

Thematic Action Learning (TAL[®]) – Futures and Foresight

The anticipation of the future can play an important role in the safeguarding and improvement of an organisation. Futures and Foresight is the interdisciplinary study of the future, drawing on a growing range of methods and techniques that allow consideration of possible, plausible, probable, preferable and potentially creatable long term futures. However, since the future is unpredictable, the purpose of futures and foresight is not and cannot be the prediction of the future, but rather its assistance to the decision-making process. This is the aim of this programme.

Using the process of action learning, a group of peers meet together in a group of 3-6 to consider the future. The process works as follows:

1. A group of 3-6 people meet for 2 hours. At first meeting, the purpose of the programme will be expressed in terms of the horizon of time for futures and foresight consideration. The assumption questions about the future are surfaced.
2. In addition, tools of futures and foresight will be introduced to deepen understanding, before actions are considered against assumption questions.
3. The group meets 6 weeks later to review actions taken so that learning can be articulated and lessons for the present can be considered. A further tool of futures and foresight will then be introduced and applied. Actions will be determined.
4. The process is repeated and on each occasion further tools of futures and foresight will introduced and applied.
5. A cloud-based support area containing key readings and ideas underpins the whole process.

At appropriate points, the group will review progress and determine how their work needs to be disseminated and impact on decision-making.

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