

Demystifying Board Development

Workshop 3



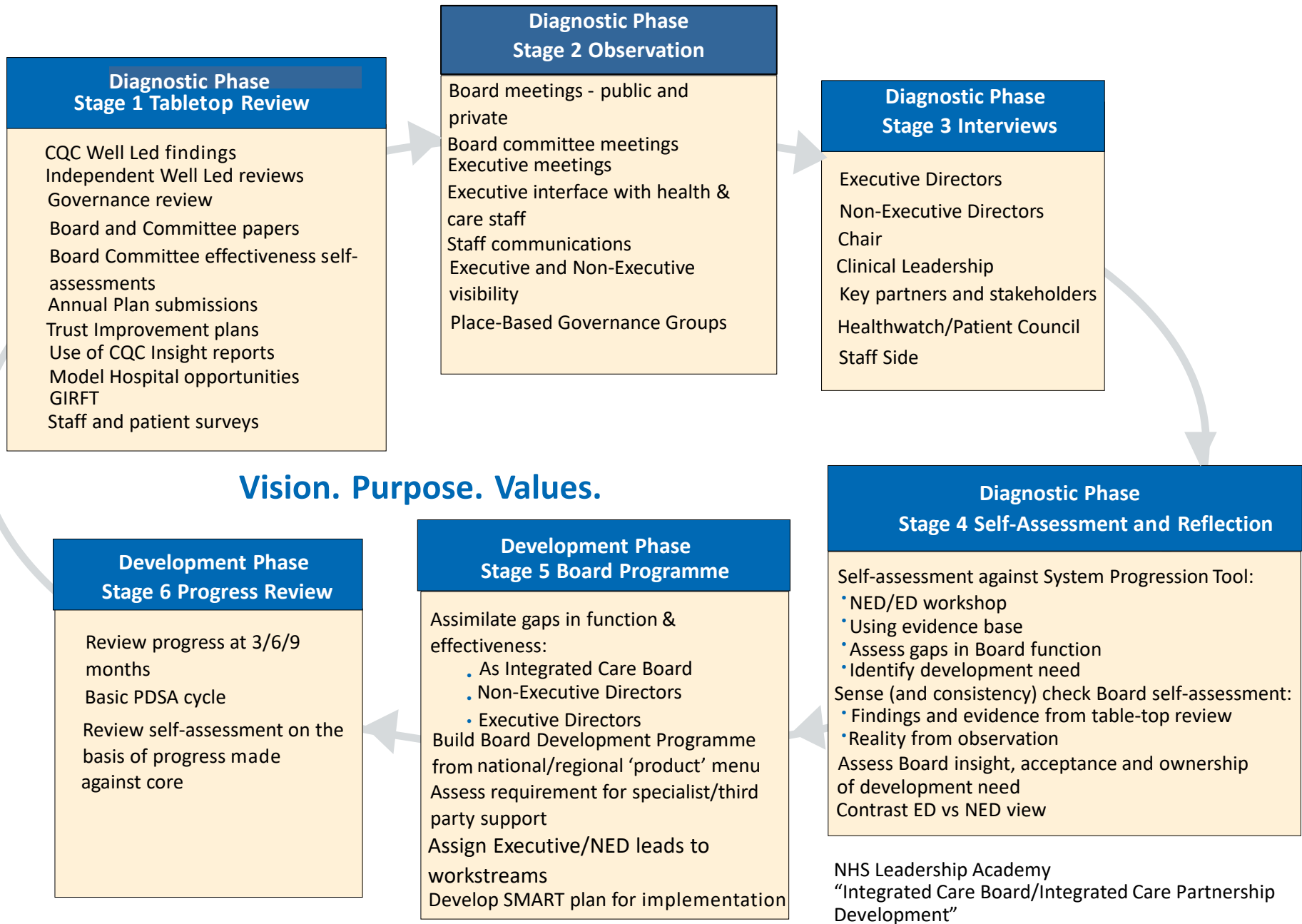
Demystifying board development workshops content

- 1 What is the current context for health and care board development?**
- 2 What is health and care board development?**
- 3 What do good health and care board dynamics look like and what can hinder them?**
- 4 How do we know what is needed?**
- 5 How do we design what is needed?**
- 6 How do we find the right facilitator?**
- 7 How do we support and/or deliver board development?**



How do we know what is needed?

Comprehensive board discovery process



Chair/CEO conversation

1. How is the board functioning at the moment?
2. What is going well?
3. What could be better?
4. What is the nature of the relationships between board members and how does power play out between them?
5. What are some of the behavioural and group dynamic challenges?
6. How is the board doing in relation to individual micro behaviours (these could be scored out of 10 in the initial conversation, then by all the other board members later in the diagnostic process)
7. What is the board culture like? It may be helpful to include some of the questions created by Sher and Brissett
8. What are their hopes and fears about the board development outcomes?
9. What are their hopes and fear about the board development process?
10. What are their views about the right kind of facilitator?

Individual micro behaviours

- Operating reflexively
- Working with process as well as content
- Listening
- Being curious and facilitating others
- Engaging with difference
- Understanding power
- Possessing and demonstrating emotional intelligence
- Building strong relationships
- Communicating clearly
- Embracing conflict
- Knowing how groups and organisations work
- Recognising how change happens
- Generating ideas
- Systems thinking
- Making robust decisions and turning them into action

Board cultural diagnostic questions

Is the culture of our Board open or stultifying?

Is it stimulating or numbing?

Inspiring or de-motivating?

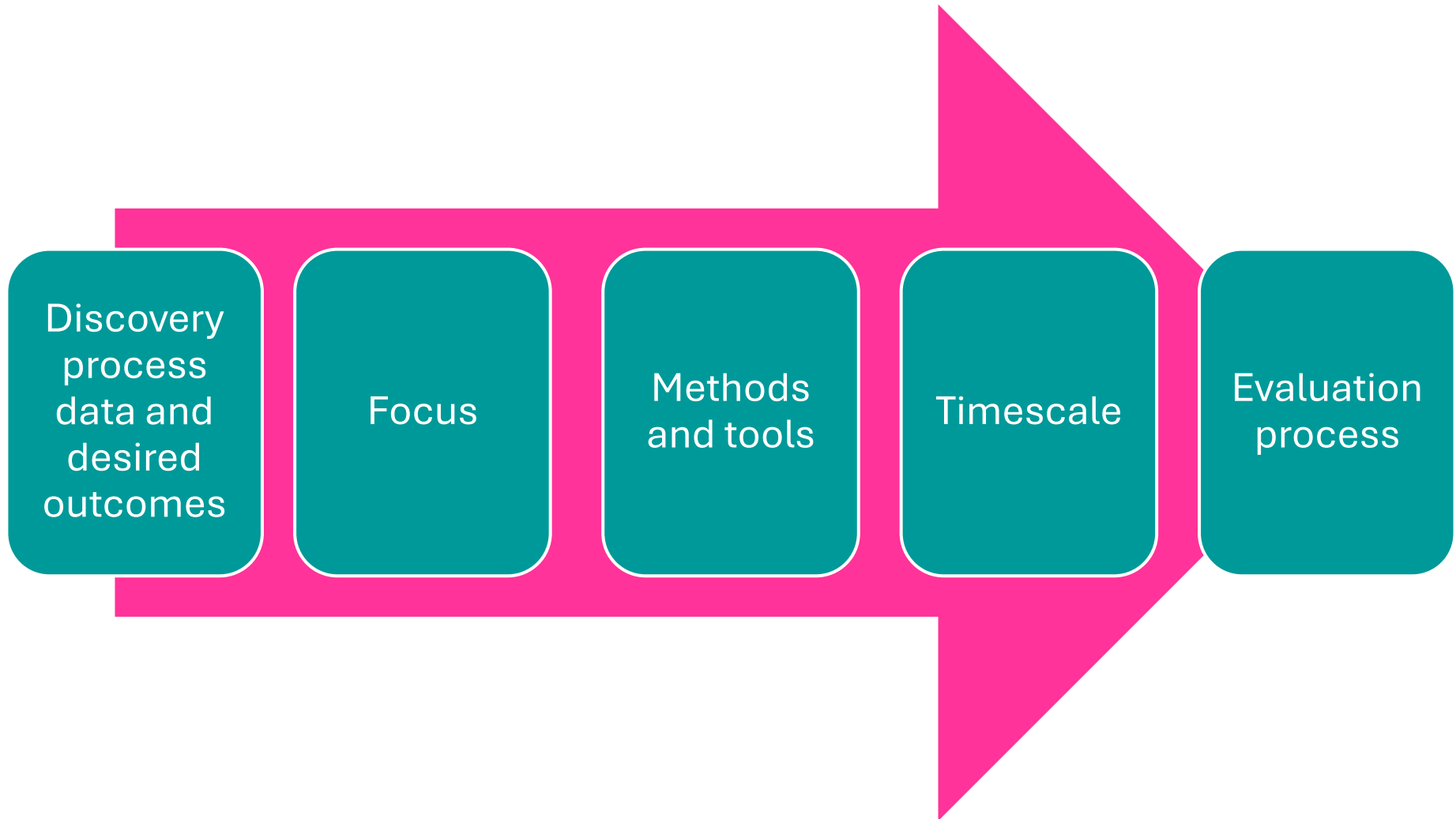
Supportive or controlling?

Rigid or flexible?

Imaginative or reactionary?

Is the Board a custodian or directing? Or a Board of guardianship, inspection or policing?

Specification framework



Reason	Discovery process	Timing	Focus
Good relationships but want to make them even better	Short	One off intervention	Tool based
Average relationships and want to improve them	Short	One off intervention	Tool based
Poor relationship and Chair/CEO can identify specific people or ways of behaving that are problematic	Medium	More than one-off intervention	Could be tool based but probably won't be
Poor relationships but Chair/CEO can't identify specific people or ways of behaving that are problematic	Long	Long process	Not tool based
Lots of conflict	Long	Long process	Not tool based

Evaluation

Evaluation of board development is notoriously challenging

Traditional benchmarking approaches rely on either comparisons with other boards which can be hard to assess, or comparisons between self-reported data at the start and end of interventions, which can be difficult because board members are often resistant to being totally honest at the beginning of interventions because of existing dynamics

These complexities need to be discussed before the work starts so that an agreed evaluation approach can be taken

First session

- Create rules of engagement which explore the potentially inhibiting issues of power in the group
- Play back some of the diagnostic themes
- Clarify the purpose of the intervention
- Explain the approach that will be taken
- Review the session experience and co-creating the next session

Subsequent sessions content

- Exploration of the diagnostic themes one by one
- Board members complete questionnaires about their functioning then process the results of their experiences and views collectively
- Experiential exercises then exploration of the results with them
- Reflexive reviews during board meetings to enable them to reflect on their dynamics in real-time
- Board to board feedback
- Tools to help to explore specific behaviours and dynamics (as a means to an end in relation to the conversations they trigger, rather than an end in themselves)

Focus (desirable micro behaviours)	Board development tools
Operating reflexively	360 degree feedback and “On the Spot” check ins
Working with process as well as content	Practising reflexive duality
Listening	Listening exercises
Being curious and facilitating others	Developing a coaching approach
Engaging with difference	MBTI
Understanding power	Power mapping
Possessing and demonstrating emotional intelligence	Emotional intelligence questionnaires
Building strong relationships	Sharing values, drivers, prouds, sorries, hopes and fears
Communicating clearly	Experiential sessions
Embracing conflict	Thomas Killman and MBTI
Knowing how groups and organisations work	Belbin Team Roles, Firo, SDI, Paradigms of organisations
Recognising how change happens	Models of change analysis
Generating ideas	Creative methods
Systems thinking	X/Y game
Making robust decisions and turning them into action	Step Activity State – seven-step model

Risk...

- Given the scope, complexity and volume of work and the roles, organisational allegiances, diverse characteristics, personal styles and historical influences of the members, the group power dynamics are more complex in boards than in other teams
- The power dynamics can make board members reluctant to engage in board development processes and resistant to speaking about anything that makes them feel vulnerable or at risk
- The risk felt by individual board members is often very real as is the risk to the whole board, the facilitator and the commissioner – because the stakes are high in this type of work
- The risk to boards is that if an intervention doesn't go well, their relationships and dynamic could get worse instead of better which could lead to a reduction in their performance
- The risk to facilitators is that just at the point when board members are starting to have honest conversations, some individuals or the whole group may feel too threatened by the exposure to carry on and so withdraw, blaming the facilitator for a process that isn't working for them
- The risk to commissioners is that if interventions aren't perceived to be successful by the board, they are blamed for undertaking an inaccurate diagnostic or finding an unsuitable facilitator

