

Schwartz Rounds

When your best doesn't feel good enough as an Anaesthetist.

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"I have learned that medicine is not merely about performing tests or surgeries, or administering drugs ... what matters most is that [caregivers] have empathized with me in a way that gives me hope and makes me feel like a human being, not just an illness."

Ken Schwartz, 2012



Introduction

Schwartz Rounds were developed in the USA by Ken Schwartz following his experiences within healthcare. Sessions currently run in Australia, New-Zealand and the UK, over 280 sites are registered across the UK.

Schwartz rounds provide a reflective forum focusing on emotional and social impacts of caregiving, rather than clinical aspects. Storytelling supports healthcare staff reconnect their values through peer-reflection. This promotes compassionate patient care and develops non-clinical skills.¹

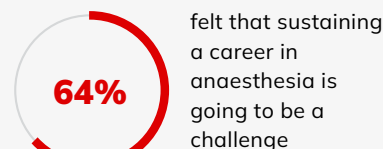
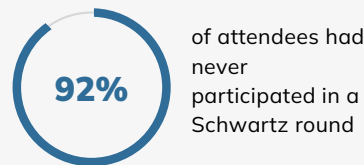
Data suggest Schwartz rounds reduce stress and isolation, increase openness to giving/receiving support and promote compassion.² Many doctors are unaware of the concepts 'moral injury' and 'distress' but find relief when the terms are explained.

Background

We explored the value of a Schwartz Round during a post-fellowship study day for anaesthesia and ICM trainees in March 2024.

Fifty, Stage 2-3 trainees attended the study day. The focus was on non-clinical aspects and demands of working as an anaesthetist, areas we often receive no formal training for.

Our pre-course survey showed that:



National GMC data suggests 58.4% are at moderate or high-risk of burnout.³

WELSH SCHOOL OF ANAESTHESIA	
Sustaining a Career in Anaesthesia / Intensive Care Medicine	
A Welsh School of Anaesthesia study day for post-fellowship stage 2 and 3 trainees in anaesthesia and ICM	
Wednesday 20 th March 2024	
08:30 – 16:30	
Sophia Gardens Cricket Stadium, Cardiff	
08:30 – 09:00	Arrival and Registration
09:00	COFFEE
09:00 – 09:15	Welcome and Introduction
09:15	J. Lloyd-Evans, A. Dhadda & A. Rimmer
09:15 – 09:55	Maximising Your Decision Making
09:55	M. Stacey, Consultant Anaesthetist, CAVLHB
09:55 – 10:35	IQ...not all it's cracked up to be
10:35	T. Kitchen, Consultant Anaesthetist, CAVLHB & Co-director of Canopi.
10:35 – 10:50	COFFEE
10:50 – 11:30	Creating a Safe and Equal Working Environment
11:30	L. Walsh, Professional Support Unit Manager, HEW
11:30 – 11:45	An Introduction to Schwartz Rounds
11:45	J. Serrell, Clinical Psychologist, ABUHB
11:45 – 12:45	Reflections on the Anaesthetist's experience of working in the NHS: When your best doesn't feel good enough
12:45	J. Serrell, M. Bidgood, Clinical Psychologists, ABUHB
12:45 – 13:30	LUNCH
13:30 – 14:10	How you don't?
14:10	T. Kitchen, Consultant Anaesthetist, CAVLHB & Co-director of Canopi.
14:10 – 14:55	Eliminating Imposter Syndrome
14:55	T. Halliday, Leading Imposter Syndrome Specialist, Author of 'Outsmart Imposter Syndrome'
14:55 – 15:05	COFFEE
15:05 – 15:45	Rethinking 'Resilience': Unmarking the dark side of a well-worn concept
15:45	J. Serrell, Clinical Psychologist, ABUHB
15:45 – 16:15	Sustaining a Career in Anaesthesia and ICM: Lessons from Ultra Distance Triathletes
16:15	H. Saltch, G17 Anaesthetic Registrar, Morriston Hospital
16:15 – 16:30	Close
16:30	J. Lloyd-Evans, A. Dhadda & A. Rimmer

Figure 1. The Welsh School of Anaesthesia study day, March 2024

Schwartz Round

The Schwartz round was included in the study day as a valuable tool in exploring burnout, moral injury and distress. The focus was then placed on developing strategies to manage these challenges.

The session was facilitated by a clinical psychologist and senior operational development practitioner. Four participants volunteered to prepare a poignant story focussed on an experience relating to the theme.

The facilitators led a sixty-minute interactive discussion. The discussion focussed on sharing thoughts, emotions and feelings.

Facilitator expertise ensured themes were identified, making a clear impact on the whole room with widespread interaction.

Steps staff can take themselves:

(these are highly dependent on their work environment)

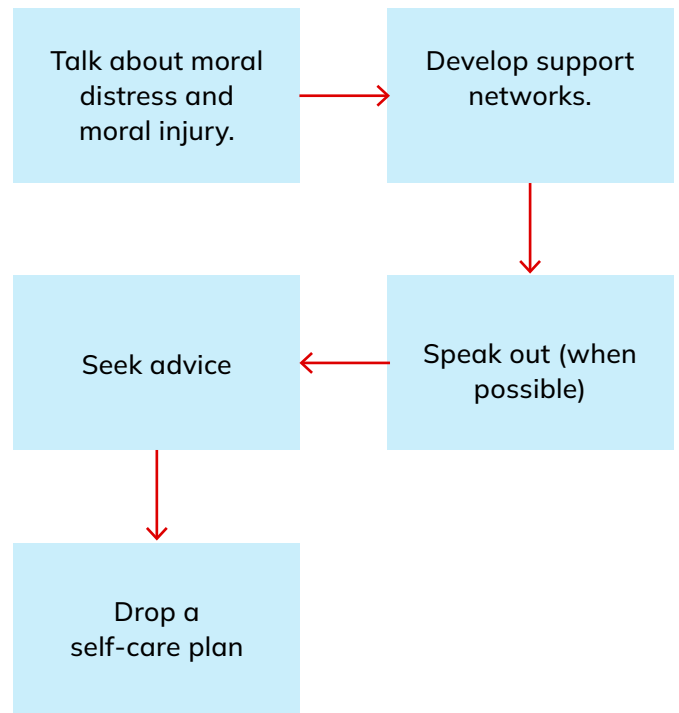


Fig 2. Benefits of the Schwartz Round

Feedback

Unanimous positive feedback for the study day was received, recommending inclusion in training for all.

97% felt that Schwartz rounds should be incorporated into training. The round was perceived as valuable in developing both reflection and openness and reducing feelings of isolation.



“One of the best sessions I’ve attended in my career. Informative and harrowing in equal measure.”



“... probably one of the most useful non-clinical 1.5 hours of my training so far. Fascinating to see that everyone’s inner dialogue is broadly similar, and we all go through the same challenges.”



“I’ve realised we all have similar experiences going through training so struggling isn’t unusual and I can most definitely find someone to relate to”



Conclusions

Burnout, moral-distress and injury are becoming well recognised terms in healthcare. Sharing experiences allows professionals to relieve some of their burden and realise their feelings are often not unique.

Implementation of Schwartz rounds develops support networks and makes these concepts more accessible. Enabling healthcare providers to reach out without fear of judgement is crucial in tackling moral-injury and burnout.

The Welsh School of Anaesthesia plans to implement Schwartz rounds in study days to ensure this opportunity is accessible for all. This will help develop a future workforce which is more open to considering values and intentions, celebrating efforts, fostering self-care and learning how to switch-off.



“we cannot address problems that we do not acknowledge exist. By talking about moral distress and moral injury, we recognise these issues and can look to tackle them. This becomes easier as the concepts become more mainstream”

BMA, 2021



References

- 01. The Point of Care Foundation. 2024. About Schwartz Rounds. [Online] Available at:**
<https://www.pointofcarefoundation.org.uk/our-programmes/staff-experience/about-schwartz-rounds/> [Accessed: 29th May 2024]
- 02. Maben, J., Taylor, C., Reynolds, E. et al. 2021. Realist evaluation of Schwartz rounds® for enhancing the delivery of compassionate healthcare. BMC Health Serv Res 21, 709.**
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<https://edt.gmc-uk.org/other-nts-reports/burnout> [Accessed: 25th March 2024]



Acknowledgements

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