

**Guidance for Schwartz Rounds panellists**

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the Schwartz Rounds.

To help you prepare to participate on the Rounds panel, the following summary provides some brief background information on the history and purpose of the Rounds, explains the format of the meeting and offers some tips on ways to prepare for the discussion and what you might expect on the day.

**What are Schwartz Rounds?**

Schwartz Rounds provide a structured forum where all staff, clinical and non-clinical, come together regularly to discuss the emotional and social aspects of working in healthcare.

The purpose of Rounds is to understand the challenges and rewards that are intrinsic to providing care, not to solve problems or to focus on the clinical aspects of patient care. Rounds can help staff feel more supported in their jobs, to give them the time and space to reflect on their roles which they might not otherwise have in their everyday routines on busy hospital wards. Evidence shows that staff who attend Rounds feel less stressed and isolated, with increased insight and appreciation for each other’s roles. They also help to reduce hierarchies between staff and to focus attention on relational aspects of care.

The underlying premise for Rounds is that the compassion shown by staff can make all the difference to a patient's experience of care, but that in order to provide compassionate care staff must, in turn, feel supported in their work.

**Format of Rounds**

Rounds normally take place once a month for an hour at a time with catering provided before the Round. Once the Round starts, a panel, comprised of three or four staff share their experiences for the first 15-20 minutes. On each panel, there should ideally be a mix of clinical and non-clinical staff from different levels of seniority.

A Round can either be based on different accounts of a case, or can explore a particular theme such as ‘when things go wrong’ or ‘a patient I’ll never forget’. Experiences are shared from the perspective of the panel member - not the patient – and the emphasis is on the emotional impact.

The remainder of the hour features trained facilitators leading an open discussion. They do this by asking participants to share their thoughts and reflections on the stories. The key skill is for the facilitators to steer the discussion in such a way that it remains reflective and does not become a space to solve problems.

The facilitators will remind participants that Rounds are a confidential space, in which patient and staff identities are protected.

**How to prepare for the Round**

You will meet with a facilitator at least once before the Round itself, preferably with the other panellists too.

Before you meet with them, think about the story that you want to tell by asking yourself not what you could have done differently or how you could have ‘fixed’ the problem, but how the experience impacted on you. What were its particular challenges? What techniques did you use to cope with the situation? Has it changed the way you work? If so, how?

The first time you share your experience may feel the most emotional and sometimes brings up unexpected feelings. Having time to talk through your story with the facilitator can help you to feel more prepared for the emotions that may arise during the Round.

You should not be telling your story for the first time in the Round. You will need to keep your story to 5 minutes and the facilitator will help you to do this. Remember that there will be time for questions and discussion following your story. If you don’t have the time to squeeze in everything you want to say about the case, there’s a good chance you can pick up the thread again in discussion or that Rounds participants will raise the question themselves.

**The Round Itself**

You may take a few notes into the Round itself if you feel nervous about remembering your story.

Please remember to speak up. Acoustics are often a challenge in some of the larger Rounds, and this, combined with the fact that speakers are often sharing emotional stories and may feel a bit exposed doing so, can make it difficult for everyone in the room to hear. Please be alert to attendees’ body language while you are speaking, as it may become obvious that they cannot hear you.