



'Be You, Be Accepted, Be Different'

Our Schwartz Rounds continue virtually via MSTeams and despite not being physically present in a room together the discussions remain so powerful and valuable. Schwartz Rounds are designed to convey understanding of the emotions, challenges and rewards that are intrinsic to providing care.

At our last Round, 'Be You, Be Accepted, Be Different', nearly 40 staff met to hear colleagues sharing their story about what it is like to be LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Queer/Questioning and all genders/identities). LGBTQ+ staff have grown up in a world feeling different and sometimes discriminated against. This affects how comfortable people are with themselves, their esteem, motivation at work and career progression.

We were very privileged to hear our colleagues share their lives – personal events and personal feelings they have experienced from childhood to the present day and how these have shaped them as individuals. There was discussion around labelling people, with one colleague describing themselves as a unique individual with no labels, whilst another colleague described the joy they felt on discovering a label which enabled them to understand what it was they were feeling about themselves. People are generally more comfortable when they are able to describe themselves or their world, but a label is a very individual preference.

The main theme to emerge from their stories was that of concealing who you are whilst at work and the need to feel 'safe'. Sadly some colleagues have not felt safe in certain situations whilst working in other organisations. Having to hide who you are, or fighting for non-judgemental recognition of who you are, requires a huge amount of energy and is emotionally draining. This will then have an impact on work, and on emotional health. Making time to hear stories in this space is so important to raise awareness and to increase visibility. We must all ensure we have some understanding of how people feel and what they may be experiencing at work.

Alongside this audience members expressed great pride at wearing their rainbow lanyards as allies, supporting their colleagues within Team ASPH no matter what, and highlighting the importance of the rainbow symbol to signal to colleagues, patients, relatives and visitors that ASPH is a welcoming inclusive organisation.