

## Most Powerful Round

We surveyed staff to find out topics that would be interesting and pertinent to them. Staff well-being, supporting staff, dealing with challenging personal circumstances were resounding themes from the survey.

Two members of staff bravely volunteered to talk about bereavement and dealing with mental health issues in a work setting. After much preparation with the facilitators, the Round took place on January 13<sup>th</sup> 2020. Not one of our Schwartz team could ever have anticipated quite how powerful the round was going to be, nor the connection that the audience created with the panelists and each other. Here are some of the feedback quotes from the Round, which illustrate what people felt during the Round. Summarising the quotes, do not do them justice and they tell the story of the round better than we can.

I was saying to XX this morning how incredible it was to talk about the death of my dad. Some of my colleagues who were in the Schwartz round have spoken to me about the impact on them. I have spoken about it often to my therapist, my psychotherapy professionals groups but never to my Moorfields colleagues. I think Schwartz round is a very powerful tool to open communication and empathy.

Panellist A

I was recently a panellist for the Moorfields Schwartz round 'gotta get thru this' and have to say that I found the entire experience incredibly fulfilling and worthwhile. Given that the subject matter was regarding my own personal Mental Health experience, I was somewhat nervous about discussing these issues in public. However the team of facilitators who organised the event were fantastic at meeting with me (and the other panellist) at two different preparation sessions and reassuring me of both the process and the content of the event.

The session itself went very well and it was great to see so many people speaking up about their own personal demons and how the organisation they were in at the time supported them (or didn't in a couple of cases!). In a society where mental health still has a stigma hanging over its head and is sometimes seen as a taboo subject, it was very heartening to see that Moorfields cares about giving their employees space to talk about such issues. Everyone at the event was very supportive and a number of people came up and spoke to me afterwards about how beneficial they found the session, and how me being open and honest about my previous experiences, helped them feel able to do the same.

Panellist B

I went not knowing what to expect, and I definitely wasn't going to share any experiences but I found that I related to the first panel members story and brought back everything how I had felt (and still feeling) about what happened with my dad. The session gave me the confidence to open up on a very difficult year and it was the first time since my dad passed away (& mum being taken seriously ill) last year that I was able to say what had happened and how I have coped with everything at home and at work. I did feel better for opening up and has given me a lot to think about. I also was able to relate to others in the groups experiences in ways that I hadn't thought of before.

Audience member C

I just wanted to say how helpful I found yesterday's session. The two stories were moving enough, but listening to the experiences 'from the floor' helped put my own experiences, particularly from last year, in perspective. Whilst, in the end, I didn't feel ready to contribute myself, this takes nothing away from the value of yesterday's meeting. Please pass on my appreciation to all those involved yesterday, and for the Schwartz rounds at Moorfields generally.

Audience member D

I appreciated the depth of the discussions and the fact that everyone was comfortable and supported to talk about their experience in a safe environment. Schwartz round is currently the only forum that staff will have an opportunity to talk about the emotional side of working in a care environment. This is absolutely necessary as part of staff health and well being initiative specially as part of improving staff engagement. It also supports the Patient Safety Strategy and The People Strategy where organisations are challenged to provide more support for staff to enable them improve better care for patients.

Audience member E

As a Schwartz team we were so surprised at the number of people in the audience who connected with the stories on bereavement or mental health issues or both. The narratives from the audience were just as rich and powerful and we watched as so many in the audience silently wiped tears from their eyes. What was also striking was the number of people who opened up about their own experiences of bereavement and mental illness and how many had said they had never shared this with anyone at work before. At the end of the Round, many people stayed behind and huddled around members of the audience who had shared difficult experiences. A scene that was so heart-warming to witness. As a

Schwartz team, we debriefed about the powerful impact that Schwartz Rounds have and just what a useful forum it is to bring staff together, in a purposeful, ring-fenced time to reflect and share and be there for one another. After the round a few panelists commented on how they felt they weren't alone anymore and it was comforting to know that others were going through similar experiences. Two of the audience members who have been struggling with grief have in fact kept in touch and meet regularly to help one another through bereavement. That is the power and beauty of Schwartz.

**Moorfields Schwartz Team:**

Rashmi Mathew, Anita Aubrey, Ruth Ball, Margaret McNamara, Andy Dwyer, Ian Tombleson