

Why our Schwartz Round programme is unique

Our Schwartz Round programme started in September 2013 and is a unique collaboration between two Trusts; Royal Devon & Exeter Foundation Trust (acute) and Devon Partnership NHS Trust (mental health).

The original motivation and commitment to our unique partnership was to champion at the Rounds that there truly can be 'No health without mental health'. We were enthused to use this opportunity to support staff who are dealing with complex patients that cross both acute and mental health trust boundaries. It was a unique opportunity to share experience across the Trusts and further build relationships.

Feedback from Rounds indicates that participants recognise that attending to our own and our patients' emotional needs is fundamental to providing effective and compassionate care, whether we are working in physical or mental health settings, and that reflective sharing enhances that care.

Since the start, Rounds have been jointly run almost every month and are supported by a joint steering group which meets immediately after each Round. Both organisations have a trained clinical lead and facilitator who together maintain the programme's popularity and variety.

The Rounds are attended by wide range of staff from both Trusts across a wide range of disciplines and services. We routinely have doctors, nurses, occupational therapists, junior doctors, students, physiotherapists, midwives, psychologists and administrators attending. We have also had the benefit of Executive Directors and Chief Executive attendance.

The unique collaboration between Trusts has several, perhaps unexpected, benefits which we continue to explore. For example, the challenge of ensuring that each Round topic is relevant to both mental health and general staff ensures we are always exploring themes that are accessible across a wide number of settings. We believe that this diversity makes it easier for staff to relate the theme of each Round to their own situation, and prevents Rounds from becoming narrowly focused on a specific situation or swaying towards problem-solving. The insights brought to the room by such a diverse group of staff are also exceptional, with commonalities repeatedly arising and a shared sense of unity, pride and camaraderie palpable at the end of each one.

About our Schwartz Round programme

Our joint working has led to a wonderful range of themes and cases across the three years we have been up and running, exploring generic themes such as conflict, memorable events, vulnerability, personal experience of being a patient and duty of care and also specific clinical cases where shared decision making, strong relationships, supporting colleagues and trust were of primary importance.

We are proud that attendance at our Rounds remains consistently high and we have 50-60 audience members on average, whether the theme leans towards a mental health related example or general. Evaluation forms are provided at each Round and the feedback provided is analysed and we make sure that this is shared gently with panel members, to support their continuing professional development. The overall feedback is extremely encouraging, with most Rounds rated 'Excellent' to 'Exceptional'.

How we have successfully implemented and sustained the Rounds

We are exceptionally proud of our Steering Group and our core team. We believe that the main reason our programme remains so successful is because of the energy, commitment, enthusiasm and will of the Clinical Leads; Dr Sarah Jackson and Jo Hammond and the Facilitators; Annie Mitchell and Laura Hobbs and of the Steering Group members; Dr Tim Malone, Dr. Simon Harrison, Chris Lovegrove, Lisa Morris, Sharon Davey and Dr Phil Yates. We have ongoing commitment and enthusiasm from previous Clinical Lead, Dr Rani Bora and previous Facilitator, Sarah Frazer, who continue to be engaged when time permits and who 'fly the flag' of Schwartz Rounds back in their everyday roles. We also have strong executive commitment from both Trusts, with occasional attendance by executives at Rounds. We have also had Executive Directors as panel members.

Being part of the Schwartz Programme is in addition to the main job of each member of the group. People's ongoing commitment, contribution and attendance is testament to how we believe in the programme, its ethos and the significant benefit it can bring to our staff and to us as individuals.

We pull together as a team. All members contribute when they can and when other work commitments take priority, other members of the team step in to support.

We are a dynamic and flexible team and believe that is key to maintaining Schwartz Round programmes on a long term basis, as they take a significant amount of work to run.

Our promotion and publicity approaches

Our promotion and publicity approach is *'tell as many people as we can, as many times as we can, in as many ways as we can!'*

- We produce a poster for each Round with a catchy title and a sub heading explaining the Round in more detail. Our most recent Round was:
'Leave or Stay? The complex relationship between patient choice and duty of care'
- The posters are printed and displayed across both Trusts at a multiple number of sites.
- Rounds are promoted on the intranets of both organisations.
- As Rounds approach, they are promoted through emails to all staff.
- The invitation to Rounds is also cascaded through directorate management teams, so that they can encourage staff attendance for those that might directly benefit from it.
- Panel members share information on the Rounds they are participating in directly with their teams, and we commonly see groups of staff supporting their colleagues and contributing to the conversations and adding their own experiences.
- We have adopted the Point of Care Foundation CPD certificates and share these with attendees and panellists at the end of each Round. This has been popular, particularly at times of revalidation!

Our changing approach and adapting to needs

While attendance remains high and Rounds positively received, we do have the ongoing challenge that Devon Partnership NHS Trust staff attendance can easily drop. The Rounds take place at the acute trust site as they have the most appropriate space for that volume of people, therefore the majority of staff that attend are from the acute trust. Devon Partnership NHS Trust is based across a wide geographical area, with over 100 teams at over 50 sites spanning from Bristol to Barnstaple, to Exeter and Plymouth, with all areas in between. It is not possible or feasible for staff to travel to Exeter for a one hour session over lunch time, when for a lot of these staff that would be between a 2 and 5 hour journey.

In 2015 we held a successful 'pop up' Schwartz Round for our Secure Services based in Dawlish following their request. We have also run very successful Rounds at the Devon Partnership Trust Nursing Forum and Medical Advisory Committees in the same year, to share the positive approach across our nursing and medical bodies and encourage attendance at future Rounds.

We hope that people's positive experience of Rounds spread and that more staff attend Rounds when they can, but more importantly, request the opportunity to be panel members. Our future plans also focus on reaching the staff in the remote localities, who are unlikely to be able to access the core Rounds in Exeter.

We also hold a yearly planning meeting, to discuss and agree suggested topics, dates and venues for the Rounds. These can then be booked well in advance to avoid panic and diary conflicts. At the planning meeting, we think about where we might need to be flexible with Round approaches. At the most recent planning meeting, held on 5 September, we focused conversation on ensuring a balance between the more traumatic topics and uplifting, positive topics. We want staff to access rounds that tap into a variety of experiences and emotions, rather than consistently evoking the same sorts of thoughts and feelings.

Our future plans

Our plans for 2017 are to continue our jointly facilitated Rounds but to also include 'pop up' locality based Rounds, to enable those staff not based in Exeter to have opportunity to benefit from and take part. We have already been approached by the Learning Disability Service to hold a Round for them in early 2017. The most exciting part of this is, while it is more for the benefit of Devon Partnership NHS Trust staff, the acute Clinical Lead and Facilitator are supporting these events as and when possible and community based acute staff might also attend.

Research and outreach

We are proud to take part in as many research studies as we are able and have over the years contributed to a variety of research studies. We are also excited that one of our Steering Group members is a trainee Clinical Psychologist that is undertaking a research project looking at the impact of Rounds on panellists.

Our most recent exciting development is where we have been particularly keen to get newly qualified professionals and learners to attend Rounds. We have been seeking new ways to encourage this. For example, we recently held a successful Round on staff members' experience of the junior doctors' strike, which brought in many of the younger practitioners.

A recent exciting off-shoot of this focus is that Annie Mitchell, the RD&E Facilitator along with colleagues from Derriford Hospital Schwartz team (Daranee Boon and Julia Bird), has been successful in gaining support from Plymouth University Peninsula School of Medicine and the Faculty of Health and Human Sciences to join the Point of Care Schwartz scheme and run Rounds as part of the educational programme. We hope that learner engagement with Schwartz Rounds during their time at university will encourage their participation in their future practice settings too.

~ Some positive Testimonials from the last year of Schwartz Rounds ~

"Very emotional and interesting people sharing their experiences. Definitely I will attend again. Very personal histories, make me realise that life is not easy for anyone and that we have to deal with that."

"The 'exceptional' score is not just because I am an RMN - seems completely relevant and useful to other health professionals!"

"Another very interesting and relevant topic. The whole set up allows us to talk candidly about quite personal matters in a safe and supported way."

"Really honest and open discussions. I could really relate with (panel member no. 3) and have felt the same once. Support of colleagues and friends is what keeps us going."

"Very powerful discussion especially because of the openness and honesty of the panel. Such strong emotions came through which are really significant for our practice. The emphasis on teamwork was phenomenal. Thank the panel for sharing in this way - admitting to their weaknesses but also drawing on their strengths. I love the positives of her experiences amongst this."

"Openness and honest apparent - a real strength and professional role modelling. Similarities between any aspect of healthcare and education. Comments and principles resonate, and parallels easy to draw. Wonderful to see the passion and professionalism - we all do this because we care."

"Inspired by the amazing team work, honesty and professionalism of the team."

"I didn't expect the content of the situation shared and the powerful way it was delivered. As a non-clinician it will not help in terms of any direct work with patients but my understanding of the work and difficulties of my clinical colleagues has increased considerably. Thank you to all."

"Inspiration - the way the presenters acted for principle, united against a sense of injustice and supported / cared for each other and those in their care."

"Thank you to the panel for sharing their story. Wonderful to see it from the 'other side'. Really educational."

"It's so important to keep chipping away and reminding ourselves about our commonalities with our patients. Schwartz helped this today."

"This was a fantastic rounded discussion on emotional impact with such powerful themes - guilt, power, trust, honesty and responsibility. Thank you."

"Good to hear from midwifery team. Wow - what a fantastic community team. Very emotional Schwartz Round - very powerful."

"Really lovely opportunity to share things, support and listen to each other."

"The panel stories were poignant and heartfelt; it's good to be reminded that staff are also people prone to illness and deserve to be treated in the same way as anyone else."

"Very powerful story - we have all experienced smaller versions of this and it is good to acknowledge feelings of team frustration."