

THE EVIDENCE EXPLAINED: WHY THE SCHWARTZ ROUNDS PROGRAMME WORKS

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on behalf of project team



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STUDY INTRODUCTION

NATIONAL EVALUATION 2014-17

Literature review:

Scoping of 12 other staff interventions & systematic of Rounds evidence

Phase 1: Mapping

Secondary data collected on **77 organisations** running Rounds July 2015

Surveys completed by **41 organisations**

Interviews completed in **45 sites** (involving 48 clinical leads/facilitators)

9 in-depth case study sites

177 interviews, 42 Rounds, 29 panel preparation meetings and 28 steering group meetings observed

Staff survey:

500 participants in

10 case study sites

Data from **two time points**, eight months apart

KEY FINDINGS

- interviewees described Rounds as interesting, engaging /source of support
- valued the opportunity to reflect /mentally process work challenges & learn more about colleagues & gain insights into their management of challenging patient cases
- panellists experienced catharsis & release of burden
- a few questioned purpose of unearthing feelings of sadness, anger/ frustration

KEY FINDINGS

Realist evaluation found Rounds offer:

- A safe reflective space for staff to share experiences (self-disclosure) and reveal and role model their vulnerability
- a space to come together to interact as a group with staff with different roles creating a level playing field
- a unique counter-cultural space
- time in which trust is built and emotional safety and containment is offered
- an opportunity to hear and tell stories about the social, emotional & ethical aspects of work that resonate, prompting reflection & further sharing

KEY FINDINGS

Realist evaluation found Rounds offer (continued):

- an opportunity to uncover and shine a spotlight on hidden organisational stories & roles making people more visible & valued
- multiple perspectives which provide increased insight and understanding of staff and patient experiences resulting in more compassion & empathy

KEY FINDINGS

Realist evaluation found Rounds 'work' by offering:

- group interaction
- **trust, emotional safety and containment**
- a counter-cultural space
- a story (storytelling)
- an opportunity for self-disclosure
- context to patients and staff
- hidden organisational stories and roles
- reflection and resonance

TRUST, EMOTIONAL SAFETY AND CONTAINMENT

If: safety and trust are maximised through careful selection of stories, preparation of panellists *and* Round facilitation creates a trusting and safe space for reflection...

Then: this leads to fuller audience engagement and self-disclosure, where panellist and audience are willing to speak honestly, openly, authentically, admit mistakes, errors, and be vulnerable (i.e. self-disclosure about emotional impact of caring)

SAFETY & TRUST

*“[Rounds are] a **safe space** to discuss things that are challenging (...) this enables practitioners to be better practitioners and be more empathic, have a moment to stop and think about themselves and their behaviours and others’ behaviours, and that reflection may help (...) in the future”. (Juniper-11-storyteller).*

‘ALLOWED TO BE VULNERABLE’

*‘You are allowed to be a **human being and to be vulnerable**, and I guess that’s what we were all doing at Schwartz. We were all showing our vulnerability in different ways and...being honest about that and not trying to pretend that this stuff doesn’t have an impact, ‘cause it does’. (Willow-03-Panellist)*

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COUNTER-CULTURAL SPACE FOR STAFF

Healthcare environments are often busy, hierarchical and outcome focused, where stoicism is valued and staff are expected to prioritise patients above all else...

Yet if... good facilitation in Schwartz Rounds places staff experience centre stage, avoids 'problem solving' and supports a safe and confidential meeting...

Then... Rounds can provide a unique physical and psychological counter-cultural space that encourages a shift in what is valued and expressed e.g. emotions, silence, and stillness, prompting reflection, openness, and honest conversations. Staff are seen as human beings, and over time, talking about emotions can become more accepted and normalised.

HONESTY, SILENCE & LEVELLING

Honesty: “to hear doctors being very honest about a difficult patient and how they handled it. I’d never heard this in this building and I’ve been around 49 years and it was the honesty of it without judgement and I think that was the powerful thing that got to me” (Cedar-04-Panellist-frequent attendee)

Silence: “I think it’s [silence] a whole new concept for most people in the audience and sometimes you can literally see people sort of relax into that, and [...] be told the silence is ok, just go with it, may be a wonderful release.” (Mulberry-367-Facilitator)

Flattened hierarchy / levelling: “I think there’s also something about flattening hierarchies, so we’ve had the most senior manager on a panel with a receptionist and with, I think, a nurse. And seeing them all side by side and [...] clearly struggling with similar dilemmas brings everybody down to the same human level, which is helpful” (Taff-138-Clinical lead)

SPACE & TIME FOR STEPPING OFF THE TREADMILL

Step off the treadmill: “So it's allowing you to step off the treadmill a moment and reflect, [...] then I think that will improve patient care, because you're going to be less reactive” (Ash-400-Facilitator)

Headspace to reflect: “(Rounds provide) uncluttered headspace (...) where people can (...) put the brakes on, you can stop, you can leave that constant drive for performance targets at the door and have that clarity where you can just breathe and start thinking with like-minded colleagues who experience the same pressures (..) being able to sit with the emotion, be with the emotion, that you normally just (...) push it down (and) move to the next task, (..) so, that ability to reflect on your practice and have that headspace (...) that's where that opportunity to do things differently comes from”. (Horse-chestnut-07-Clinical-Lead).

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GREATER CONTEXT ALLOWS BETTER INTERPRETATION OF BEHAVIOURS OF OTHER STAFF AND PATIENTS

Expanding knowledge of patients and staff through multiple perspectives leads to increased insight and understanding of staff and patients resulting in more compassion and empathy:

1) **PATIENTS:** when different panellists talk about the same patient this provides a multi-dimensional perspective on the patient

2) **STAFF:** when panellists share their experiences authentically and hear how others describe view of the staff member and their role

CONTEXTUALISING PATIENTS: WALKING IN THEIR SHOES

Insight into people's behaviour: 'I think it's enabled 'difficult patients' or difficult cases to be understood and digested in a more constructive way, in a less defensive way, in a more reflective way. [...] it's helped people understand the more complex and more challenging cases and why people behave like they do' (Esk-123-Facilitator)

Insights into people's lives: Well it's certainly changed the way I view patients [...] I think I'm much more aware of their back story. In some of the Rounds occupational therapists have talked about seeing the patient's home life, they've [...] visited their house and how chaotic and dishevelled many people's lives are outside the trust" (Looe-381-Facilitator)

Empathy: "It makes us think about what we're doing and we're walking in their shoes a bit more. I think also you reflect on and you internalise what you've heard so even subconsciously you think 'I might try that a bit differently or do that a bit differently'" (Ash-02-Facilitator)

CONTEXTUALISING STAFF

Generosity: you're much more sympathetic and tolerant of the decisions other people make [...] Rounds are really helpful in reminding [us] that everybody is trying to do their best (and to have) [...] a more generous understanding of other peoples' difficulties and how hard everybody is trying [...] which makes it easier to be generous to ourselves then as well, acknowledging that we do a really hard job..' (Taff-138-Clinical-Lead)

Empathy: I think I've got a bigger understanding as to how other people's minds work [...] and] what other people have to put up with in their jobs, how challenging they are, [...] really understanding where other people are coming from (and I have) more empathy towards other staff members and colleagues, but also patients as well. (Willow-178-Clinical lead)

Staff survey results

Professor Jeremy Dawson



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SAMPLE

- Questionnaires given to staff attending Rounds for the first time and asked to complete before beginning of Round where possible
- Follow-up questionnaires sent 8 months later
- Survey also sent to a random sample of staff in each organisation as control group – they were excluded if they had ever attended Rounds
- Final sample of 489:
 - 51 regular attenders (went to at least 50% of Rounds)
 - 205 irregular attenders
 - 233 non-attenders

WHAT WE MEASURED

- Key outcome measures:
 - Psychological well-being (GHQ-12)
 - Work engagement
- Other outcome measures:
 - Self-reflection, empathy, communication with patients, compassion, peer support, organisational climate for support, absence rates
- Follow-up survey asked about number of Rounds attended
- Analysis adjusted for occupation, grade, working hours, contact with patients, length of service, age, and gender

KEY FINDINGS: Survey Results

Psychological wellbeing:

A statistically significant improvement for regular attenders compared with non-attenders

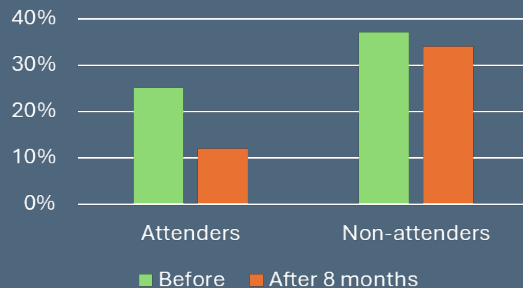
Work engagement:

No statistically significant improvement for regular attenders compared with non-attenders

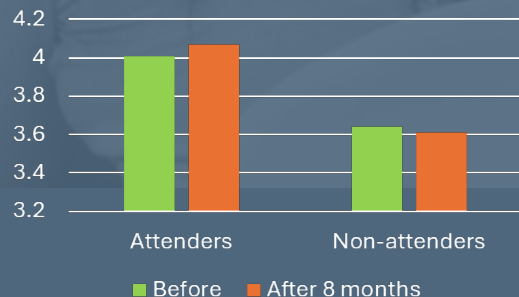
Other outcomes:

Most other outcomes showed changes in the expected

Psychological well-being



Work engagement



KEY FINDINGS: Survey results

Start of study

8 months later

Did not
attend



37%



34%

Attended



25%



12%

KEY FINDINGS

Other reported outcomes included:

- improved teamwork & communication
- increased empathy & compassion for patients and carers, for other staff & for self
- decreased isolation
- positive changes in behaviour & practice (e.g. changes to protocols; new groups & changed behaviour)

KEY FINDINGS

Challenges:

- Round attendance was an issue for some groups (ward-based/community staff)
 - enablers- convenient location and freedom over schedule
 - barriers- lack of understanding / conflict with clinical priorities
- sufficient organisational support (including administrator), active steering group and enough resources required to sustain Rounds
- some individuals decided Rounds were not for them/ not accessible by everyone

UK ORGANISATIONAL GUIDE

Free to access...

Forewords by:

Sir Robert Francis QC

Dr Beth Lown

Dr Jocelyn Cornwell



FILM



<https://youtu.be/C34ygCldjCo>

EVALUATION OF SCHWARTZ ROUNDS IN HEIs

Principal Investigators: Professor Cath Taylor and
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Research Officer: Dr Sarah Beck

Project Manager: Sarah Papadacis



Workforce, Organisation and
Wellbeing Expert Group



Schwartz
South



UNIVERSITY OF
SURREY

SCHWARTZ ROUNDS IN UK HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIS)

34 HEIs currently run Schwartz Rounds in the UK.



SCHWARTZ SOUTH HEIS



University of Brighton



**University of
Hertfordshire UH**



AIMS AND DATA COLLECTION



Aim: To evaluate the implementation of Schwartz Rounds in Schwartz South (6 HEIs)



2022



2023



Round Data

- Theme names
- Storytellers
- Sign Ups
- Attendees
- Contributors

Non-participant observation data

- Rounds
- Steering groups meetings
- Storyteller preparation

Interview Data

- Facilitators
- Steering group members
- Administrators
- Storytellers
- Attendees

Survey Data

- Surveys for attendees and storytellers
- Likert scale responses and open-text

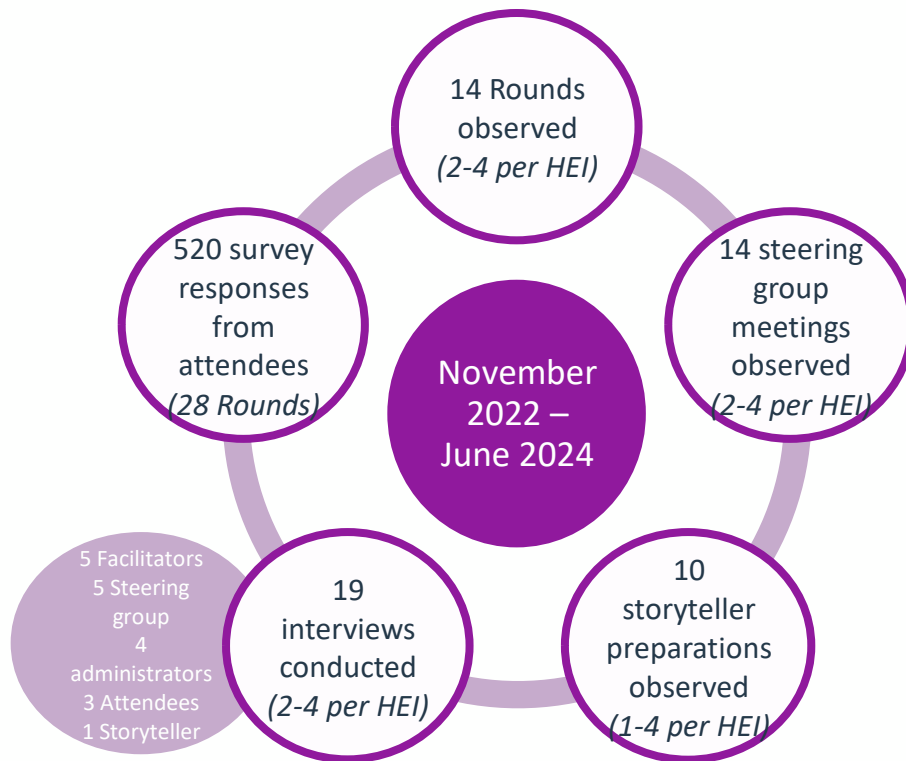
OVERVIEW OF ROUNDS IMPLEMENTATION



- During the study period (November 2022- June 2024)
- Rounds implemented in 5 of 6 HEIs
 - 2 now discontinued
- A total of 32 Rounds run (3-11)
- Mixt of online and in person Rounds
- Number of storytellers ranged 1-4
- Attendance range 3-116 (Av: 34)
- Steering group attendance at all HEIs

Did I do enough?
A fear I overcame
Lost in translation
Raising a concern
A lesson I learned
Is it me or everybody?
A patient I will never forget
Being everything to everyone all the time
Mistakes I'm glad I made
The good, the bad, the filtered
A day in the life

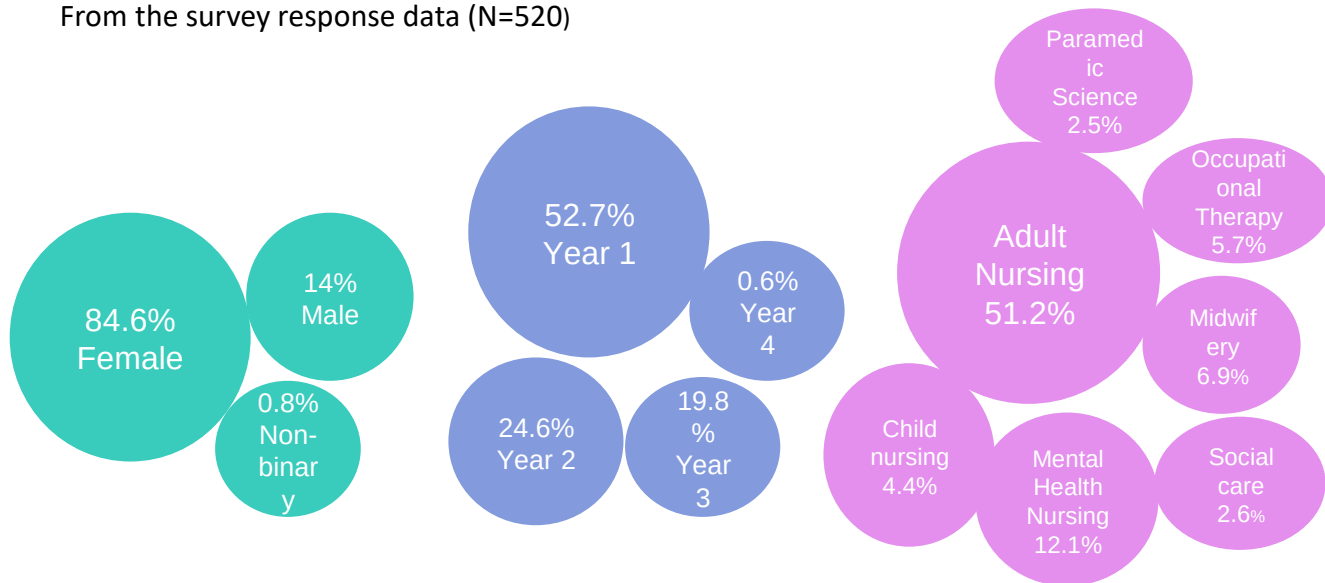
DATA COLLECTED



WHICH STUDENTS ARE ATTENDING ROUNDS?



From the survey response data (N=520)



HOW DID STUDENTS RATE ROUNDS?



37.9
%

Exceptional

47.1
%

Excellent

5.8%

Good

"This Schwartz Round I found really touching. I felt privileged to be a part of this"

"Round went very well. Atmosphere created by all participants was very warm and trusted. Will attend again in nearest opportunity"

HOW DID ROUNDS IMPACT STUDENTS?



“It makes me feel more connected to my colleagues hearing their stories and knowing people feel similar to me”

Reflecting on self and own experience

Importance of reflection

Gaining new perspectives

Space to reflect

Sharing the 'load'

Connecting with others

Not feeling alone

Feeling part of a team

HOW DID ROUNDS IMPACT STUDENTS?



Importance of compassion

Learning for own
practice

Feeling more equipped

Adapting practice

Acknowledging difficulty
of profession

Pride of profession

Reaffirming career choice

Motivation and inspiration

*"Reminded me why I
originally fell in love with
nursing and gave me a bit of
extra motivation going
forwards in finishing my
course"*



WAS THERE A DIFFERENCE IF THEY WERE ONLINE OR IN PERSON?



No difference in how students rated Rounds

22 In-Person Rounds



38.5% Exceptional, 44.4% Excellent
(93.1%)

"It was great to have this as an in-person event rather than online"

6 Online Rounds



35.9% Exceptional, 55.5% Excellent
(93.6%)

"being online was great as if this was held on campus, I probably wouldn't have been able to attend"



WHAT ENABLED STUDENTS TO ATTEND ROUNDS?

47.7%

The time of day was right

30.6%

Was not in placement/ clinical practice

20.6%

Saw the poster and topic appealed



UNIVERSITY OF SURREY STUDENT EXPERIENCES OF ROUNDS



*"It's been such an important space for me and I **wouldn't still be on the course without Rounds**"*

*"It was great to see that I'm am not the only one struggling with confidence. Having the opportunity to discuss this with others in a controlled environment is what **keeps us going.**"*

*"Thank you so much. I really enjoyed this session. I found that a lot of people felt exactly the same as me, and (...) I feel like **my feelings about placement feel a lot more validated.**"*

*"I thought the Schwartz round was an opportunity to take time out from "everyday" stuff and think on a deeper level about how we are affected by our work roles. I was very moved by quite a few speakers and their concerns resonated. I found the **session invaluable in terms of being able to learn coping skills.**"*





Find out more...



THANK YOU

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