

Purpose

Active listening of patient experience and, like a goldfish bowl, you are looking into the 'bowl' of the patient and watching and listening in.

Why are we doing this?

- Have a better developed understanding of the experience users have of the services.
- Appreciate the need for all staff to adjust attitude and behaviour in order to ensure that the experience of service-users is as good as it can be.
- Understand the need for all staff to think through options for service improvement – and to share those appropriately.
- Have an awareness of the sorts of actions that they might take in the course of their day-to-day practice that will improve the quality of experience for service-users.

Process

After this briefing you will be taken into the room where there are about 3-4 patients (possibly partners too). Please come in quietly and sit in the outer circle and you will not be facing the patients. The Facilitator will introduce the patients by their first names or any name they would like to use and ask each one to tell their experience of their care at your hospital.

The Facilitator will jot down notes / key points on a flipchart as the patients talk about their experience.

When all the patients and their partners have finished speaking, they will be ushered out of the break-out rooms and go for refreshments. There will be no contact or conversation between the patients and the staff in the room.

You will then stay in the room for your refreshments and reflect on their stories and participate in group discussion and action planning led by the Facilitator.

Rules of the game

You need to pay attention and some past participants have even closed their eyes so allowing them to concentrate on what the patients are saying. Please switch off your mobile phones and, if you need to take a call, please do not return to the room. The patient part of the exercise is only an hour long.

- It is all about hearing concerns from the patient's perspective and not from yours; remember for the patient, perception is reality.
- It is not personal, do not be defensive or make tut-tutting noises or disapproving sounds (you are the professional and your professional, caring image is also on show).
- Every patient gets a chance to speak within the inner circle, the role of the staff is to sit in the outer circle and be quiet and listen.
- You can not interrupt the patient with questions or comments as they only have 10 mins for telling their story with some prompting from the Facilitator if the patient needs it or if they are telling the story via an interpreter.
- Remember this is a new and scary experience for the patient especially if they are not used to public speaking and we need to make them feel welcome and allow them speak freely and not intimidate them. Some may even be angry, cry, sad, happy or neutral –they are sharing their personal memories with you, which is why you need to be supportive and quiet during the session.
- Once the patients leave the room, you need to reflect on the experiences and empathise with the patients and their partners / family when we do our reflective learning and action planning.