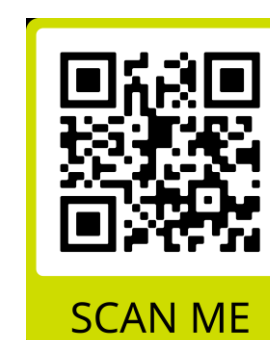


Developing a Clinical Skills Suite within a Hospice Environment

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St Columba's
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Why develop a Clinical Skills Suite?

Learning and maintaining clinical skills is a requirement for all health care workers to ensure safe and effective patient care (Care Inspectorate, 2017; Nursing & Midwifery Council, 2018a, 2018b). However, releasing staff for such training can be a challenge in a busy working environment within and beyond palliative care (Francis & O'Brien, 2019; Mlambo et al., 2021).

Recognising the value of learning and developing clinical skills in a safe, protected environment, the Practice Development Team at St Columba's Hospice Care set up a Clinical Skills Suite as an innovative and dedicated space for clinical staff training.

Step by step...

The development of the Clinical Skills Suite involved the following key steps:

- 1) Identifying the clinical skills and competencies required by our clinical staff
- 2) Seeking guidance from our University Hospice partner (Queen Margaret University) and other local higher education institutions to draw on their experience of setting up similar clinical skills learning environments
- 3) Reviewing current best practice guidelines and policies in the field
- 4) Setting up a short-term clinical governance working group

With funding secured, the Clinical Skills Suite was set up in the hospice with a patient mannikin (known as 'Alex') and bed space to simulate a real-life care setting.

Learning and feedback

The Clinical Skills Suite has already been used for clinical staff induction training and continuing professional development (CPD) refresher sessions. Its use has enabled hands-on practice of skills staff are using in their roles, including updates in wound management, skin and mouth care products. Clinical skills training days for the registered nurses, including new clinical competency updates, have also taken place.

Feedback from these sessions has been positive, with staff appreciating the skills training in a simulated patient environment. The dedicated space away from patient care areas allows more opportunity for interactive discussion, questions, and practice in a relaxed environment. This can be a catalyst for reflective learning.

"I had one of my team yesterday talking about doing clinical based scenarios and this would be a great idea to support the teams particularly those maybe less experience / have not worked in palliative care before."

Senior Management staff member

"... refreshed all aspects of personal care, oral and catheter/stoma care."

Healthcare Support Worker

"Great to have more training in clinical skills and competencies."

Registered Nurse

"Learnt lots and will definitely put into practice."

Healthcare Support Worker

Next steps

As a service improvement initiative, the Clinical Skills Suite has addressed some challenges associated with clinical skills training and CPD in the hospice setting. The Suite promotes an active learning environment benefitting our clinical staff.

Looking ahead, this resource will be used in diverse ways. Examples include clinical simulation 'scenario-based' training sessions for the medical teams and communication workshops for allied health professionals. These approaches to training can be used to develop team working, support planning for real-life care situations, and offer possibilities for research learning.

Acknowledgments

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