

Who CARES?

Evaluating the success of the CARES Skills Framework as a peer support intervention amongst paramedic students in the UK

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Introduction

Student paramedics face a myriad of potential stressors during clinical placement

Peer support is documented as a common informal coping strategy¹

The CARES Skills Framework is a structured peer support framework developed to support student paramedics²

A nominative group technique was used to evaluate the experiences in clinical placement of 35 paramedics students undertaking the CARES Skills Framework

Shared Experience

“A sense of relief that I’m not the only one feeling these emotions”

“It was nice to know that actually everybody is going through something”

“Useful to speak about experiences with people who understand”

“I didn’t feel so alone”

Safe Space

“There as an unwritten trust in the conversations we had”

“I thought I would feel judged, but actually it was a safe space”

“Honest emotions were displayed”

“Was able to express feelings without fear of judgement”

“It fostered supportive comments”

Conclusion

Student paramedics experienced many of the benefits of peer support found in literature³

Potential for this framework to be used in curricula and preceptorship

Further research needed to understand its’ potential use more widely

References

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3. Pinks, D., Warren-James, M. and Katsikitis, M., 2021. Does a peer social support group intervention using the cares skills framework improve emotional expression and emotion-focused coping in paramedic students?. *Australasian Emergency Care*, 24(4), pp.308-313.