Hepatitis C: teamwork at work

June 6, 2015 By Grace Campbell

I've written a lot about the teams that keep the Grace Show on the road - friends, family, online friends.

I've skated over my work colleagues. Not because they aren't awesome and amazing. Not because they don't help and support me. More because I tend to compartmentalise work and home for the sake of my sanity. I didn't do that for a long time and I'd find myself still at work at 8:00pm, when everyone had left three or four hours ago.

I'm going to bust open the compartments today.

It's an absolute certainty that I would not be in one piece without the support of my work colleagues. They've supported my misson to find treatment for hepatitis C. They've understood when I have needed to be away. They've even been able to overlook or manage my brain fog and distraction.

The secretary at work has picked up many extra responsibilities with me working part time. Things we'd normally do together, or at least in consultation with each other, she has taken on. She doesn't ring me on my days off work, respecting that I am off work because I need to be. She manages appointments, ensures a flow of communication to other staff and generally is irreplacable.

The second in charge at work has been vital. He has stepped up to take on ownership of some aspects of the organisaton's management. He has talked me off the ledge, dealt with more than one melt down, made unpopular suggestions ("Do you think perhaps you need more time off work?"

Throughout all of this - me working part time, a busy work place, many management issues, much structural change to be managed as a side effect of state-wide reforms - we have managed to keep our leadership team pretty intact.

Of course the team has widened. With me not there as much, the work needs to be shared among others. This is a time of distributed leadership. We've always leant that way in our workplace, but this has meant people have to be even more willing generally to step up to the plate.

The other executive member of the team and I manage this fairly challenging time with a few strategies.

I've made my weaknesses perfectly clear. He knows my memory is a bit dodgy. He knows I get tired easily. I've also warned him about "riba rage".

We communicate often, formally and informally. He knows I would only ring after work hours if it is important and I know the same, so we always pick up each other's phone calls.

Our communication is not limited to phone conversations. We also leave each other notes detailing what needs to happen, we have a large planning white board and EVERYTHING is written on it and we hot-desk in the office.

Most importantly, I know he has my back and I trust him.

I couldn’t do my job without everyone there playing a part, no matter how small. I’m lucky, they make me look good.

The great thing is, when this is all over there will still be a job for me. I haven’t had to step down, retire or resign. That is a price beyond rubies.

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