Networks – how they support women leaders

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The King's Fund
Mixed picture of female leadership gives hope for future

The findings of the HSJ survey on female health leaders, run in association with the King’s Fund, are a cause for both optimism and concern. Analysis by Claire Read
Who responded?

- 1,075 responses
- 90% women
- 46% clinical background
- 63% had children
- Breadth of organisations (acute sector, community, primary care, CCGs, CSUs)
Survey - Enablers

✓ Good managers (male and female)
✓ Enabling organisational culture
✓ Peer support
✓ Female role models and mentors
✓ NETWORKS
✓ Coaching
✓ Flexible working
✓ Access to leadership development opportunities
✓ Local secondment opportunities

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Why women only…?

“If you were a racing driver, you would take your car to the mechanic who specialised in your sort of engine, so that you could be in the best possible shape for the race”

(Kathryn Bishop) Said Business School
A room of our own..A place where
(Stacey Gordon, former President of the National Association of Women MBAs)

“we can nurture relationships in a way that feels comfortable, a venue where we make the rules, and a private space that empowers us”

“a minority knows with certainty they are allowed to congregate - removes the uncertainty that exists when they walk into a room”

“we are judged less – not by our actions, our speech, our tone of voice or our discussion of families in a business setting”
Survey - Barriers

Culture:
- Old boys’ network
- Nepotism
- Prejudice
- Macho, pace-setting environment
- Unhelpful attitudes to women leaders

Many networking opportunities are organised around male interests .....
Survey - Leading with authority

- Over 50% felt female healthcare leaders under greater pressure to prove themselves than their male counterparts.

- “women need to earn authority and trust, which is more naturally granted to men”

- “As a women you need to establish your authority, you can’t assume it”

- “Developing an authoritative style when needed without being stereotyped is more difficult”

- Women feel pressure to act in a “macho” way in order to be considered part of the group.

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Why women only...?

▷ Clear and growing demand for women-only development
▷ Easier for people to learn when they feel comfortable
▷ Collaboration, teamwork and camaraderie
▷ Free dialogue and transparency
▷ Atmosphere to relax and develop trust
Networks abound..

In Health:
› Women in surgery
› Women in MH special interest group
› Medical Women’s Federation
› Network of women chairs

In education, the church, engineering, law, police, civil service, prison

In public, private and third sector – regional and national

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Purpose

- Informal discussion, exploration of ideas
- Personal and professional development
- Mutual support, advice and guidance
- Share resources
- Influence policy
- Understand and raise the profile of the issues facing women
- Encourage attitude change
- Increase representation at senior level
- Recognition and fair treatment
- Share experiences and learn together
The power of social networking....

Karen Castille (@KarenCastille)
28/05/2014 13:09
2 informative sessions on supporting women leaders at #confed2014 Hear from @HartleyNicola @CahillT1 @kandola8 others & of course the floor!

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