

Sunday 22nd March 2020

The Stark Reality...The Perfect Storm

To you all,

If we are doing 'battle' trying to 'defeat' and are at 'war' with COVID-19, then why are we sending our 'troops' to a battlefield without protection...

...Would we send the military to fight our 'enemy' without bulletproof vests?

Would we send the bomb disposal squad to defuse a bomb without the right equipment?

Would we send riot Police to protests without riot gear?

Would we send Fireman to put out fires without water and protective clothing?

The short answer is NO we wouldn't! Why? Because they are the very people we will need again and again when these things happen.

So, why oh why are we sending thousands of health professionals to 'battle' everyday without the right protective equipment...or the 'weapons' they need for this 'battle' this isn't just about protecting themselves but a matter of survival for their patients. This isn't just about professionals in hospitals and Paramedics, this is about Health Visitors and Community Nurses who are going into people's houses and will be called upon to take on more and more in the coming weeks,...this isn't just about now in this unprecedented 'battlefield'. The suffering and disease that filled health professionals minds, hearts and energy haven't suddenly disappeared because of COVID-19, they is still there and will continue long after these few months take their toll...the question we should all be asking ourselves is will the health professional workforce still be there...how many will die from the virus and how many will be suffering from PTSD from being unable to effectively do their job because of the lack of equipment, staff and resources? How many will be battling their guilt that they contracted the virus at work and passed it on to a love one?

After years of underfunding and being taken advantage of how much more do you expect health professionals and the health service as a whole to cope with?

This is one part of the storm...

The other part is what is happening in people's minds, relationships and communities... for the last 10-20 years we have been encouraged, coerced and convinced through government 'initiatives', advertising campaigns and our own egos, that we should place more value on aiming for a higher wage, going out, buying a new kitchen, car, house or having another holiday, over time reading with our children, looking after our elderly, taking time in our communities and sheltering our homeless. And yet thousands now face losing their jobs, we're not allowed out or to travel...as a society we have been operating for ourselves as individuals or individual family units. So, now when the government tries to create change in this mentality, individuals and families see this as a threat ... and what do people do when they feel threatened....they panic, we react emotionally instead of rationally, scared for our survival. So, because our sense of selves and family have been built on things rather than time, that is what people reach for first...resulting in panicked purchasing...and when the media and government keep displaying pictures of empty shelves and the need for tighter and tighter controls on a daily basis people panic again and again...they can't get out of their survival fight/flight mode to stop, think, process and understand before making a decision...we are all like children 'misbehaving' and yet we all know the more a parent/ carer raises their voice to a child who isn't doing what they've been asked, the more the child panics inside and situation escalates rather than resolves.

And so...

When the government is using terminology suggesting the public should care and worry about the NHS...(which is true,) we have to remember what the public have witnessed over the last 10-20 years when it comes to the government 'caring' and 'looking after' our NHS...they have seen the government underspend and understaff at all levels. They have heard time and time again politicians dismiss Doctors, Nurses and NHS leaders when they've raised concerns over staffing, equipment and morale. So why when people are in their state of fight/flight and survival would individuals be thinking of those who all this time the government has mistreated, insulted and disregarded...they won't!

By the government telling us how we must all do 'this' or 'that' otherwise the NHS will be overwhelmed, they are creating a reason for when in 6 months time they are asked for answers...'well the public didn't adhere to social distancing rules' they'll say...they will forget the part they played, by not contact tracing and testing ... even just yesterday I know of someone who flew back from having been in quarantine for 5 days in a hotel where there was a confirmed case....did they have to provide their contact details on arrival...NO, were they swabbed...NO, were they advised to self isolate for 14 days...NO, they were free to go on public transport and are expected back at work (in the care industry) this week.

They won't agree that years of targets, under funding, low staff morale, oh and the small matter of Brexit resulting in thousands of European nurses leaving played a far greater part in what has and is unfolding.

So yes we all have a part to play but when 'parents' are saying one thing, whilst having done the opposite for the last 10-20 years of their 'children's' lives, why are we expecting anything other than what is happening... luckily not all 'children and young people' have been listening to their 'parents' and have been working tirelessly against the tide of cuts and ignorance using their creativity, innovation and resilience to form groups and support those in need ...but now the whole world is in need and change needs to happen at the 'top' to support what those at the 'bottom' have somehow managed to keep doing all these years.

What the government needs to do is be a grown up and admit the part they're playing in all this...not to create blame but to create change. The government should accept it made mistakes at the very outset of what's unfolded and take steps to rectify them wherever possible. Maybe then, as a nation we'll be able to stop a moment and reflect on our own mistakes and rectify those too...and yes we can do this by ourselves but we are not in this alone we are in this together and for collective change we need to know that those at the top care enough to admit and address their mistakes...as I said not to create blame but to create change.

To all those who read this far...I will just say this...hang on...hang on to those you love, care for those you can, remember those you've lost and do whatever you can every day to create positive change wherever you are.

The coming months won't be easy so just hang on....whatever it is and whatever unfolds, time does not stand still... this too will pass.