the process translating data into information which is organised meaningfully to become knowledge. As Information professionals, we're one step removed from data, but I wondered whether this might change in future. Dr Davies talked about developing "data literacy" which suggests a skill that we all need and use in our roles to some extent, whether creating a spreadsheet, collating metrics and analysing user statistics in context. I shared this talk with a colleague, who mentioned that engaging with clinical data had been an aspect of a recent leadership course she had attended within our trust, used in informing plans for service improvement. Jen Stirrup, a Data Scientist, prefers the term "data fluency" in terms of adding meaning, so perhaps there's a bit more of a qualitative/quantitative balance to this than the "scary maths" that makes my brain freeze. Using both sides of the brain might not come naturally if like me, you have a Humanities background. Nevertheless, it is important to appreciate if not develop, within our role.

Having said all that, you might be passionate about data and wondering why I'm making such a fuss, in which case this course is a great developmental opportunity. Those interested can follow Dr Alan Davies on Twitter @AlanDav25216796.

What's wrong with the term data literacy? Here's an alternative - Jen Stirrup

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