

Most powerful Round: *“Inclusion – How are we doing?”*

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“Motivated, valued and respected staff give much more, they feel appreciated and part of something. A fully included workforce improves patient safety, patient care and patient satisfaction”. (Yvonne Coghill RCN deputy president, BMJ 2020)

Background

“We want a SCR covering Inclusion and a real look at how we are doing” came the request from a colleague. Rounds had been running for about 5 years in the Trust and whilst we had tackled important topics such as bullying and mental health, we knew that the theme of experiences of Inclusion needed to be heard and tackled sensitively but honestly. It is an important, topical subject; research suggests that ‘the extent to which an organization values its minority staff is a good barometer of how well patients are likely to feel cared for’ (Adebowale & Rao BMJ 2020, Dawson 2018). Our sense was to be as broad as we could in covering experiences of all but where to start?

We engaged our colleague who had suggested this theme to help support us in finding the stories. In fact they agreed to be a panel member. We also approached the Lead for Equality to help us to find people and stories. A simple title was agreed to get the message across *“Inclusion: How are we doing?”* Communications went out across the intranet and by word of mouth and posters were printed.

The Round

Our panel members included a member of staff who had been born female and transitioned whilst working clinically, who spoke eloquently about their journey of change and how it had felt, the responses of colleagues and how the panel member was now a source of experience and support for other staff.

Our second panel member talked about having joined a hospital team as a younger member of the workforce and the experiences of others (colleagues and patients’) expectations of them being too young to be able to do the job and not experienced enough and how this brought challenges and frustrations, balanced with their enthusiasm to learn and energy to give to the post. Our last panel member was BAME and a gay man who talked movingly about his experiences through previous jobs up to the present day. He emphasized the need for all of us to maintain civility and respect for everyone as human beings, irrespective of background and finished with a simple heartfelt plea for equality in day-to-day life.

A pause for the audience to gather their thoughts and reflect on what they had heard and then the conversation opened up. Themes from the audience covered what it feels like to feel different, how names and identity and culture interweave in our professional and personal lives and how this affects work and feelings of acceptance. The group reflected together on the experiences of those from different countries and cultures who come to a new country to work in healthcare, and how we as colleagues need to support and value them. A recurring theme of the importance of respect for others became clear as a thread running through the discussion. A takeaway message was the need for sustained dialogue and education to all around this area to counteract pockets of ignorance.

Feedback

The Round was a popular one attended by 44 attendees. 34% of the audience described the Round as 'exceptional', 52% as 'excellent'.

"So grateful and impressed with the panels openness and honesty...so brave! Thanks I got a lot from this"

"Very informative about what people encounter on a day-to-day basis. Didn't realise there were so many struggles on a daily basis"

After the Round:

The Schwartz Rounds are naturally not problem solving but out of this Round came ideas and inputs, 'the ripple effect' so to speak to look within ourselves, and the organization.

- A decision to make an annual theme of Inclusion for one Round – to focus a lens on an aspect to widen our understanding-this year an aim for a Round to coincide with Pride month
- An aim to run a SCR on the particular theme of overseas staff and their initial experiences of joining the workforce
- We are looking at attendee feedback sheet with the Lead for Equality to make sure we are representing groups in the way they would like to be represented and to gain a sense of how inclusive our SCR are.
- Separately, the Trust has been looking at an initiative to celebrate all staff to show they are valued and treated equally within the organisation. The Trust is also looking at materials to focus on how proud it is that it is a multi-national work place with over 100 nationalities represented in the workforce.

References

1. Coghill Y. BMJ 2020;368: m474
2. Adebawale & Rao, Racism in Medicine: Why equality matters to all. BMJ 2020;368: m530
3. Dawson J. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/links-between-nhs-staff-experience-and-patient-satisfaction-1.pdf>