

The Practice of Self-Reflection as a Learning Tool during Covid-19 Redeployment for Dental Core Trainees

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INTRODUCTION

Dental core trainees (DCTs) were redeployed as part of the medical team during the COVID-19 pandemic due to increased need of doctors in intensive care units (ITUs).

The drastic shift in their working environment and job scope had a significant impact on their wellbeing. They had to learn really fast how to work in a medically complex environment.

OBJECTIVES

To create a space that allowed them to consolidate their learning from their working experiences.

To encourage open and honest discussions to allow for shared learning.

To provide psychological safety to help them build resilience.

METHODOLOGY



6 female DCTs were working within Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery were redeployed to a medical rota in ITU. Weekly self-reflective sessions were organised

The teaching sessions were learner centred. Therefore, the topics of discussion varied every week. There was a mixture of clinical topics, working environment difficulties, team working, communication and also emotional well-being.

Self-reflective and shared learning was achieved through debriefing. The sessions were facilitated by the OMFS education fellow and the clinical psychologist.

Six months post-redeployment, interviews were carried out to assess and evaluate the learning achieved through self-reflection and shared learning.

RESULTS/ FINDINGS

Analysis of the interview responses, showed that the session had multifactorial benefits. The benefits on well-being seemed to be amongst all trainees. The feeling of belonging, being well supported and building resilience were very important aspects of their overall well-being. Learning from other peoples' experiences was perceived very useful.



"Self-reflection did not just help me through the redeployment period, but allowed me to grow in both my professional and personal life."

"Incredible sessions which gave us the opportunity to think about past and present experience in depth, strategise effective ways to manage negative emotions/ experiences."

"I was struggling physically and mentally during redeployment, but self-reflection practice helped me work on my work-life balance. I'm happier overall now!"

CONCLUSION

By creating a supportive dedicated learning environment, redeployment did not hinder the overall progression of the dental trainees. The sessions helped them to overcome various challenges during their redeployment.

Furthermore, they provided support while they accelerated their learning in the new environment. We advocate this to be a successful learning model that should be encouraged within healthcare teams.