

End of Shift Huddles

A guide and some tips

What is a huddle?

The terms 'huddle' and 'handover' are sometimes used interchangeably, but there are a number of key differences. Handovers focus on the efficient sharing of clinical information during a transfer of clinical responsibility.

Huddles are short briefings where teams come together to review key events and promote team and individual physical and emotional safety and wellbeing.

Psychological safety

For huddles to be effective, team members must all be given the opportunity to contribute and be assured that their views will be heard. The aim is to foster a culture of openness where asking for help is seen as a strength not a weakness.

It is space to help de-escalate hyperarousal, check on any niggling doubts and worries, acknowledge and share events, a quick learn and reflect, and to enhance team cohesion as well as express appreciation.

Timing

Timing is everything. No more than 10-15 minutes maximum - the shorter the better. Clarify when this will happen (end of shift, perhaps beginning too), and set the expectation that everyone from the multidisciplinary team will come, and that this is a routine aspect of working together. In some areas where there is a large staff team, this may prove a challenge – could you break this up into several huddles?

Managing the space

Agree a start time and place, making sure that all staff are aware when and where the huddle will take place. The location of a huddle is critical to its success. A confidential space convenient for all team members is the ideal.

Social distancing and ward environments may be challenges to consider and find a way around.

Facilitation

Huddles are ideally facilitated by a senior member of the clinical team, whose key responsibility is to ensure respectful, open communication with all opinions considered and valued and to manage the time.

An ability to keep the huddle focused whilst maintaining a broad perspective also helps. Think about who might be best placed to lead this for you.

Some top tips for facilitating your huddle

Using a template keeps the structure consistent and ensures everyone knows what to expect and what information to share. Here are our top tips for facilitating a huddle:

- Start by thanking everyone for their hard work and time taken to come together for the end of shift huddle
- Ask the team how the shift went, what they have experienced that is important to share with others. Keep this feedback general and brief, this is not the time for a deep dive. But it is important to acknowledge the reality of the work that day.
- Find out what the team think went well, what they have learned from the day, what they want to hang onto for their next shift.
- Don't forget to provide feedback on what you have noticed went well, identifying ways the team worked well together as well as individual contributions.
- Ask how the team are. Find out what they need to look after themselves before they leave the workplace. Something to eat, drink, a rest, a shower, a good cry, an opportunity to talk to someone, a walk or a run. Consider whether there is anything you need to do as a team to look after each other.
- Close by expressing your gratitude or appreciation for something that has happened that day. Or for a member of the team, or for each other. Thank everyone again before the huddle ends.

What do you do when a team member needs additional support?

Look to address practical needs first:

- Encourage use of break out/restorative spaces around the hospital
- Provide additional opportunities to rest, this may even require days off
- Consider rotation to a less stressful role for a short period

Know where your informal and formal support is (and much is advertised on the Trust COVID19 wellbeing page)

- Look to buddy up people within your team
- Draw on the psychology first aid training, and your local mental health first aiders
- Signpost wellbeing resources on the Intranet and Talking Helps Newcastle Website
- Encourage use of the OH staff helpline (call 0191 282 4800 or email nuth.ohscounselling@nhs.net)
- Seek advice from the Health Psychology Service (0191 2824081) or chaplaincy (0191 244 8129)
- Consider the issue of risk and the need to encourage contact with the Samaritans and local Crisis Services (0191 8148899)

Huddle facilitation template

- Thank you for your hard work and the time taken to come together for the end of shift huddle
- How has this shift gone? What went well? What can we learn from/act on for next time?
(Keep this feedback general and brief - this is not the time for a deep dive. However, it is important to acknowledge the reality of the work that day.)
- Here's what I noticed that went well....
(highlight ways the team worked well together as well as individual contributions).
- Check in with yourselves – how are you overall at the end of this shift?
(this goes for you too)
- What will you do to look after yourself and/or each other before you leave the workplace. (Something to eat, drink, a rest, a shower, a good cry, an opportunity to talk to someone, a walk or a run.)
- Close the huddle with gratitude and appreciation for something that has happened that day. Thank you again for all that you have done....
- Afterwards: check in with anyone that you are concerned about