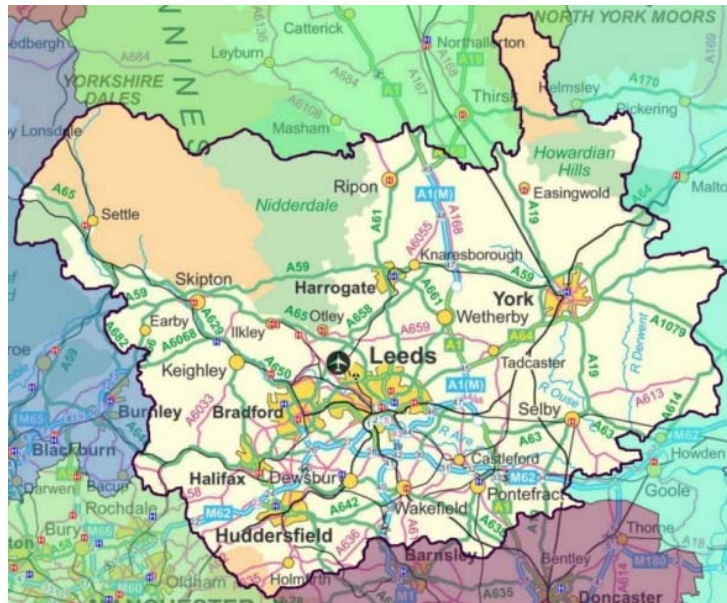


YORKSHIRE CANCER NETWORK



Advanced Communication Skills Training (ACST) A 2-day Training Programme for Senior Cancer Clinicians

If you are interested in undertaking this programme please complete and submit the application form to the address shown

Programme dates are displayed on the YCN website (www.ycn.nhs.uk) throughout the year, circulated to professionals on the ACST waiting list and the Trust Cancer Lead Teams for local dissemination.

Further details of the Connected Programme can be found at <http://www.connected.nhs.uk/>

Evidence for training:

It is widely acknowledged that effective communication skills are central to the delivery of high quality health care and a decisive factor in determining patient satisfaction, compliance and recovery (Cancer Plan 2000; Fallowfield 1990; Razavi 2000; Stewart 1996).

However, despite its centrality, the emergence of user based studies continues to suggest that there is much scope for improvement in practice (National Cancer Alliance 1996). These findings are reinforced by a more recent UK ombudsman report (2004) and the conclusions of the National Audit office (2005) which state that a high percentage of all complaints made by patients and families relate to a perceived failure of effective communication, rather than to issues of clinical competence.

The DOH Advanced Communication Skills Training Programme has been developed in line with a number of national drivers such as; NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (2004), NHS Cancer Plan 2000, NICE Guidelines on Improving Supportive and Palliative Care (2004) and more recently the End of Life Strategy (2008). The programme has been shown to have a beneficial effect in changing the communication behaviour of professionals with a significant increase in participant's confidence levels for key communication tasks measured pre and post course. (Fallowfield et al 2002, Fellows D, Maguire et al 1996 & Wilkinson et al 2008).

Aimed at:

As part of the National Cancer Peer Review, at least those core members of the MDT (named in the list in the MDT structure for core membership) who have direct clinical contact with patients should attend this training.

Nursing Staff (Grade 6+): Cancer clinical nurse specialists; palliative care CNS's; community matrons; senior grade nurses on cancer/palliative care wards.

Doctors: Consultants; final year registrars and staff grades working as clinical, medical and surgical oncologists; palliative medicine physicians. Also dermatologists, haematologists and chest physicians whose work involves cancer patients.

AHPs: Clinical psychologists; psychotherapists; counsellors. Cancer specific social workers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, radiographers, dieticians, dental assistants, socio/sexual therapists and chaplains.

Enhancing health care professionals' ability to deal with difficult communication situations, this unified model of advanced communication skills training has been designed under the auspices of the National Cancer Action Team, and is funded by the Department of Health. The course will be a requirement for all senior health care professionals caring for cancer patients in the near future.

The course structure

The course runs over two consecutive days utilising an interactive workshop approach. A willingness to use experiential methods of learning and undertake a video recorded simulated consultation during the two days is an expectation of the programme. Please note that attendance at all sessions over the two days is seen as essential.

Prior to the course participants will receive a pre-course workbook that contains reading and exercises and which asks you to reflect on your current practice and communication challenges. The book should take approximately 1 hour to complete and must be brought with you on day 1.

Each course:

- Provides an overview of the communication literature which includes; the evidence base for training, the structure of an interview/consultation, review of the skills that enhance patient communication and the behaviours that may block it.
- Is based on the individual group/participants agenda covering the issues that the group identify on day one as a challenge in their everyday practice.

- Utilises video recorded simulated consultation in order to rehearse key skills. This work is undertaken in small groups of four or five.
- Is supported by comprehensive handouts, bibliographies, references and reading list.
- Is taught by fully trained nationally approved facilitators.
- Attracts a certificate of attendance and a total of 12-14 continuing professional development (CPD) points (Royal College of Physicians) for medical staff. Clinicians can apply for 2 extra CPD points through the RCP self-certify process for completion of the workbook.

As the course is designed to be a safe but intensive learning experience we request that all bleeps and mobile phones are turned off during all training sessions. The venue will take any incoming messages as necessary and contact with work can be made during the regular breaks/lunchtime if required.

Course Content:

As previously stated the course content is led by the participants and as such varies from group to group; however, common themes to emerge on previous courses are as follows:

- Breaking bad news
- Handling difficult questions
- Working with strong emotions such as anger, anxiety and depression
- Managing denial/collusion
- Working with colleagues

Due to the experiential nature of the course, strong personal emotions can occasionally be triggered. In view of this we suggest that participants consider any recent significant or stressful life events such as bereavement prior to submitting their application.

Course options:

Multi-professional courses are offered. These are non-residential. We may offer a choice of uni-disciplinary training where there is sufficient demand and residential where appropriate.

Course Venue:

We will hold the courses in venues central to the Network (Leeds), details of which will be confirmed nearer the time. The venue is carefully chosen to maximise learning, offering a comfortable environment away from the pressures and demands of your everyday work setting.

Allocation of places:

Core members of MDTs will be prioritised to meet the National Peer Review measure, selected on a first come, first served basis by organisation, however, in order to ensure a multi-professional mix from all organisations within the Network, this may not always be possible. Non-core MDT members and non-MDT members should expect to wait longer for a place. Places will also be offered to high priority professionals identified by localities (Trust Cancer Leads).

Everyone on the waiting list will be sent an email 12 weeks prior to each course date inviting them to apply for a place *if they are available on those dates* and will be given 7 days to respond. The selected delegates will then receive 11 weeks notice of their allocation of a place. Those who respond that we cannot accommodate will also be notified and will remain on the waiting list, and so on.

Funding:

The course is currently funded by the Department of Health and as a result there is no charge to NHS staff (refer to Cancellation note under Terms & Conditions). Participants will be **liable for their own travel costs**. Accommodation costs will be provided for the residential course.

All courses include refreshments and lunch.

Terms and Conditions for Booking:

- Applications **must** include the applicant's line manager who takes responsibility on behalf of the organisation, for **payment of a non-attendance fee** for delegates who fail to attend designated courses. This also confirms acceptance to release the applicant from practice for 2 full consecutive days.
- Applications will be accepted on an on-going basis and automatically added to the YCN ACST waiting list.
- Applicants should notify the YCN of any change in circumstances affecting their application (for example; changing job or employer).
- Applicants on the waiting list will be notified of future course dates when scheduled and any late place availability as they arise.
- All information will be sent out **by email**. Please make sure that you provide the most appropriate email.
- If you have already attended Maguire, Wilkinson or Fallowfield communication skills training at any time, this is currently recognised as compliant with the peer review measures, providing evidence is available. If funding is provided in the future, it may be decided that refresher courses will be required.

Cancellation

There are 10 places available on each workshop. Attendance on the 2 days is mandatory. Although this course is free to delegates, there is a cost implication to the Cancer Network. In the event of cancellation or non attendance, the host organisation will be **liable for the cost of the delegate place (course costs vary)** unless a replacement from the waiting list can be found. Please contact the Network Office Manager immediately if you are unable to attend.

Enquiries and Applications to:

Email: pauline.atha@ycn.nhs.uk (Office Manager)

Post: ACST, Yorkshire Cancer Network, 21 Wetherby Road, Harrogate, HG2 7RY.

Tel: 01423 555761 or the main office number on 01423 555705