

Teaching valued leadership skills to foundation doctors through a mixed didactic-interactive workshop

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Background

It is vitally important for doctors to learn how to lead “because of their power and influence and the resources they control” (NHS Leadership Academy, 2023). Leadership is present through the full range of doctor grades, including foundation doctors (FDs) - it is “a process, not a position” (Health Education England, 2017), although FDs themselves may not realise this.

Junior doctors, including FDs, are known to value communication and teamwork skills in leaders (Phillips and Edey, 2019).



Methods

The Basildon Leadership Hub is a non-clinical workshop provided free of charge to foundation doctors (FDs) across Essex as part of their core curriculum; and has been run annually since 2018. Feedback has been collected from attendees after each Hub, which has guided changes to sessions offered in subsequent years. Mixed didactic-interactive sessions are chaired by doctors from a range of grades on a voluntary basis, including consultants and junior doctors. Topics include leadership and management, teamwork, resilience, and communication, particularly as these skills relate to the healthcare service, and describe practical examples and experience from each speaker.

Interactive breakout sessions encourage individual participation using a classic conflict situation simulation activity, the Ugli Orange Exercise (Tosi and Mero, 2003). This scenario promotes open communication and teamwork skills, and is followed by an active debriefing session.

Results

The Leadership Hub has trained a total of 130 FDs in important leadership skills over the past 5 years. Junior doctors appreciate leadership skills training provided by fellow doctors, even if those doctors are, themselves, junior – an effective form of near-peer teaching. Feedback collected from attendees has been positive, with suggestions offered for minor improvements. Interactive sessions consistently receive the most positive feedback, and attendees have suggested incorporating more of these interactive sessions in future.

Learning points and take-home messages

The Basildon Leadership Hub has been well received by FDs across Essex. Interactive sessions, near-peer teaching, communication and teamwork topics are particularly valued by attendees.



Acknowledgements

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References

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