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An independent evaluation of the paediatric advanced communication skills training programme

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**Midlands and East**

West Midlands Strategic Health Authority



**Coventry University**

**An independent evaluation of  
the paediatric advanced  
communication skills training  
programme**



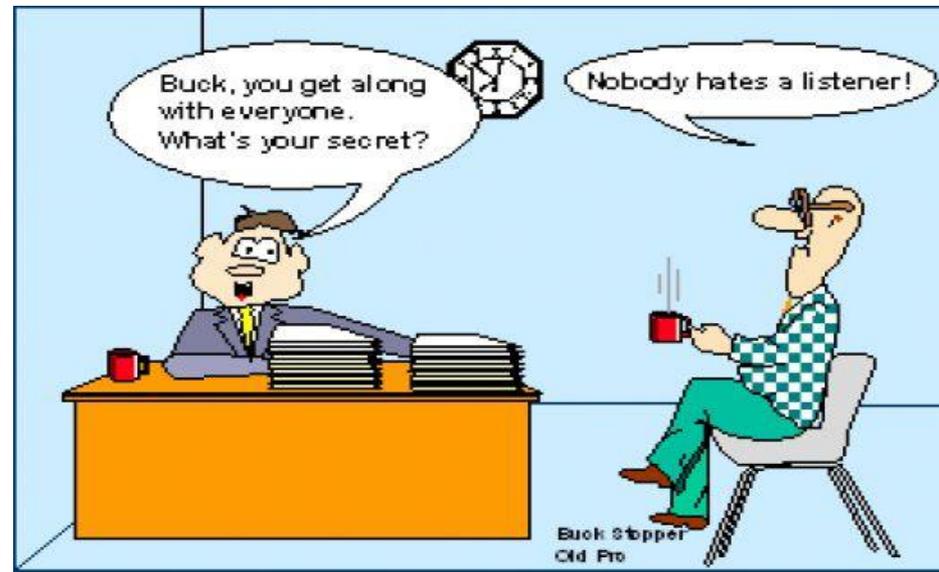
# Development of the course ...

- **Connected programme for senior cancer professionals launched January 2008**
- **2007 pilot work shown the need for a dedicated course for those working with children & young people**
- **2009 new CYP Connected programme developed & piloted by West Midlands Strategic Health Authority, Nicki Fitzmaurice and Cathy Heaven.**
  - tailored evidence based and scenarios
  - additional actor support
  - independent evaluation commissioned



# Background and rationale

- Effective communication is central to the quality care agenda, improving children, young people and family satisfaction and care outcomes (Ranmal et al 2009)
- Effective patient-professional communication and providing advanced communication skills training is embedded within cancer guidance (DH 2000, 2008)
- Economic pressures necessitate evaluating the impact of training programmes on professional practice



# Design and methods

- Evaluation based on Appreciative Inquiry (AI)
- Forty-five health professionals, primarily doctors and nurses, participated
- Range of data collected- individual interviews, pre/ post course evaluations, e-mail survey, reflective work records
- Framework approach was used to examine and explore the data

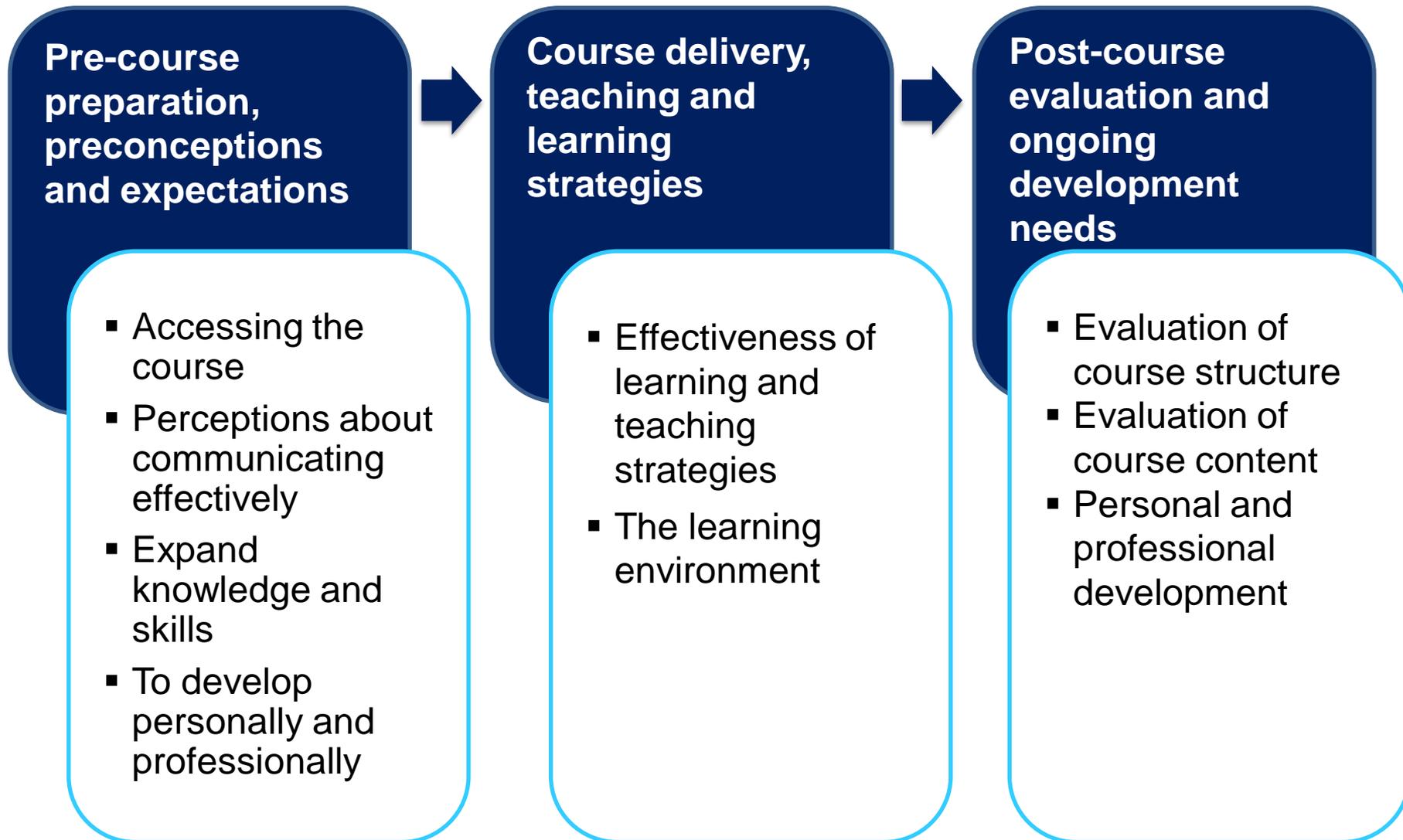
# Summary of data analysis

- Familiarity with the data by reading and re-reading participants' narratives
- Pre / post course questionnaires and two interviews (one recipient and one facilitator) were used to generate initial codes and preliminary categories
- Synthesising and summarising data
  - Moving back and forth between initial themes and categories across data sets
  - Constant refinement
- Developing final themes and sub-categories

# Example of identifying categories

Description (in-vivo codes)	Preliminary thoughts	Preliminary categories
<b>Data: Interview 3 (JS) Recipient</b>		
Wanted to <b>improve talking to families</b> , particularly breaking bad news to families	Being effective	Being effective when engaging with families
<b>Data: Interview 2 (JC) Facilitator</b>		
it's a surprise <b>how little people know</b> or the way they communicate. There's a perception that <b>more experience means you will have improved communication</b> but it's <b>not the case</b>		Perceptions about communicating effectively
<b>Data: Pre-course questionnaire</b>		
I want to ensure I am <b>giving most effective information</b> /advice/ support using most appropriate skills I have	Being effective	Being effective when engaging with families

# Findings: themes and categories



# Pre-course preparation, preconceptions and expectations

- Majority of delegates felt that training was requirement for senior health professionals working with CYP & families in cancer care
- Preparing for the course was variable primarily due to time pressures
- Value of pre-course material was variable: some delegates did not undertake the work others felt pre-course reading was underutilised:

**‘More use could have been made of the pre course reading materials, very useful yet some on the course had not received them and some not read them’** *Delegate (E-mail survey 1)*

- Delegates identified lack of confidence when communicating with CYP & families in providing information about the child’s prognosis or end of life care:

**‘There is a perception that the more experience you have means you will have improved communication but it’s not the case’** *Trainer (Interview2)*

- Some accounts about the purpose of communicating effectively were not consistent with a collaborative approach:

**‘Would like children and parents to let us carry out treatment plans sometimes’**

*Delegate (Pre-course Questionnaire 6)*

# Course delivery, teaching and learning strategies

- Multi-professional learning / simulation were effective teaching strategies:

**‘Effective use of professional actors really made the role playing real, to be able to practice or test our ways in a safe environment. It was certainly the closest thing I could get to have a feedback from a real-life situation’**

*Delegate (E-mail survey 1)*

**‘The opportunity to learn from and with others was very useful indeed, especially having such a mix of skills and professions - I have never studied alongside consultants before and it was invaluable experience’**

*Delegate (E-mail survey 2)*

- Overall delegates were highly satisfied with the training received :

**‘Have a structure to impart news; leaned cues, empathy, silences, less is more, summarising, check understanding, just need to put into practice’**

*Delegate (Post-course Questionnaire 16 )*

# Post-course evaluation and ongoing development needs

- Delegates rated the course highly:

**‘It was fun, informative and has helped me to develop and improve my practice’**

*Delegate (E-mail survey 14)*

**‘I would rate it 10/10, excellent and best course I have ever been on in all my professional career ‘**

*Delegate 1 (Interview 1)*

- Delegates, peers, parents reported courses had a positive impact on practice

**‘Actually am meeting more of young people’s needs now since the course but I realise I do not see parents alone unless its really bad news. Guess I need to work on this one’**

*Delegate (360 degree feedback 1)*

**‘....yes they have seen my girl on their own once for first time and I sat outside .. it was good’**

*Parent (360 degree feedback 1)*

# Recommendations

- Developing an E-learning package focussing on theories and concepts relating to effectively communicating with children and young people and their families. This would enable the course to be reduced in attendance days
- The course should be delivered by health professionals experienced in communication strategies and working with children and young people and their families in order to maximise the benefits of the simulated role play and assist delegates when choosing and developing scenarios

# Key messages

- Value of advanced communication skills training should not be underestimated
- Multi-professional learning and simulated role play are powerful and effective teaching and learning strategies
- Role of facilitators and their ability to influence learning cannot be underestimated

# Following this evaluation ...

- CYP Connected programme has been developed into a 2 day model
  - Pre course workbook ... being turned into an e-module
  - Shortened presentations including DVD clips
  - Maintain role-play
- Over 1000 CYP professionals attend the dedicated course in 2 years
- Contact: Nicki Fitzmaurice  
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Children and Young Persons Lead  
Connected  
The National Communication Skills Training Programme  
[www.connected.nhs.uk](http://www.connected.nhs.uk)

**Thank you**  
**Any questions**



**NHS**  
*Midlands and East*  
West Midlands Strategic Health Authority

**Coventry**  
Universities

For further information of our report  
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