Take a Break

Debrief in the Emergency Department

Introduction

Staff in all Emergency Departments (ED) are frequently exposed to traumatic events that can negatively impact well-being as well as affecting ability to continue to work safely and effectively in the short and longer term.

We work in a major trauma centre with busy adult & paediatric EDs yet there is no formal debrief programme for staff.

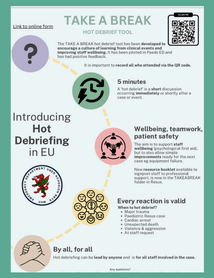
Objective

We wanted to initiate conversation around debrief, including formalising a process for hot & cold debrief for staff within and visiting the Emergency Department.

What did we do?

A multidisciplinary "debrief team" was formed, composing of doctors, nurses, the chaplain service and medical students. After a series of initial meetings we introduced new systems.

1. d**evelopment of a new hot debrief tool which we have called 'Take a Break'**



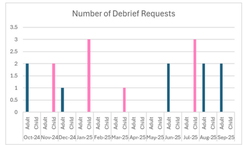
2. **development of a cold debrief process and structure.**

- automated process for triggering a cold/reflective debrief where staff scan a QR code on their way out of an event and a pre-written email is sent to all involved
- provides advice regarding what to expect afterwards, signposting to available support services and an invitation to a cold debrief
- process expanded to all staff from any specialty involved in cases occurring in the ED
- Cold debriefs are run by a member of the debrief team and follow a structure, as laid out in our standard operating procedure.

Pre-implementation survey results

An audit of resus cases in our department revealed very few debriefs were taking place prior to starting this project

Results/feedback so far



50% of requested debriefs in last 11 months have been since QR code activation went live in May

Feedback on support email and resources:
•100% of individuals received e-mail, 86% within 72 hour target
•10 people used the resources
•100% found them 'Very Useful'

Free text Quotes:
•'I didn't use them but it was a comfort to know what options were available'
•'I was really worried about coming back to work the next night but when I received the resources that day, I felt so much better and more able to cope on my next shifts.'
•Very useful and comprehensive. There is a good range of support for people to access what they feel is most appropriate for them'

Feedback from post event reflective/cold debriefs

People's descriptions/feelings on cold/reflective debriefs

- Good feedback from staff on new processes
- Increasing awareness within Emergency department and wider hospital of these processes
- Greater engagement with debrief process, particularly cold debrief
- Challenging to promote and facilitate hot debrief

Ongoing/future work

- gather further feedback in order to assess adherence to operating protocol and to develop the model further.
- It is hoped that this framework can be rolled out in other areas of the hospital in order to maximise its impact on healthcare professionals.
- recruiting more members of staff to our debrief team to help us keep up with the increasing demand as awareness grows
- provide all members of debrief team with training on how to facilitate these debriefs.
- We hope to present a business case for a psychologist within the ED to further enable this process.

Authors

Katie Clark - EM/PEM registrar
Nikola Creasey - PEM consultant
Lowri Warren - senior nurse for professional development
Duncan Thomas - EM consultant

Development of Take a Break tool by Elinor Hughes, Medical student at Cardiff university
Development of automated process for cold debrief notification system by Flora McHattie, Medical Student at Cardiff University