

# Guidance for Schwartz Rounds Panellists

Thank you for your interest in becoming a story teller (panellist) at Schwartz Rounds. To help you prepare to participate on the Rounds panel, the following summary provides some brief background information on the history and purpose of the Rounds, explains the format of the meeting, and offers some tips on ways to prepare for the discussion and what you might expect on the day.

## What are Schwartz Rounds?

Schwartz Rounds provide a structured forum where all staff, come together regularly to discuss the emotional and social aspects of working in care industry.

The purpose of Rounds is to understand the challenges and rewards that are intrinsic to providing care, not to solve problems or to focus on the specific aspects of care.

Rounds can help staff feel more supported in their jobs, to give them the time and space to reflect on their roles which they might not otherwise have in their everyday routines.

Evidence shows that colleagues who attend Rounds feel less stressed and isolated, with increased insight and appreciation for each other's roles. They also help to reduce hierarchies between colleagues and to focus attention on relational aspects of care.

The underlying premise for Rounds is that the compassion shown by staff can make all the difference to a service users experience of care, but to provide compassionate care colleagues must, in turn, feel supported in their work.

## Format of Rounds

Rounds take place regularly for an hour at a time and are currently being held via Microsoft Teams Meeting. Once the Round starts, a panel, comprised of two or three staff share their experiences for the first 10-15 minutes. On each panel, there should ideally be a mix of staff from different levels of seniority.

A Round can either be based on different accounts of a case or can explore a particular theme such as '*when things go wrong*' or '*a colleague I'll never forget*'. Experiences are shared from the perspective of the panel member - not the service user – and the emphasis is on the emotional impact.

The remainder of the hour features trained facilitators leading an open discussion. They do this by asking participants to share their thoughts and reflections on the stories. The key skill is for the facilitators to steer the discussion in such a way that it remains reflective and does not become a space to solve problems. The facilitators will remind participants that Rounds are a confidential space, in which service users and staff identities are protected.

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### How to prepare for the Round

You will meet with a facilitator at least once (ideally twice) before the Round itself, preferably with the other panellist/s too.

Before you meet with them, think about the story that you want to tell by asking yourself not what you could have done differently or how you could have 'fixed' the problem, but how the experience impacted on you. What were its challenges or positive experiences? If difficult? What techniques did you use to cope with the situation? Has it changed the way you work? If so, how?

The first time you share your experience may feel the most emotional and sometimes brings up unexpected feelings. Having time to talk through your story with the facilitator can help you to feel more prepared for the emotions that may arise during the Round. You should not be telling your story for the first time in the Round.

You will need to keep your story to 5 minutes and the facilitator will help you to do this. Remember that there will be time for questions and discussion following your story. If you don't have the time to squeeze in everything you want to say about the case, there's a good chance you can pick up the thread again in discussion or that Rounds participants will raise the question themselves.

### The Round itself

You may take a few notes into the Round itself, or even prepare a script if you feel nervous about remembering your story.

Whilst we are doing this online, please ensure you have access to Microsoft Teams, and you have a private area (or headphones available).

Please remember to join early as technology can be temperamental. Please be alert to attendees' body language while you are speaking, as it may become obvious that they cannot hear you. If problems emerge during delivery of your story, don't panic, the Facilitators and Project Lead will be there to manage the situation as it arises.

### Feedback from a previous Panellist

The Schwartz team give lots of support in advance to help with preparation of the story, so time needed includes x2 one hour prep meetings in advance of the session itself, plus quite a bit of thinking time for a 5 min 'story'.

- There seems to be a clear vision for what is wanted from a story – something that resonates with the experience of the audience, including any emotional impact that will draw out – personal reflections on difficult or enriching work experiences. There seems to be quite a bit of training involved to be a Schwartz facilitator & this includes how to help storytellers to shape their story (inc. considerations of boundaries to sharing, confidentiality issues etc.)
- Once a story is told, the rest of the session involves reflections of others on their own experiences, with reflections triggered by the stories so there is no need to provide further comment or response having told one's own 'story'
- The facilitators have a script for introductions & format and use the 'chat' function on the videocall as a way of bringing in people who would like to contribute.

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Participants were mainly new to the format, but many commented that they would be returning as they had appreciated this form of 'coming together'

#### Examples of themes

- A service user I'll never forget
- A colleague I'll never forget
- The day I nearly walked out
- It's not easy being a newbie: new jobs, teams, roles, organisations
- Have we done all we can? Discharge to a high-risk environment
- Caring at home and at work– the juggling act
- "No win" situations
- A job well done
- Making a difference
- A part or apart? Feelings of isolation at work
- I'm human too: emotional and physical vulnerability
- Compassion fatigue/burnout
- Compassionate care for colleagues in trouble
- When the client is a colleague
- The unexpected death of a colleague
- Maintaining professionalism

**To find out more contact Afet Mehmet – Schwartz Round Project Lead**

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