Success Factor Modeling for Effective Healthcare
Finding what works in an effective healthcare ecosystem

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At the beginning of 2020 we presented the first results of our study on the success factors in the healthcare ecosystem. The study was launched in Italy in June 2019 and was conducted by using the *Success Factor Modeling* (SFM) methodology developed by Robert and John Dilts. This study marks the first time the Success Factor Modeling methodology has been applied to the field of healthcare.

Our fundamental question was:

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES THAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE IN CREATING A SUCCESSFUL RESULT IN THE FIELD OF HEALTHCARE?

This has been an especially significant question since the onset of the global COVID19 pandemic. The goals of the study were to:

- identify the key factors associated with successful performances in the different areas of the healthcare ecosystem

- map and organize key success factors into a working model

- develop new assessment tools and training courses suitable to spread those key success factors to others and support their application

Following SFM methodology, we looked at the relationship between:

1. **Outcomes** – the types of results that characterize effective healthcare

2. **Actions** – the particular behaviors and actions that produced those desired outcomes

3. **Mindset** – the inner capabilities, priorities and motivations that drive and guide the actions required to achieve a successful result

Using an online survey, we asked the various actors of the different areas of the healthcare ecosystem (clinics, healthcare professionals, institutions, universities and postgraduate schools, scientific societies, patient, patient and caregiver associations, assistance organizations and health services ...) how they defined "success" in the Healthcare System by asking them to think of real examples of successful cases in their context, according to their perspective. We then asked them to identify the key actions and characteristics of mindset that produced and supported those successful examples.

Defining Successful Healthcare Outcomes

Our first survey question was:

> **How do you define SUCCESS in the healthcare field?**
> **Think about and reflect upon one or several cases that you consider to be good examples**
> **of success in healthcare from your perspective in your role and occupation.**

We then asked respondents to select from a list 46 statements the outcomes that most fit with the example(s) they had chosen. We chose these statements by taking cues from the WHO

(World Health Organization), CMS (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) and the IHI (Institute for Healthcare Improvement) triple aim.

Success, for the majority of responses involved outcomes in which 1) all the actors are involved 2) relationship and interaction between team members is very good, (3) doctor-patient communication is clear and effective, 4) the Health Provider Organization is efficient and effective and (5) where each team member knows roles and tasks.
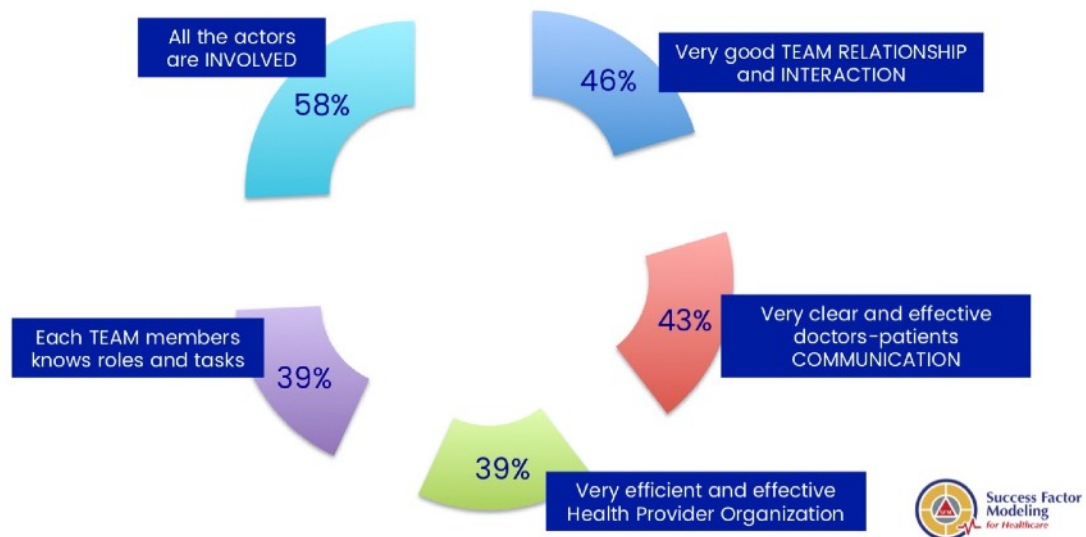

For the model, we categorized these statements in the following way:

- **Engagement** – *all the actors are involved*
- **Empowerment** – *relationship and interaction between team members is very good*
- **Effectiveness** – *doctor-patient communication is clear and effective*
- **Efficiency** – *the Health Provider Organization is efficient and effective*
- **Expertise** – *each team member knows roles and tasks*

We chose star points in red to represent these categories.

Outcomes Key Success Factors

Expertise
Each team member knows roles and tasks

Engagement
All the actors are involved

Empowerment
Very good relationship and interaction between team members

Efficiency
Very efficient and effective Health Provider Organization

Effectiveness
Very clear and effective physician-patient communication
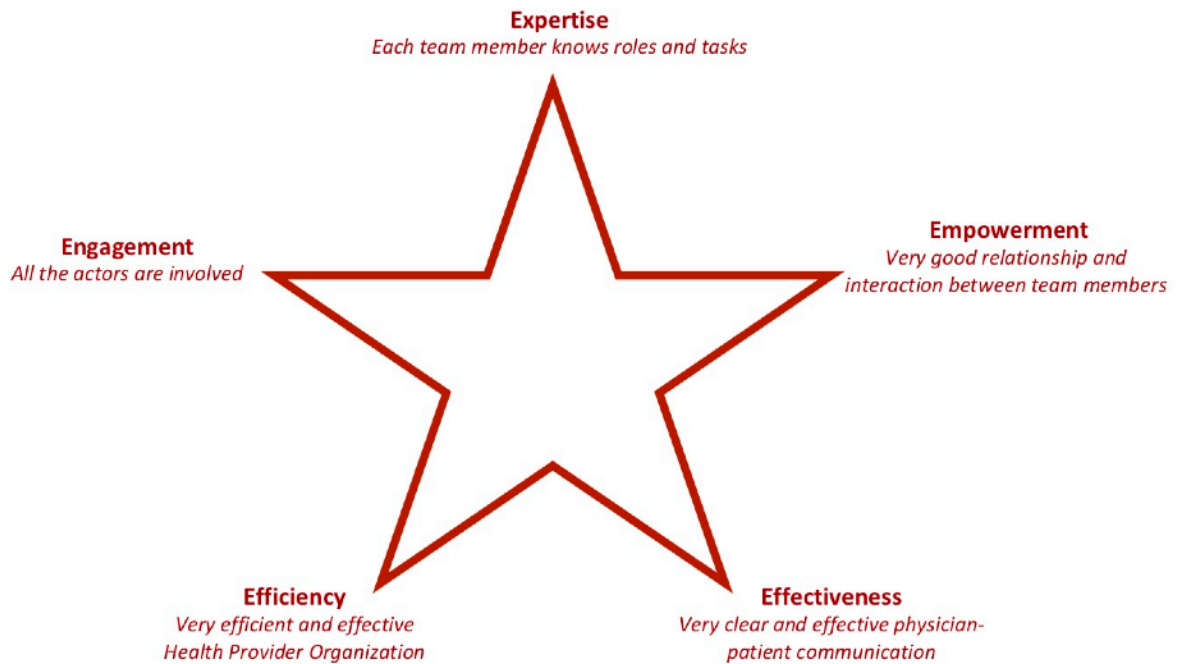
It was significant to observe that these outcomes are evenly distributed between those related to the *relationship* between actors and those related to the *tasks* that need to be accomplished, with a slight emphasis more to *relationship*.
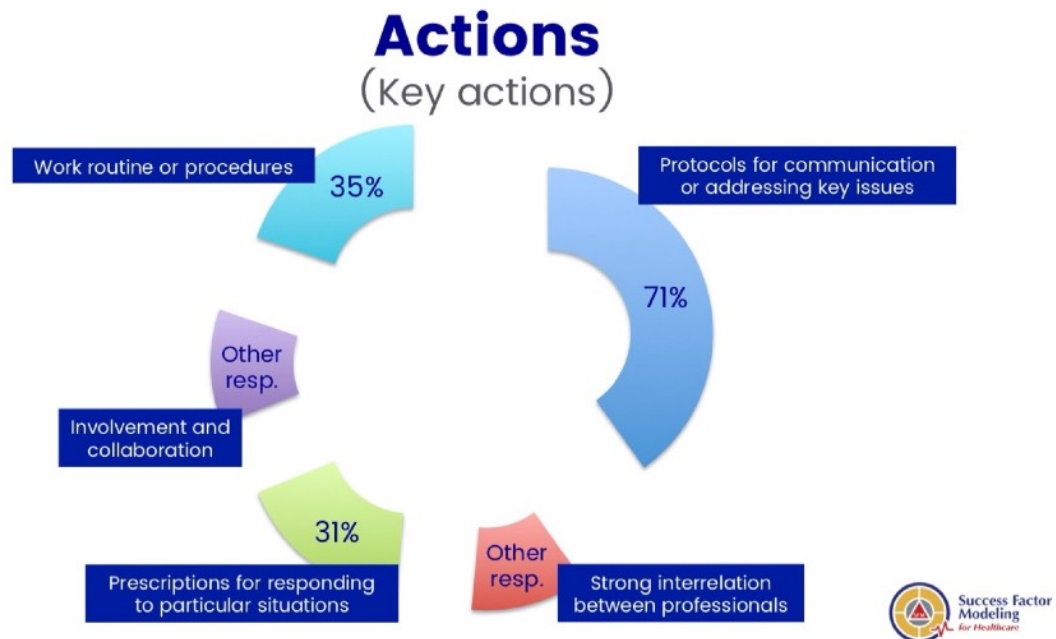

Relationship

Empowerment 46%
Very good relationship and interaction between team members

Engagement 58%
All the actors are involved

Effectiveness 43%
Very clear and effective physician-patient communication

Expertise 39%
Each team member knows roles and tasks

Efficiency 39%
Very efficient and effective Health Provider Organization

Task

Distribution of Effective Healthcare Outcomes Between Task and Relationship

Defining Successful Healthcare Actions

To determine the key **actions** that produced the effective healthcare outcomes, we asked:

> **What are the most important actions that you think facilitated the successful performance you have identified?**

The top responses were: 1) protocols for communicating and addressing key issues**,** 2) strong interrelation between professionals**,** 3) prescriptions for responding to particular situations, 4) involvement and collaboration**,** 5) routine work and procedures.

We categorized these actions in the following way:

- **Communicate** – protocols for communicating and addressing key issues
- **Care** – strong interrelation between professionals
- **Co-Create** – prescriptions for responding to particular situations
- **Collaborate** – involvement and collaboration
- **Clarify** – work routines and procedures

We chose to represent these actions as blue wedges inside the star of outcomes. We placed the actions most related to producing a particular outcome in the wedge produced by that point of the star.

Actions Key Success Factors
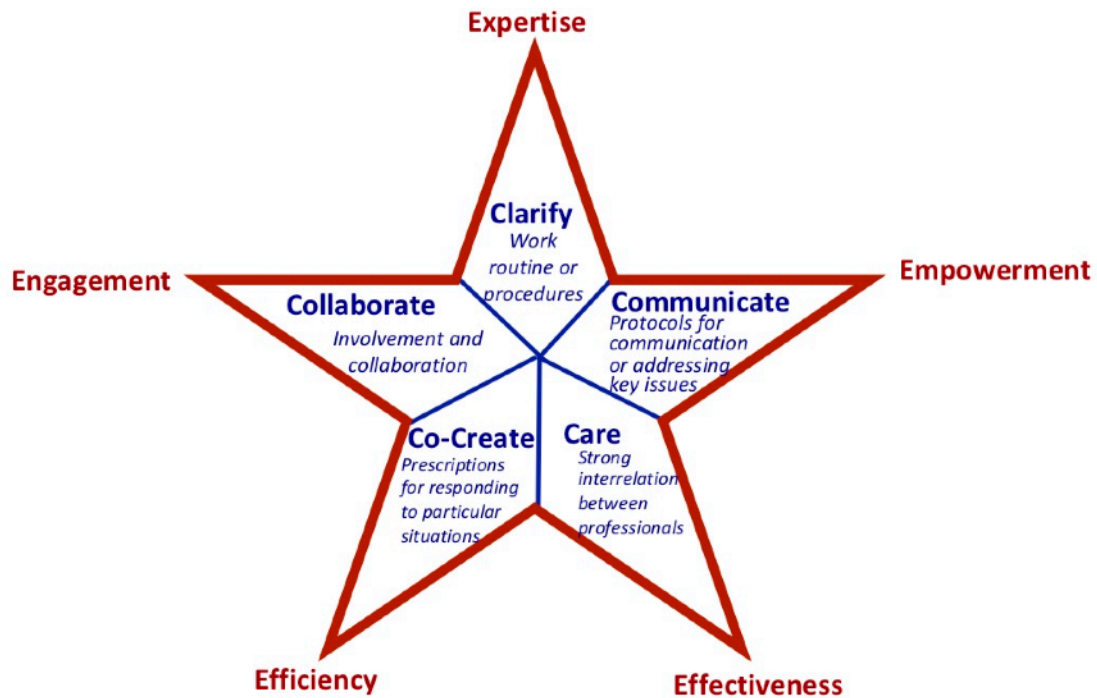
It is interesting to note that these actions are also evenly distributed between those related to the *relationship* between actors and those related to the *tasks* that need to be accomplished.

Distribution of Effective Healthcare Actions Between Task and Relationship
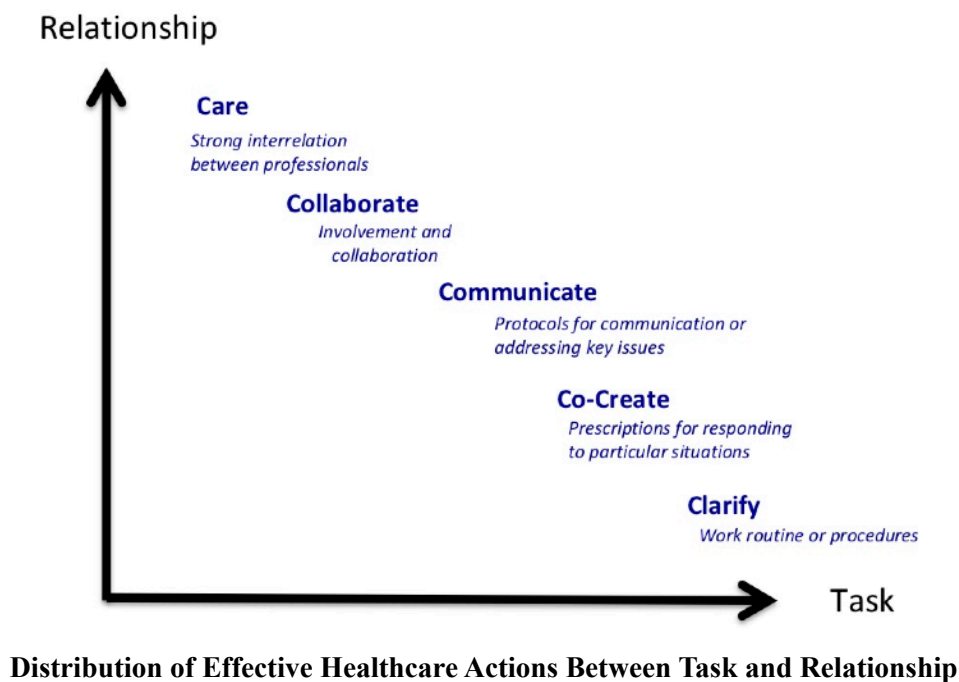
Defining the Key Characteristics of Mindset that Produce Successful Healthcare Actions

Regarding **Mindset** we merged principle results relating to **capabilities**, **values and beliefs**, **identity** and **vision**.

For **skills and competences** the question was:

> **What are the most important *skills and capabilities* that you think facilitated the successful performance you have identified?**

The most prevalent answers were 1) **communication skills,** 2) **problem solving skills**, 3) **emotional intelligence**, 4) **interpersonal skills** and 5) **self-awareness**.

For **Values and Beliefs** the question was:

> **What were the most important *values and beliefs* (priorities, mandates and motivations) that supported and reinforced the successful performance you have identified?**

The key values and beliefs were identified as 1) **skills and updates are essential**, 2) **patients come first**, 3) **we are responsible for our own success**, 4) **it is important for us to innovate** and 4) **we are capable to adapt**. We clustered the beliefs that supported particular capabilities in the following way:
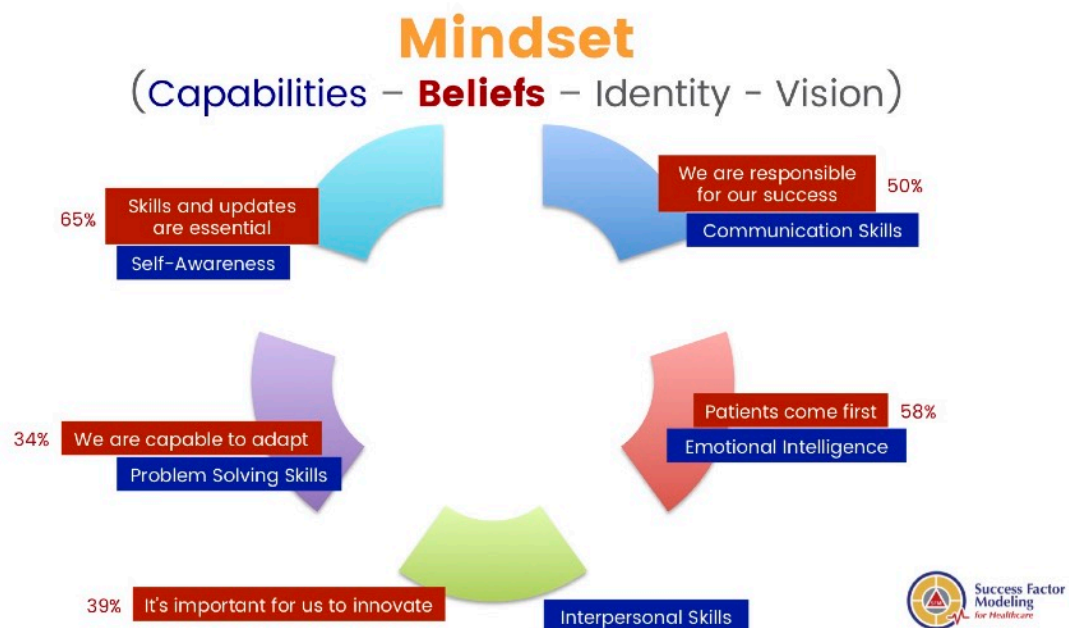
Concerning **Identity** the question was:

> **How would you characterize the most important aspects of *identity, mission or role* that contributed to creating the successful performance you have identified?**

The main aspects of identity that emerged were those of 1) **Catalysts**, i.e. the activators of change, 2) **Connectors**, i.e., generators of energy and links between people, 3) **Co-creators**, i.e., encouragers of collective realizations, **Builders**, i.e., constructors something new and concrete and 4) **Enablers**, i.e., facilitators of transformation. We clustered these aspects of identity in the following way:
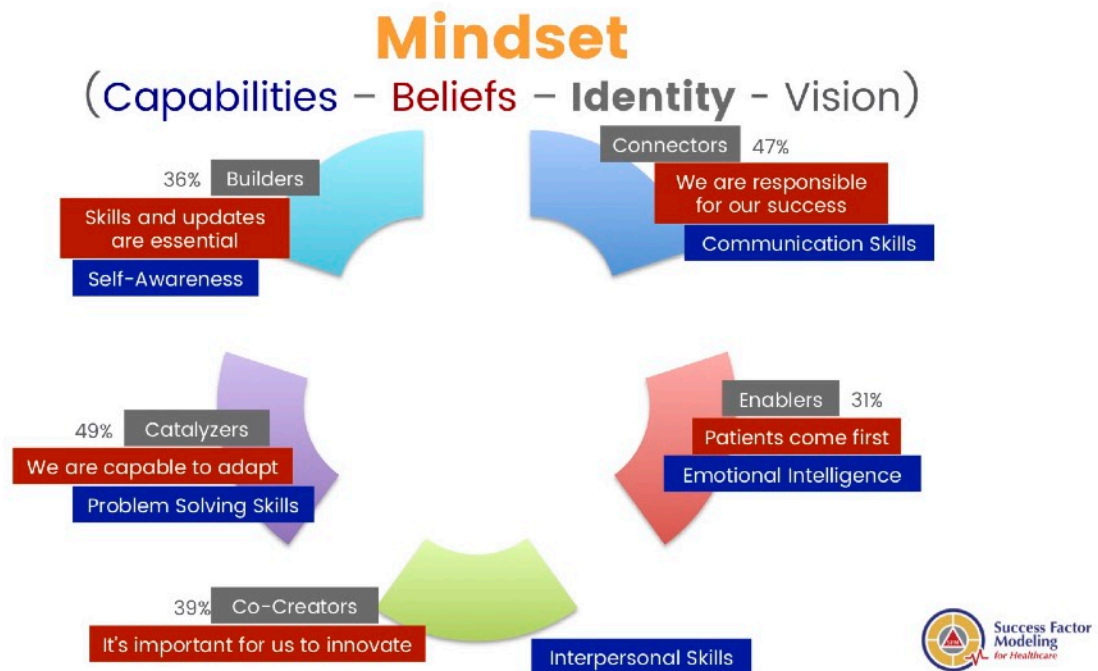
At the level of **vision**, the question was:

> **How would you characterize the most relevant aspects of *vision and purpose* that contributed to creating the successful performance you have identified?**

The most important aspects of vision and purpose were about 1) **effectively overcoming challenges and difficulties**, 2) **enhancing patients' ability to face illness with courage and hope**, 3) **raising awareness**, 4) **encouraging generative interactions** and 5) **increasing positive experiences in the healthcare field**.

Mindset
### (Capabilities – Beliefs – Identity - Vision)
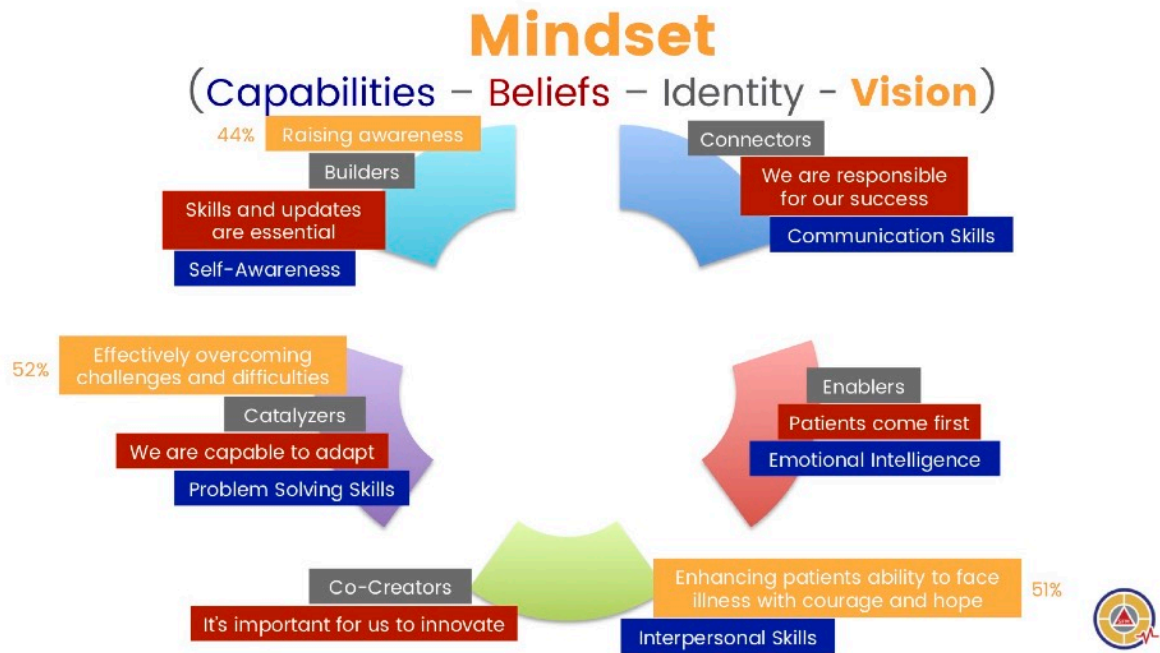
We synthesized and categorized all of these various aspects of mindset in the following way:

- The **Builder** mindset emphasizes Competence: *Skills and updates are essential –* promotes Self-Awareness

- The **Connector** mindset emphasizes Connection: *We are responsible for our success –* promotes Communication Skills

- The **Enabler** mindset emphasizes Compassion: *Patients come first –* promotes Emotional Intelligence

- The **Co-Creator** mindset emphasizes Contribution: *Enhancing patients' abilities to face illness with courage and hope –* promotes Interpersonal Skills

- The **Catalyzer** mindset emphasizes Catalysis: *Effectively overcoming challenges and difficulties –* promotes Problem Solving Skills.

In our model of effective healthcare, we represented these key characteristics of *mindset* as a yellow circle surrounding and supporting the actions that had been identified as crucial to producing successful healthcare outcomes. The **Builder** mindset, for example, supports the actions of clarifying and collaborating in order to increase engagement and expertise. The **Connector** mindset promotes the actions of clarifying and communicating in order to enhance expertise and empowerment. The **Enabler** mindset engages the actions of communicating and caring in order to increase empowerment and effectiveness. The **Co-Creator** mindset supports the actions of co-creating and caring in order to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency. The **Catalyzer** mindset engages the actions of co-creating and collaborating in order to create more efficiency and engagement.

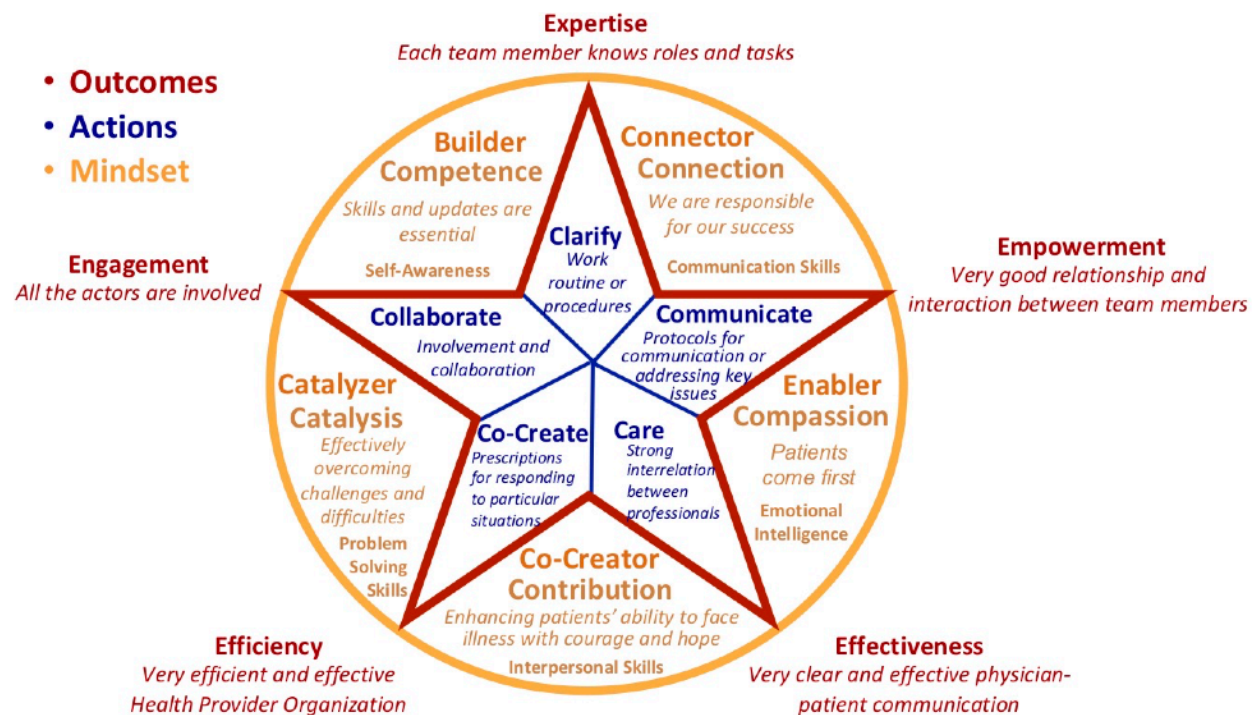# Mindset Key Success Factors
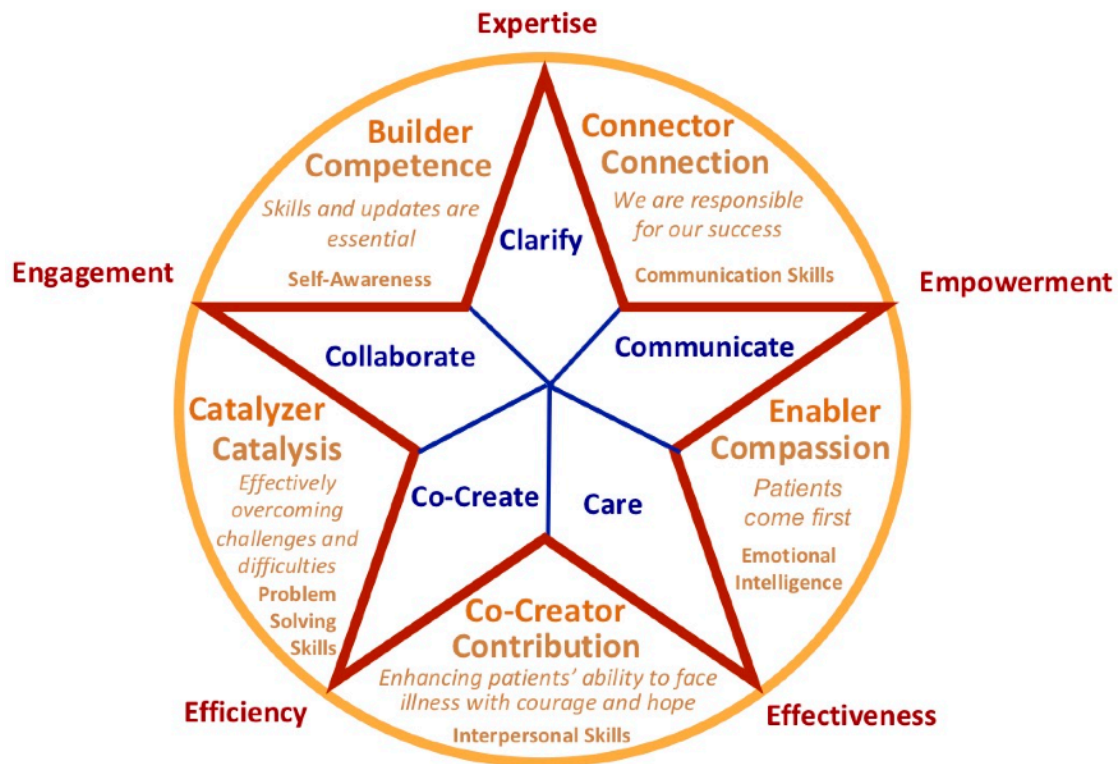
Not surprisingly, these various characteristics of mindset are also evenly distributed between those emphasizing the *relationship* between actors and those directed toward the *tasks* that need to be accomplished.
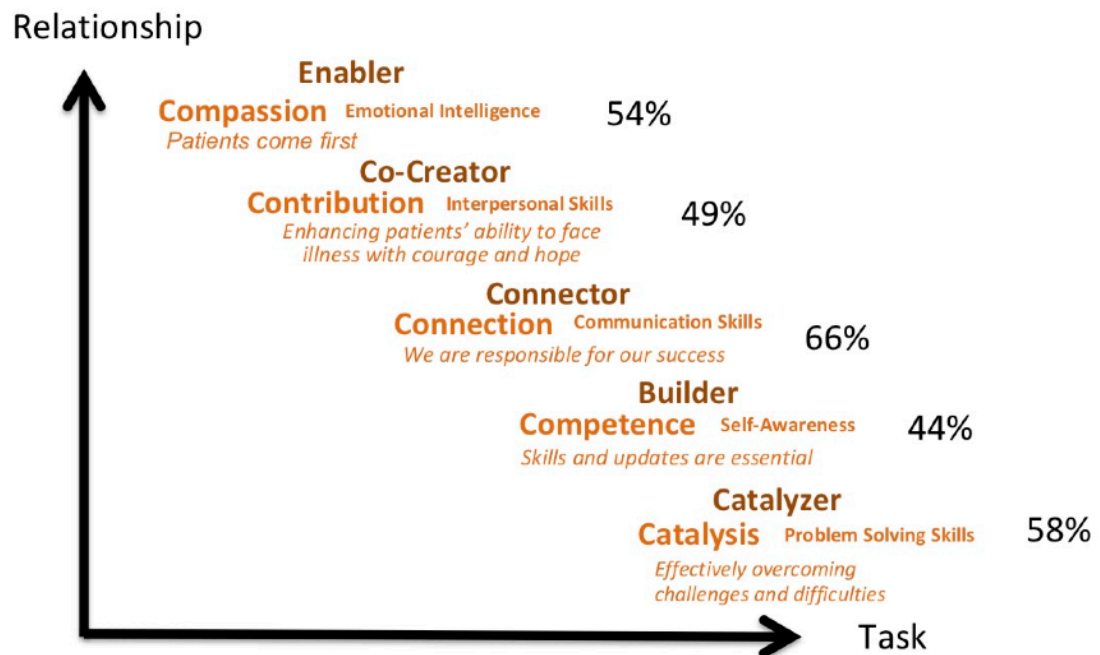
Distribution of Effective Healthcare Mindset Characteristics Between Task and Relationship

SFM for Effective Healthcare Model

In summary, the SFM for Effective Healthcare Model is a synthesis of all these results, showing which actions are most relevant for particular outcomes and which aspects of mindset are most connected to key actions and outcomes.


The various clusters of success factors (mindset–actions–outcomes) are evenly distributed between those emphasizing the *relationship* between actors and those directed toward the *tasks* that need to be accomplished.

**Distribution of Effective Healthcare Success Factors Between Task and Relationship**

Next Steps

The study is in its second year in Italy and has completed its first year in France and Greece. These new results have confirmed and enriched our preliminary findings, affirming the robustness of our fundamental categories.
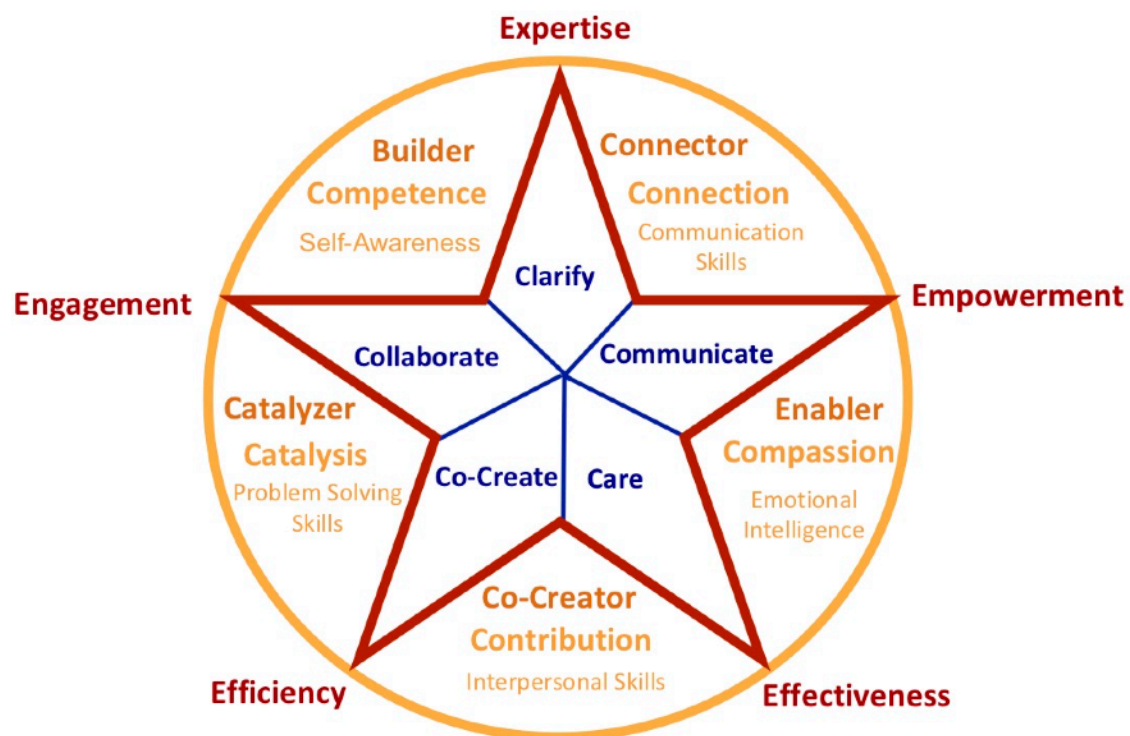
We are completing the development of an assessment tool that can identify areas for improvement within different parts of the healthcare ecosystem. We have also created a series of mindset training program to help actors within the healthcare system to improve their performance and success. The mindset trainings are organized around achieving each one of the five key healthcare outcomes.

The tool helps users within the healthcare ecosystem to define their present state and desired state with respect key healthcare outcomes. It then shows which areas of mindset and actions need to be improved in order to increase their success.
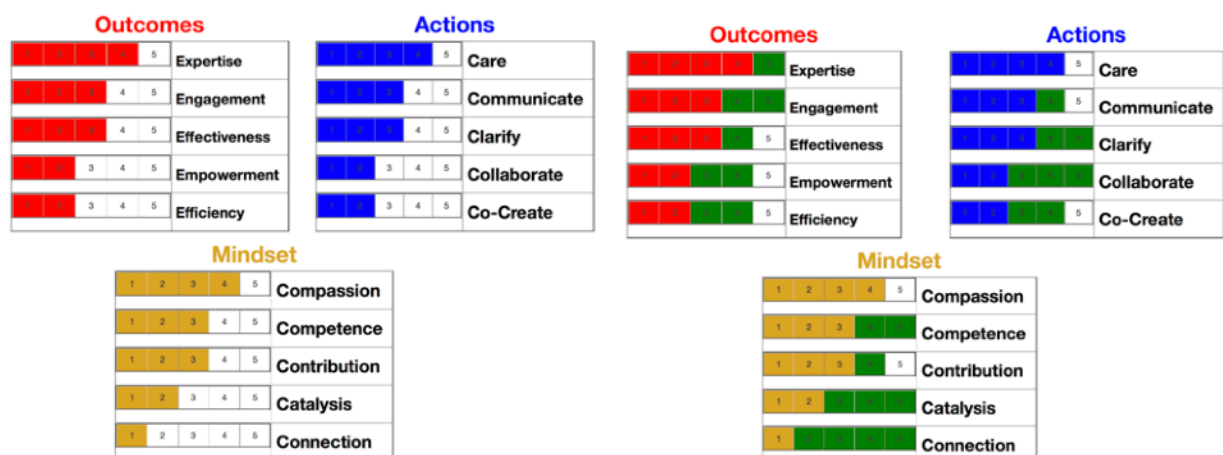
Present State   **Desired State and Areas for Improvement**

We will be presenting a free webinar update on the research project on April 19th & 20th 2021: https://mailchi.mp/sfmforhealthcare/2021-international.

Please join us in the exciting next steps of this adventure!