

Improving communication for better patient and staff experience

Enhanced Communication Course



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The Problem

“ People may
HEAR your
words, but they
feel your attitude. ”

John C. Maxwell

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Background and Patient Feedback

- Communication within the NHS rates highly as the factor most impeding patient experience.
- Recently Francis, Keogh and Berwick Reports (2013) and Hunt (2014) identified communication as fundamental to good practice.
- A parent-led audit was undertaken within SWMMNN using the Bliss Family Centred Care audit tool. One member of staff when asked about breaking bad news said “it’s something you pick up as you go along; I have never had any communication training. You are as good as the person you watch”.

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Background and Patient Feedback

An independent survey, focusing on what parents want from professionals, again highlighted communication as key to good parental experience. Comments from parents included:

“Please keep parents informed. It seems a constant uphill struggle to obtain information...”

“We just weren’t told what to do or what to expect...”

“Honesty is another thing, it’s scary enough watching your baby fight for life, but if you are unaware of how serious things can be, then the total shock just adds to the pain...”



Action

- Developed from a course being run being run by the National Cancer Action Team.
- Adapted to meet the needs of our multi-disciplinary workforce.
- Intensive one day course, away from the workplace.
- A facilitator and actors trained specifically in communication skills, set role plays to up-skill staff using challenging communication scenarios, which have been identified by staff themselves.

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Action

The course allows staff to develop communication strategies to be used with patients and colleagues. It aims to:

- Increase communication skills and confidence of professionals to undertake difficult conversations in different settings.
- Improve the experience of families by championing open and transparent communication.
- Reduce the incidence of miscommunication and consequent errors.
- Minimise the opportunity for disharmony, discontent or dissatisfaction and support a healthy working culture.
- Course participants identify their own learning objectives; therefore the course is tailored to meet these, working on adult learning principles.
- Each workshop is unique and adapted for the specific delegates on a given day

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Impact

“The language that we use becomes 'normal' for medical/nursing staff and we forget that we use jargon to the parents.”

“The importance of words and how easy it is to give a negative impression. I found this course to be of immense value and it really made me think about how I talk to other staff and patients.”

“Appointed to a seconded Band 7 Education and Training post last year, I have received no training to carry out my role. This day proved very valuable. I often deal with performance issues and this day has taught me better ways on how to approach individuals about their performance, and also to tackle the unpicking of clinical incidents when speaking to staff involved in incidents.”

- In a follow-up survey, 90% of respondents said they had used skills they had developed on the course in their daily roles.

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The Future

- A core SWMMNN education programme.
- SWMMNN team members have been trained as facilitators.
- Health Education West Midlands assessed the course against strict criteria and accredited it with their gold award. They have since commissioned courses.
- 12 courses have been run, to over 220 multi-disciplinary staff (including: neonatal nurses, medical staff, midwives, HCAs, support workers, and administrative staff.
- These courses have included courses commissioned by other organisations: Health Education West Midlands, Shropshire Staffordshire and Black Country Maternity and Newborn Network, City Hospital Birmingham and 1 planned at New Cross Hospital Wolverhampton.
- Commissioned by Sandwell and West Birmingham to run a series of 5 courses for their maternity services workforce at their City Hospital site.
- The West Midlands Deanery has agreed, in principle, to commission 5 courses for their senior trainees for 2016-17.

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Thank you for listening.

Any questions?



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