



Difficult Conversations Workshop for Trainees in Paediatrics

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Objectives:

Whilst there is significant emphasis on communication skills in the RCPCH curriculum, many Paediatric trainees receive little dedicated communication skills teaching or feedback. We planned a communication skills workshop involving simulated difficult conversations with actors, aimed at doctors working in General Paediatrics.

Methods:

After surveying trainees, we developed communication scenarios addressing both trainees needs and key capabilities in the RCPCH Progress curriculum. These included raising and exploring safeguarding and mental health concerns, dealing with conflict and talking to a bereaved family.

We ran a full day workshop, where each trainee led a simulated communication scenario with an actor and received a full debrief with experienced faculty.

Results:

Eight doctors attended, consisting of GP trainees and junior and senior Paediatric trainees. All rated the session as 5/5 overall on a Likert scale. All felt the session had improved their communication skills, and all would recommend to colleagues.

Specific comments:

- “The environment felt like a safe space to debrief and discuss situations openly in a non-judgemental manner. Having professional actors involved was invaluable to get the most realistic feel to the scenarios.”
- “The faculty were really supportive, the scenarios were very realistic, the atmosphere was non-judgmental and the actors were amazing.”

Conclusion:

Our workshop allowed trainees to experience difficult conversations, targeted to their identified learning needs, in a safe and realistic environment. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and we aim to create a bank of scenarios to develop and hone the skills that future Paediatricians need to communicate effectively with children and their families.