

Anaesthetic escape rooms - A team building exercise

Louise Flynn, Consultant Anaesthetist, **Helen Carter** Paediatric Surgical Care Practitioner.
Leeds Children's Hospital.

Introduction and Aims

Teamwork and communication are non-technical skills which have a considerable influence on an anaesthetist's performance and patient safety¹. Errors in teamwork and communication have regularly been shown to attribute to adverse events². In many other industries it is usual practice to have regular team building events but this is not done as well in healthcare.

Our aim was to provide a team building project in the paediatric anaesthetic department which incorporated discussion of different aspects of non-technical skills and possible critical incidents. The aim was a team building exercise which was fun to be involved in but would allow us to score participants on teamwork, leadership and communication.

Methods

The education team within Leeds Teaching Hospitals developed a series of escape room style challenges for different departments within Theatres and Anaesthesia.

A joint venture with the education team and a consultant paediatric anaesthetist led to the development of an escape room challenge for the paediatric anaesthetic team.

The challenge is made up of a series of clues which have an anaesthetic base and are often linked to critical incidents. Once one clue is solved it gives a key or code to open the next clue. The final clue reveals the key to escape. Teams have one hour to work through all clues in order to find the last key to 'escape'.

During the challenge the teams are assessed on communication, teamwork and leadership using the Observational Teamwork Assessment for Surgery (OTAS) scoring system. This is reviewed at the end of the challenge.

Many of the clues have a critical incident link and the protocol for that is also discussed at the end of the challenge.



Results

Consultants and advanced trainees have taken part in escape room challenges with excellent feedback. All participants felt it was a fun way to highlight critical incidents and learn more about their own communication and teamwork. They all felt it was a useful experience for their own development.



Assessment of Team Functionality			
Team Name:			
BEHAVIOUR	Planning and preparation 0-6	Undertaking the task 0-6	Combined Team functionality score
COMMUNICATION			
COORDINATION			
COOPERATION AND BACK UP BEHAVIOUR			
LEADERSHIP			
TEAM MONITORING AND SITUATIONAL AWARENESS			
Total score	/30	/30	/60
General comments:			

Team Name:	
Total time in minutes minus combined Team Functionality score - The lower the better!	
Score	Teamwork
≥60	Oh dear. You have produced a high score. The team function has probably been hampered by your behaviours and this has possibly affected your ability to complete the tasks. Perhaps think about your teammates strengths and draw these out.
≥50	Whoops. Something didn't quite go right this time did it. You need to really think about how you can support each other to complete a task in a timely manner.
≥30	Satisfactory. Your teamwork skills are adequate but there is certainly room for improvement.
≥20	Nice one. Keep up the good work. You work well as a team. Share your secret to good teamwork with your colleagues.
≥0	Super work. Your Teamwork has been boosted by behaviours which have enhanced the Team function.
≥-20	Great Job. You completed the Paediatric Surgery Escape Room with time to spare and showed great Teamwork. Well done.
≥-40	Wow. You have shown excellent behaviours, which have enabled you to work as a highly effective team, completing the escape room in record time.

Discussion and Conclusion

Failures in communication and teamwork have been shown to attribute to adverse events in healthcare. Paediatric anaesthesia can be a challenging and demanding speciality where communication and the ability to utilise a team can be vital to patient outcomes.

The escape rooms provide a platform for personal assessment of teamwork and leadership skills in a fun and safe environment. The escape room explores different aspects of human factors that is hard to do in a standard clinical setting. Adding the competitive and fun aspect increases uptake and satisfaction of this kind of training. We plan on continuing to run the escape rooms and to involve the wider theatre team.

References

1. The role of non-technical skills in anaesthesia: a review of current literature . G. C. L. Fletcher et al. BJ Anaesth 2002; 88: 418±29
2. Communication failures in the operating room: an observational classification of recurrent types and effects. Lingard L, Espin S, Whyte S, et al. BMJ Quality & Safety 2004;13:330-334
3. Observational Teamwork Assessment for Surgery: Content Validation and Tool Refinement, Hull Louise, Sonal A, Kassab E, et al.. Journal of the American College of Surgeons, Volume 212, Issue 2, 234 - 243.e5