

USING EMOTIONAL TOUCHPOINTS TO LEARN ABOUT EXPERIENCES

(Adapted by Belinda Dewar from - Listening, learning and responding using a person centred approach, NHS Education Scotland 2012 <http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/making-a-difference/resources/valuing-feedback.aspx>).

Using emotional touchpoints can help us to learn about the experiences of patients, relatives and staff. We can learn about those things that worked well for them and those that caused concern. The touchpoints help the storyteller to share their experience in a structured way. The information gleaned from the story can be used to identify small improvements that can have a huge impact on how care is provided and people's sense of well being.

Getting started

Develop a set of touchpoints to use in your interview. A touchpoint is a point in the experience such as 'coming into hospital', 'coming into the care home' 'getting information', 'visiting times' 'starting on the ward' 'working with the team'

A sample of touchpoints for use with residents, patients, families, staff and students is included. Make sure when carrying out the interview that you have some blank sheets so the storyteller can identify an additional touchpoint.

You will also need to prepare a set of both positive and negative words.

The person who is sharing their experience identifies the emotional touchpoints they want to talk about, and are then asked to select a few emotional words that sum up what the experience meant to them in regard to the touchpoint. These words could be negative, such as 'lost' or 'embarrassed', or positive, for example, 'relieved' or 'safe'.

Inviting the storyteller to take part

Invite resident/patient/relative or staff member (storyteller) to take part in sharing their experience by explaining the process and providing verbal and written information if appropriate.

If they are happy to take part ask them to sign a consent form (from your organisation) which sets out their agreement to take part and also permission to share the information with the wider team and organization to help promote learning and development. Try to do this 24 hours before doing the story. Arrange a time that is suitable for them.

Hearing the story using touchpoints



Find a quiet area if you can in your area. Have the pack ready and paper and pen to jot down notes from the session.

Check consent with the storyteller again.

Present the range of touchpoints to the storyteller. Ask them to select the ones that they would like to talk about.

If they have a point in their experience they would like to discuss and this is not presented in the touchpoints, write this on one of the blank cards.

(You may need to guide them on the number of touchpoints selected. On average for a 20 minute interview you may be able to discuss 3 or 4 touchpoints).

Taking each touchpoint in turn ask the storyteller to select the words that sum up the experience for them.

So for example if the person has selected the touchpoint 'visiting time' they may select the words – 'frustrated' and 'included' to describe how this felt.

It is helpful to lay the words they have chosen on the touchpoint.

Ask the storyteller why they felt that way. Listen intently to try to understand their experience.

Try not to feel you have to defend the service, offer explanations as to why something has happened or try to provide a list of solutions.

Try not to take negative emotion personally. It is a reflection on what has happened and how the participant feels, potentially opening up possibilities to develop the service.

When a negative point is raised try to ask the person what they would think may help to improve the experience or ask them if they can recount a time when things did work well.

After you have worked through all of the touchpoints in turn and in a similar way, thank the person for taking part.

After the interview

Type up the notes from the story as soon after the interview as possible.

It is helpful to write the story as if the storyteller has written this e.g. I felt frustrated and surprised at visiting time. I felt frustrated because there was very rarely somebody around to talk to.....

Give the story back to the story teller and ask them if the account is accurate and if they would like to make any changes or additions.

Check consent again – in particular if they are happy for us to share the story with staff and others in the organization.

For further information

Dewar B, Mackay R, Smith S, Pullin S, and Tocher R., (2010) Use of emotional touchpoints as a method of tapping into the experience of receiving compassionate care in a hospital setting, Journal of Nursing Research 15,1, 29-41.

Touchpoints in action - <http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/making-a-difference/making-a-difference/valuing-feedback.aspx>).

Professor Belinda Dewar, Institute of Care and Practice Improvement, University of West of Scotland , Belinda.dewar@uws.ac.uk

Examples of Touchpoints

STAFF	STUDENTS
Starting on the ward/unit	Starting in the unit
Working as a member of the team	My learning outcomes
Supporting students	Getting feedback
Managing change	Working with my mentor
Talking with relatives	Caring for patients
Talking with staff	Talking with relatives
Caring for patients	Talking to members of the multidisciplinary team
Giving information to patients	Carrying out procedures
Rehabilitation	Giving information to patients
Achieving outcomes	Breaktime
My learning	Working with the team
My career	
Feedback	

PATIENTS / RESIDENTS	RELATIVES
Coming into hospital	Getting information
Coming into the care home	Being involved
Working with the therapist	Visiting the care setting
Mealtimes	Being here at night
Medicine time	Talking to the therapist
Being here at night	Talking to the nurses
Getting better	Talking to the doctors
My goals	The environment
Having something to do	Going Home
Talking to staff	Going to Hospital
Using appliances	Involvement in decisions
Making decisions	The care of your relative
Being with other patients/residents	
The environment	

PATIENTS / RESIDENTS	RELATIVES
Having tests	
Getting information	
Being kept in the loop	
Going home	

Emotional Words

NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
Alarmed	Calm
Anxious	Comfortable
Awful	Cheerful
Sorry	Confident
Awkward	Safe
Bothered	Fortunate
Embarrassed	In control
Cut off	Included
Defensive	Moved
Dejected	Optimistic
Uncomfortable	Proud
Disheartened	Protected
Dismissed	Supported
Dreadful	Respected
Upset	Happy
Scared	Satisfied
Flustered	Over the moon
Frustrated	Welcomed
A bit silly	Positive
Intimidated	Hopeful
Let down	Relieved
Fed up	Heard