

Introduction

Returning to practice can be a challenging prospect and The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC) expressed concerns about the lack of direction for doctors returning to practice [1]. Following The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) Junior Doctors' Contract Agreement [2] and Health Education England (HEE) Enhancing Junior Doctor's Working Lives [3] it was recommended that Health Education England's local teams should develop and implement training programmes which would ensure a safe and effective return to learning and practice. Health Education England Yorkshire & the Humber in partnership with the Montagu Clinical Simulation Centre (MCSC) developed the SuppoRTT human factors and communication course which was one of a suite of courses aimed to support trainees returning back into clinical practice, safely and confidently, after a sustained period of absence.

Methods

The SuppoRTT human factors and communication course is a one day course using a blended approach of e-Learning, presentations and simulation-based education provided within a safe learning environment. The main themes of the day are; breaking significant news using actors as simulated patient relatives, dealing with conflict and a video-assisted exercise to explore and discuss the importance of human factors within the healthcare setting.

Results

A total of four SuppoRTT human factors and communication course days were delivered in the first year. Nineteen trainees reserved places and eleven trainees attended representing a wide range of specialities, experiences (core and speciality trainees) and length of absences [9]. The evaluation questionnaire was specifically developed to ascertain the trainees' confidence in dealing with breaking significant news, dealing with conflict and an understanding of human factors within



the healthcare setting. Before and after scores were collected using a 10 point Likert Scale (Results see table 1).



Table 1

The results showed that the candidates reported a significant increase in confidence in breaking significant news, dealing with conflict and an increase in their understanding of human factors.

1. Confidence in Breaking Significant News			2. Confidence in Dealing with Conflict			3. Understanding Human Factors		
	Before	After		Before	After		Before	After
Range	5-9	7-10	Range	3-8	6-9	Range	1-8	7-10
Mean	6.38	8.23	Mean	5.62	7.62	Mean	5.67	8.75
p-value	p < 0.001		p-value	p < 0.001		p-value	p < 0.001	



“This was a really great day. I wasn't sure what to expect and felt a little nervous but I was soon made to feel at ease by the facilitators.

It definitely helped with refreshing knowledge and skills and was an invaluable confidence boost.”

Results

Further questions asked the delegates; what did they enjoy about the course; what did they dislike or what would they change and what have been the main learning points from the day and how would they change their practice?

Additional comments made were:

“Excellent.”

“Maybe a few speciality specific scenarios at hand to use if attendees would find them useful. Although principles of good communication are the same so scenarios can be generic.”

“More hands-on session with simulated patient.”

Although some of the trainees showed signs of nervousness and anxiety, after initial introductions and discussion of the programme, the data gathered highlighted that the day was informative and helped improve confidence in breaking significant news, dealing with conflict and gain a better understanding of the importance of Human factors in clinical practice. However, it was commented that a more hands-on approach would be of benefit, although careful consideration of the trainees' circumstances needed to be taken into account. Therefore this course was specifically aimed at an introductory level for returning back to practice.

Conclusions

The SuppoRTT human factors and communication one day course provides a safe environment for doctors returning to practice to improve their confidence in breaking significant news, dealing with conflict and develop their understanding of the importance of human factors, within a healthcare setting. Health Education England recognised that postgraduate medical trainees require flexibility within their career pathway and a “step on-step off” approach [3]. Enhancing working lives and building upon this flexible approach, supports the trainee both personally and professionally and will hopefully enrich the quality of patient care.



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