

Our Schwartz Journey: Helping to build #teamipswich



Autumn 2014

Starting out – planning, plotting, finding supporters, getting trained.

Dr Ali Alsawaf – Clinical Lead

Jo Wood and Sarah Higson – Facilitators

What's the fuss about Schwartz Rounds?

Hospital colleagues are sharing some of their most difficult patient experience stories with each other as we introduce Schwartz rounds for the first time. Schwartz rounds are confidential meetings among professionals where stories which reveal their feelings and emotions are shared. They are well established in America and are now being introduced to hospitals across the UK. Geriatrician Dr Ali Alsawaf is the clinical lead for Schwartz rounds. He said: "The purpose is not to solve problems, but to explore the human aspects of delivering care and the challenges that staff face."

The premise is that the compassion shown by staff can make all the difference to a patient's experience of care, but to provide care with compassion, staff must themselves feel supported. At each meeting, three or four staff members present a story about a particular patient which leads to a discussion with the wider group. For example, our first Schwartz round – attended by more than 100 members of staff – saw a junior doctor, a senior nurse and our Chief Executive Nick Hulme talk about 'A Patient I'll Never Forget'.

Nick said: "The ability of our staff to not only support patients and their families when they need help, but also to keep doing it day after day is truly extraordinary. It is a resilience I don't possess and I have to remind myself sometimes that some of the stresses and challenges I face on a daily basis pale into insignificance compared with the pressure that staff face every day."

Get round to a Schwartz meeting: Our hospital's Schwartz rounds are open to all staff. Colleagues Jo Wood, Dr Ali Alsawaf and Sarah Higson (pictured top right) have brought them to our hospital.



Stepping out: Round 1 – one we'll never forget!

- Topic – 'A patient I'll never forget'.
- Panel – Nick Hulme (CEO), Asmah Syed (doctor) and Frances Bolger (Head of Nursing).
- 120+ attendees: standing room only – no pressure then?!
- Comments:

'thought provoking and well facilitated'

'very powerful'

'excellent first round'

'very emotional'

Some of our topics:

- 'End of Life Care – caught between the patient and their family'
- 'The challenge of respecting culture in a crisis, coping when behaviour is scary and intimidating'
- 'Care giving at work, care giving at home – the juggling act'
- 'What makes for a compassionate patient / caregiver relationship'
- 'A complaint I'll never forget'

Yikes! A hard act to follow?

- The first 6 months – 359 attendees.
- Second 6 months – 507 attendees.

Highs?

- The amazing start and commitment shown by the whole organisation.
- Hearing people's stories and seeing how Schwartz brings people together – building bridges across the organisation.
- Feedback from individuals who have experienced positive change after attending a round.
- ISS engagement – porter on the panel for 'Praise & Positivity – reflecting on the impact of 'thank you'.
- Tracy instigating innovation – setting up Pop-Up Schwartz in Critical Care and joining our facilitator team.
- 'Coming back to work after a bereavement' – an amazingly powerful Round – superb panel and sharing from the audience made this truly memorable and moving.
- Being part of the Schwartz community – conferences/support/networks.



Staff survey improvements

The willingness to recommend the Trust as a place to work or receive treatment – **Better than the 2014 survey and above average compared with all acute trusts.**

The extent to which staff feel motivated at work – **Better than the 2014 survey and above average compared with all acute trusts.**

Quote from bereavement panel member –

"It was a privilege to attend and talk about my experience. I find I can now fully appreciate and understand the difficult emotions our patients go through in this difficult time and not just to show compassion but to really listen with empathy and assist them in the best way possible."

Quotes from audience members:

"Really helpful having other peoples experience when only just beginning my journey."

"What people said made a lot of sense – support each other. No one comes to work to do a bad job – they just have a bad day!"

"Did not expect trust to be discussed as much which is brilliant. Trust and support within the team! Thank you."

Lows?

- Ali leaving and needing to find our new clinical lead.
- Doctors strikes leading to cancellations!

What next?

- Involving our community partners and linking with Colchester Hospital.
- New clinical lead to find and expand the group of facilitators.

What our panellists said:

"It's not often that we get an opportunity to reflect upon our practice and to share our experiences with the wider hospital community. Over the last few months I have attended several of the Schwartz Rounds. I have found that they give an opportunity to acknowledge that we can have a mixture of emotions at work. sometimes we can feel frustrated, scared, angry or upset but, at other times, we are proud of both a job well done and of being part of an effective team that cares for our patients"

"I found it to be both an emotional and empowering experience and an amazingly unique forum in which to share my experiences and challenges with a vast range of fellow colleagues"

"I was very nervous initially, but I have thoroughly enjoyed it. I'm very grateful to be part of this organisation"

