



Teaching Compassionate Leadership to Students

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Background

Health care professionals have amongst the highest rates of negative work-related psychological effects every year (Health and Safety Executive 2022). These factors can result in higher sickness rates, with anxiety, stress, depression, and other psychiatric illnesses consistently being a predominant reported reason for staff sickness within the NHS (NHS Digital 2022). With 27% of intensive care nurses being shown to intend to leave worldwide (Xu et al 2023), creating a positive working environment is paramount.

Compassionate leadership has been proposed as a positive change for leadership within healthcare (West and Chowla 2017). Compassion from a leadership level can have a trickle-down effect with staff being more supported to be compassionate towards others (Lilius et al 2011).

The effect of instigating training in compassionate leadership for undergraduates has not been studied yet. At the University of Nottingham School of Health Sciences, we are developing a compassionate leadership module for students to gain extra credit as part of the Nottingham Advantage Award with a pilot being run autumn 2023.

Aim

To evaluate the effect of an undergraduate extra-curricular course in 'compassionate leadership for healthcare' using the Kirkpatrick model of learning evaluation (Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick 2006).



Fig 1: Kirkpatrick model of learning evaluation.

Methods

Post the learning activities students will complete a survey and interviews regarding their experiences and consequent actions. Questions for this are compiled using the Kirkpatrick model of learning evaluation, evaluating up to level 3 (behaviour change).

The module will include teaching in the following areas:

- Compassionate leadership
- Toxic leadership
- Quiet leadership
- Nonviolent communication

This teaching will be supported by 2 facilitated discussions and a podcast.

Implications

Providing this training to aspiring leaders may aid in creating the positive work environments of the future NHS, helping to retain staff. This is particularly important in areas of high turnover.

References

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