

An Introduction to Schwartz Rounds

Schwartz Rounds provide support to staff helping to improve wellbeing, teamwork and connections which ultimately has an impact on improved person centred care.

The National Quality and Patient Safety Directorate (NQPSD) in collaboration with the Point of Care Foundation (PoCF) are supporting organisations who decide to establish Schwartz Rounds.

The Point of Care Foundation describes Schwartz Rounds as “meetings which provide an opportunity for staff from all disciplines across the organisation to reflect on the emotional aspects of their work.”

If your organisation is interested in establishing Schwartz Rounds, the NQPSD will be happy to share with you:

- Advice on steps to establish rounds
- Guidance on identifying the clinical lead, facilitators and administrator
- Guidance on establishing the steering group
- Overview of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) commitments
- Learning from the independent evaluation of Schwartz Rounds
- Opportunity to watch a Schwartz Round or connect with organisations in Ireland for tips.

The NQPSD is grateful to our colleagues from Blackrock Hospice and University Hospital Galway who introduced and Schwartz Rounds in 2016 and participated in the external evaluation. They are pictured below.



What are Schwartz Rounds?

Schwartz Rounds are tightly structured, monthly meetings for multi-professional groups of staff working in health care environments. The Rounds provide an opportunity for staff from all disciplines across a healthcare organisation to reflect on the emotional aspects of their work. The focus is on the human dimension of care.

What are staff saying in Ireland about Schwartz Rounds

Encourages insight

- “Amazing insight into other professional’s experiences”
- “Felt glad that multidisciplinary from cleaner to consultant was emphasised”
- “These rounds help break down barriers between all the different members of the hospital staff ...”
- “Takes time out to my day to see the patients on my waiting list but is a good way to focus on caring for ourselves”

Reaffirms values

- “Brings caring and kindness back into the workforce”
- “Helps us remember why we are in a caring profession”



Positive feeling

- “Feel-good factor - positive effect overall”
- “Incredibly moving and human”
- “Stunning - made me very proud to work with such compassionate, sincere and expert people”
- “Well worth taking the time to attend despite a very busy schedule”

Highlighting important issues

- “Highlighted other issues like open disclosure”
- “Very positive and potent reinforcement of how an individual can impact on patient care through non-clinical means - smiles, compassion, greetings”
- “Very thought-provoking about what we do well and when things go wrong”

How do Schwartz Rounds Work?

Each Schwartz Round lasts one hour and is based on staff stories around a particular theme. Each story is briefly presented by 3 or 4 members of staff who go on to describe the impact that experience has had on them.

Once the panel have presented, a facilitator and a clinical lead (who jointly facilitate the Round) help the participants to make a connection between the stories they have just heard and similar experiences of their own. Listening to colleagues describe the challenges of their work helps to normalise emotions, which are part and parcel of working in healthcare but are often kept under the surface.

The group then reflects on their experience with the facilitators creating links between the stories that are shared, and drawing out personal, professional and organisational themes that emerge. This facilitated discussion is an opportunity to listen, share, support and create mutual understanding.

Seeing beyond the professional identity of colleagues allows staff to feel more connected to one another. Schwartz Rounds are unique in that unlike other supports for staff they do not seek to solve problems or look for outcomes.

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Why Schwartz Rounds?

“Research into the effectiveness of Schwartz Rounds shows the positive impact that they have on individuals, teams, patient outcomes and organisational culture”.

Staff engagement is intrinsically related to patient and service users experience in health and social care services. Reported benefits of Schwartz Rounds are listed to the right...

Schwartz Rounds have been shown to lead to:

- Increased insight into the social and emotional aspects of patient care
- Increased confidence to deal with sensitive and non-clinical issues relating to patients
- Beliefs in the importance of empathy and actual empathy with patients as people
- Openness to expressing thoughts, questions and feelings.
- Decreased feelings of stress and isolation
- Improved team work and interdisciplinary communication
- Specific changes in departmental or organisation wide practices as a result of insights that have arisen from discussions in Rounds.
- Decrease in psychological distress

Rounds and the policy context

The introduction of Schwartz Rounds supports several organisational goals. For example, the National Service Plan 2020, the Organisational Response to COVID -19 and the National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare which recommend:

- *“Implementation of communication and engagement strategies” (Theme 5: Leadership, Governance and Management 5.5.4)*
- *“Support for and promotion of a culture that values, respects, actively listens to and responds to the views and feedback from all members of the workforce.” (Theme 6: Workforce: 6.4.1)*

Useful Resources

- www.staffengagement.ie
 - <http://www.theschwartzcenter.org>
 - <https://www.pointofcarefoundation.org.uk/our-work/schwartz-rounds/>
- The benefits of Rounds are outlined in the evidence - useful links are:
- [External Evaluation](https://www.pointofcarefoundation.org.uk/evidence-library/?filter_topic=0&filter_programme=72&filter_person=0)
 - https://www.pointofcarefoundation.org.uk/evidence-library/?filter_topic=0&filter_programme=72&filter_person=0
 - <https://www.surrey.ac.uk/school-health-sciences/research/longitudinal-national-evaluation-schwartz-centre-rounds>

Local Cost

Costs to consider when establishing Schwartz Rounds include training, release of staff to participate in rounds and the provision of lunch (or breakfast as appropriate) for all attendees at the rounds. As rounds are a way of supporting staff, providing a meal is a powerful symbol of the organisation’s commitment to staff emotionally and physically. It is a ritual and central to the Rounds. (Estimated cost is €5,000 excluding staff) . The local service also needs to consider the time commitment for the following key personnel:

Schwartz Rounds Roles	Time Commitment
Facilitators	Minimum of one day/month
The Clinical Lead	Minimum of one day/month
The Administrator	Minimum of one day/month
The Steering Group	Half day/month

The Memorandum of Agreement completed by each organisation with the National Quality and Patient Safety Directorate (and the Point of Care Foundation) provides for:

- **Schwartz Round License:** use of the term Schwartz Round and the Schwartz Round protocol
- **Training:** a package of “two days” on line training for key Schwartz Rounds roles (one clinical lead and two facilitators) with access to e-learning materials, webinars on line (payable by each organisation to the Point of Care Foundation)
- **Mentorship:** three days onsite (video conference) mentoring over an initial two-year period and calls with mentors
- **Membership of the Schwartz Community:** attendance at Schwartz Conference in Ireland and access to the Point of Care Foundation and National Quality Patient Safety Directorate to support the introduction of Schwartz Rounds

We have endeavoured to minimise the costs to each organisation, acknowledging that this is an investment in both staff and those who use our services. The NQPSD is funding the licencing agreement for each site.

To register your interest, please contact:

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Follow us on twitter @NationalQPS using #SchwartzRounds and see qualityimprovement.ie for updates and more information