London Ambulance Service
NHS Trust

Talking about work

Learning from experience at the London Ambulance Service

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Discover:

Our Service was challenged by the CQC to improve the way we learned and shared from incidents. However, we wanted to improve the way we learn from all work, not just from incidents resulting in a negative outcome.

Ambulance services face considerable challenges to organisational learning due in part to their highly disseminated workforce. The London Ambulance Service (LAS) has 70 ambulance stations and 5000 staff, 4000 of which are frontline working in silos of one or two people. In addition, the Service experiences extreme pressure in terms of workload, completing 1.2 million patient contacts in 2017. The LAS is the only pan London NHS Trust. We work within a complex health economy, intersecting many primary and acute providers.

Our goals:

- To understand and bring together the many routes by which the Service receives information about work-as-done.
- To demonstrate to our staff that the organisation is genuinely interested in understanding and talking about the complexity of their lived experience of work, not just the exceptional events.
- To create a culture of debrief and trust, where clinicians feel empowered to talk openly and honestly about cases as part of their day-to-day work.
- To create opportunities for staff to feel appreciated and to recognise/appreciate the work of others.

Our interventions:

- The 'learning from experience (LfE) group' incorporates staff from the previously siloed sources of information including clinical tutors, governance, legal, patient experiences, clinical audit and research and medical directorate. The group adopts a Safety II approach, identifying and collating themes arising from various departments and exploring ways to share learning proactively.
- Introduction of a web-based 'excellence reporting' facility (200 reports in the last year).
- A quarterly case-report magazine (Insight), providing narrative accounts (several written by frontline staff) of cases drawn from serious incidents and cases where excellent care was provided, many of which were drawn from meetings of the LfE group. The core message being "any of us could encounter one of these cases" and "we can all learn something from every case". Insight also aims to encourage discussion amongst colleagues, not just personal reflection.
- Emphasis on the importance of debriefing after cases. This included training for all Clinical Team Leaders. A debrief tool was shared with all operational placement centre mentors and a modified version introduced on mandatory annual core skills resuscitation training courses.
- 'Insight Live' – Case based learning sessions with themes including human factors, patient report form completion, mental health and myth busting in relation to Serious Incident (SI) investigation.
- Intranet page acting as a one stop shop for all things 'learning from experience': Meet the team, access useful resources, links to excellence reporting, details of learning events hosted by the LfE team and Insight magazine.
- Infographics posters covering recurrent themes including spinal injury management in the elderly, timely defibrillation and 'nature of complaint' when call handling.
- One pagers covering learning from recent SIs which are shared with all front line staff.
- Facilitating positive discussion and gaining staff insight on our staff Facebook site which has an audience of over 3,900 staff; for instance "Let's talk about...always events".

Dreams:

Our vision is that work-as-disclosed aligns closely with work-as-done and that a debrief culture becomes locally owned, delivered and valued so that the organisation can learn most effectively.

We want our actions to be effective and sustainable and for staff to feel appreciated through such initiatives as Excellence Reporting.

Design and Destiny:

Three senior paramedics lead Learning from Experience, delivering pop-up CPD (in the form of case based discussions) and utilising Facebook to encourage positive discussion across our workforce. Designing and innovating infographics and new apps to promote learning from experience.

Learning from Experience

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Excellence is everywhere

MINUTE MONDAY

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