

Case Study: Human Book Club for Healthcare Learners

A Human Book Club event was held to help student nurses and Trainee Nursing Associates gather evidence for the communication section of their portfolios. The Human Book Club provided an opportunity for healthcare learners to get a better understanding of how an individual's culture, social identity and expressed beliefs impact on the choices they make about their care and treatment.

'Titles' included learning disability, gay man with HIV and transgender. 17 'readers' and 5 'books' took part, holding 15 minute conversations with each other in a 'speed dating' format. The feedback was extremely positive, with both 'books' and 'readers' rating the event highly.

The event took place in the Education Centre at Royal Bolton Hospital on 23rd October and was organised by Steph Jolly (Practice Education Facilitator), Lenny St Jean (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead) and Paula Elliott (Library Manager).



Key Outcomes

- Readers and books were asked to complete a short questionnaire after the event and all participants replied. Overall, all participants rated the event as 'It was good, I liked it' or 'It was excellent, I loved it'
- 14 general comments were given about the event. Mostly, respondents wanted more time. One participant commented: *'Absolutely fantastic. Everybody should do this, not just students.'*
- All the students agreed or strongly agreed that the event was a good way to improve their communication skills. All the 'books' strongly agreed with this.
- Asked 'how will you change the way you communicate with patients following this event?' all the students came up with at least one thing they would do.

Background

Bolton NHS Foundation Trust is a major provider of hospital and community health services in the North West Sector of Greater Manchester, delivering services from the Royal Bolton Hospital and also providing a wide range of community services from locations across Bolton. The Trust received a 'Good' overall rating from the CQC in July 2016. The Royal Bolton Hospital is a major hub within Greater Manchester for women's and children's services and is the second busiest ambulance-receiving site in Greater Manchester.

The aim of the Human Library movement is to promote social inclusion, and challenge prejudice and stereotyping. The organisation was founded in Denmark in 2000 by a group of students, and events have been hosted in an estimated 70 countries around the world. The methodology and language of a library is used as a framework to promote respectful conversations between the 'books' and 'readers' who take them out on loan.



In January 2015, a HEE Forerunner Fund application was approved to deliver Human Library events in a healthcare setting. Led by Clare Inkster (Associate Dean, HEE working across the North West), two events were hosted by Bolton NHS Foundation Trust in May 2016 to coincide with NHS England's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights week (see Appendix 1 for the report of these events).

Learning lessons from these events, subsequent events have moved away from the official Human Library methodology, which requires a lot of planning, organisation and resource leading up to and on the day(s). During debriefing sessions, the clinical librarian suggested the concept might help students gather meaningful evidence for the communication element of their portfolios. Library staff then came up with a 'speed dating' methodology, whereby a number of readers would move from book to book, holding time limited conversations.

Key Aims

- Help students deliver person-centred coordinated care by understanding how social identity, culture and expressed beliefs impact on an individual's choices and experience of healthcare
- Increase students' confidence to talk openly and respectfully about difference
- Help students to identify proactive strategies to improve inclusion

Key Stages of Set-up

Once the 'speed dating' concept had been thought of, the Library Manager contacted Steph Jolly (Practice Education Facilitator) and Lenny St Jean (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead) to see if they would be interested in organising an event. An initial meeting took place at the beginning of August 2017 and subsequent planning took place mainly by e-mail. The venue was booked for the afternoon of 23rd October and books and readers were signed up by 11th October.

How it Works

The 'readers' had an introductory session to explain the idea and how it would work. They were then split into groups of 3.

'Books' were allocated a table and the groups of 'readers' were assigned to a book randomly. Each table had a copy of the 'rights of the book' and the 'rights of the reader' which set the ground rules.

After 15 minutes, the first conversations were brought to an end and the readers moved on to the next book.

The second conversation started and after 15 minutes the process was repeated until all readers had visited every book.

There was a refreshment break half way through.

Everyone was asked to complete a short evaluation questionnaire before leaving.

The students attended a follow up session with the Practice Education Facilitator the next morning, where they shared learning with colleagues who hadn't attended the event.

Resources

The books were paid travelling expenses and there was a small cost for the refreshments. The venue was available free of charge.

Key Challenges

- There were no challenges for this event as lessons had been learned from previous events, some of which are summarised below (see also Appendix 1 - p. 16)

Challenges and lessons learned from previous events:

- Some of the learning included organising a training session for staff and volunteers to ensure the event ran smoothly and providing literature on unconscious bias (making a quick judgement about a person or situation) for staff and readers. Advanced notice was key and student nurses worked extremely well as a specified group to engage with – this could be replicated with learners from other disciplines.

Key Learning

The main lesson (from evaluations) was that more time is required for conversations. These could probably last 30 minutes. A loud sound to indicate the end of the conversations would have been useful.

Sustainability

This process is a patient engagement tool and is designed to improve the communication skills and confidence of nursing students when talking about difference. Students will hopefully use this experience to better engage with patients in their everyday interactions.

Next steps

- To fix dates for quarterly events during 2018
- To invite Trust staff with specialist roles to be the human books in a 'Knowledge Café'

Supporting Material

- **Appendix 1** – Inkster, Clare (2016) Challenging Prejudice in Healthcare – the Human Library. Manchester: Health Education England. Retrieved from [https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/The Human Library for Healthcare Learners %282%29.pdf](https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/The%20Human%20Library%20for%20Healthcare%20Learners%20%282016%29.pdf)

Relevant Websites

<http://humanlibrary.org/>

For more information contact:

Paula Elliott
Library Manager, Bolton NHS FT
paula.elliott@boltonft.nhs.uk
01204 390935

Published December 2017