Schwartz Awards

Most Powerful Schwartz Round

'Being Human'

NHS
North Tees and Hartlepool
NHS Foundation Trust

Being Human

As part of World Mental Health Day and the Treat as One Campaign the theme of the Schwartz Round was "Being Human".

The stories the panelists chose to share how mental health has affected their lives. Each speaker had their own personal experience with depression and how it prevented them from working, isolating themselves from close friends and family members too.
Regardless of the speakers' backgrounds and role, each found themselves denying their illness, trying to carry on as normal, pretending to themselves and those around them that they were okay. One panelist shared that the continuing sense of denial for what she was going through only deepened the state of depression and debilitating behaviour. However, because they now were no longer able to function it pushed each of them to ask for help and start making changes.

All speakers reflected on their experience as a blessing in disguise.

'Although it was a difficult and dark time in my life, my experience has only helped increased my compassion for myself as well as others.'

As the panelists were so open, honest and brave it supported the audience to do the same; sharing their fears and experiences of mental health too.

The speakers were colleagues who on the surface seemed confident and self assured so for them to share their vulnerability made others think it was ok for them to do the same

The session was duplicated at both hospital sites and reached 56 attendees.

The venue, the Spirituality Centre, is also conducive in creating a safe, informal environment where the attendees feel they can share their experiences.

How it all began

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust wanted to ensure that staff felt supported and were able to share and reflect on their experiences in the workplace. We began running the Schwartz Rounds in March 2019. Since then there have been several rounds where panelists spoke of past and current experiences that impacted their lives. These included topics such as recalling the first experience of a patient's death, dealing with difficult situations with humour, personal conflict and mental well being.

Schwartz Round and Beyond…

There have been tears in laughter at these rounds. Our aim in running these rounds is that not only do they give staff the time to reflect on their own experiences but they also perhaps more importantly encourage them to take an extra moment to "see/hear" that of others. Many of those attending have done so at the recommendation of colleagues which seems to indicate that this is the case.