Compassion In Action: Schwartz Centre Rounds

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Impact of pressures on people in caring professions

- Withdrawal for emotional protection
- Isolation, depression and stress, burnout
- Lowered sense of personal effectiveness
- Emotional exhaustion
- Depersonalisation of care

“Kindness suffers as the capacity for fellow feeling recedes.”

Why staff wellbeing matters

Links between staff and patient experience

There is increasing evidence drawing links between staff and patient experience:

- A study of nurses conducted over three years by Jill Maben et al (2010), King’s College London, found strong links between staff well being, staff reported patient care performance and patient-reported patient experience

- A study (Raleigh VS et al, 2009) analysing data across 166 NHS trusts found that positive staff experience was broadly reflective of positive patient experience
The ordeal has been punctuated by moments of exquisite compassion’ in the form of ‘acts of kindness – the simple human touch from my caregivers’, which ‘have made the unbearable bearable’

Schwartz Centre Rounds
What happens in a Schwartz Round?

- Food is offered before the start
- Presenting team talk for 10-15 minutes
- Trained facilitators moderate the discussion
- The audience is asked to share their thoughts, ask questions, offer similar experiences
- Round lasts for 1 hour in total
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=JUk-mlGZm7s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=JUk-mlGZm7s)
Examples of Round themes

- Trying to help in impossible circumstances
- Conflict – with patient; family; colleagues
- ‘Unrewarding patients’ – nasty; terrifying; intractable problems; ungrateful; uncooperative; families
- Rewarding patients and the perils associated with them
- Organisational events – e.g. poor CQC report, a major complaint; litigation
- Human too – personal and professional overlap
- The patient/colleague I’ll never forget
Impact of Schwartz Rounds

US evaluations show that Rounds have a positive effect

- For individuals
- For teams
- For organisations
- This impact increases over time spent attending Rounds


Impact of Schwartz Rounds (Continued)

Schwartz Rounds now run in 100+ sites in the UK, including hospitals, hospices, community mental health services and prisons

In the UK, Round led to an increase in:

- Staff confidence in handling sensitive issues
- Beliefs in the importance of empathy
- Actual empathy with patients as people
- Confidence in handling non-clinical aspects of care
- Openness to expressing thoughts, questions and feelings about


A number of other published studies report positive results
Impact of Schwartz Rounds (Continued)

Feedback from Rounds

- Rounds acknowledge feelings and reduce stress
- Rounds encourage networking and multidisciplinary team working
- Rounds contribute positively to hospital culture
- Power of hearing senior staff express vulnerability
- Shared understanding of experience
- Different opportunity to think when not trying to problem solve
What did participants say?

‘Anecdotally, nursing staff, physios, all staff really, say they have a greater sympathy for
doctors, who seem less cold and hard. And doctors have greater respect for the rest of
the team as they appreciate what they do and what they are having to take home with
them.’

‘I sometimes feel as if you’re a little part of a jigsaw and going to a Schwartz Round you
see all the other bits of the jigsaw, so you actually get the whole picture ...it’s
reassuring, ...it’s educational...it’s enlightening’ (Reed et al 2014)

‘Rounds discussions often contain an underlying hope that there is a policy or strategy
that will deal with this and that the organisations ‘must’ be able to protect them. Over
time the Rounds help the community of staff to digest the fact that there isn’t, it can’t
and to reflect on and appreciate how they are withstanding painful situations – and
surviving in cases where it would be difficult to thrive.’ (Wren 2014)

from a longitudinal evaluation’, Journal of Interprofessional Care,, Vol. 25, pp.1-2
Wren (2014) Schwartz Rounds: ‘An intervention with potential to simultaneously improve staff
experience and organisational culture’, Clinical Psychology Forum 263 – November 2014, pp. 22-25
Stories from Rounds

Tears at the wedding

There’s nothing you can do to help

From Africa to England, from a birth to a death
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