

Making patient safety everyone's business using a safety huddle

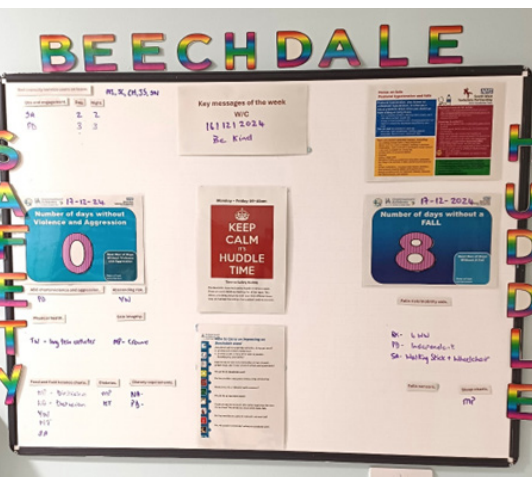
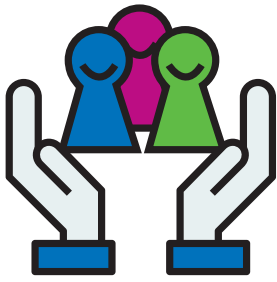
Safety huddles are 5-10 minute discussions in a team. These happen at a regular time, ideally every day, and bring together all members of the multidisciplinary team (MDT), including healthcare support workers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, housekeepers, nurses and medical staff.

Safety huddles highlight and discuss any current safety and risk concerns for patients and support open and transparent communication between all staff.

How a safety huddle works

There is no set way to structure a safety huddle, it depends on what works best for your team. But there are some key tips from the wards who have been using them:

- Keep the huddle between 5-10 minute
- Have the huddle at the same time, in the same place each day
- Invite everyone who is on shift, clinical and non-clinical staff
- Make sure everyone is comfortable to speak-up in a non-judgmental environment
- The most senior clinician, nurse or AHP or safety huddle champion should lead
- Ask – 'who are the patients most likely at risk of harm'
- Discuss – only the patients at highest risk
- Agree – the plan for this patient(s)
- Check – if everyone knows what the plan is and that everyone is happy with the plan
- Celebrate what is working well



It is a fantastic forum to obtain important updates about patient's progress on the ward and to promote communication between disciplines. In particular, I've found it enables me to spot patient's emerging needs, and in doing so facilitates timely interventions to reduce risks and promote patient's recovery.

- Psychology team

More 'ingredients' for a successful safety huddle can be found on the intranet: <https://swyt.sharepoint.com/sites/PatientSafety/SitePages/Safety-Huddle.aspx>

A huddle can reduce the number of patient safety events by supporting:

- The identification of new and changing risks
- Increased awareness of risks
- Staff to think proactively and anticipate risks in the delivery of care

Safety huddles can cover anything that staff may think is a risk to a patient. At previous safety huddles this has included the risk of falls, self-harm, violence and aggression, verbal abuse, substance misuse and absconding. These discussions are also vital to capture information about patients who have increased physical health needs, such as frailty, pressure ulcers or nutrition and hydration needs.

How safety huddles are being used across the Trust

On Beechdale Ward at The Dales, the team reintroduced a safety huddle over 12 months ago as a quality improvement initiative.

This is a quick stand-up meeting for all team disciplines to check in with each other at the start of each morning to encourage collaboration. The huddle covers patient safety and any increased physical healthcare needs.

The huddles have been welcomed by the whole team who have described a consistent approach with their input and contributions. They have reported a difference in team morale and staff feel valued and appreciated.

The team display their data on a visual board which is updated on a daily or when new risks are identified. The team describe how having a visual board for the safety huddle provides the team with a snapshot of current up-to-date information, they share incident rates by completing safety days without falls and aggression and violence.

The safety huddle on Beechdale is creating a safer and more supportive environment for everyone by fostering open communication within the team. They wanted to focus on staff engagement and as well as ensuring a culture for patient safety. The huddle also keeps the team involved about recent updates to policies and procedures to ensure best practice.

At Horizon Centre safety huddles take place every weekday morning on the ward, led by the nurse in charge of that shift.

The team have found the huddles have supported overall safety on the unit. Adrian, ward manager at Horizon Centre said: 'We use this time to review changes to care plans, risk assessments, review Datix reports and Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequence (ABC) charts from the previous day to explore functions and learning from any patient safety events. This also provides another tier of debrief for the staff team. The safety huddles support communication in the team about any changes to care plans, people's daily routines, in house activities and planners. We also use this time daily to explore MDT ward round outcomes, and Section 17 leave opportunities and how these are going to be met.'

'From a staff perspective, the safety huddles support the review of daily observation sheets and how the staff are allocated. We ask about any

Emma, one of the ward managers from Ward 19, Priestley Unit, says:

It allows an opportunity for all staff from each team to get together and be given a brief overview of the risks identified on each ward. Having the MDT present, it allows all information to be cascaded to the necessary teams and improve communication within the ward.

Matron Kim says:

The development and consistency of the safety huddle on Beechdale is a clear indication of a positive approach to communication within the ward team and supporting teams. This benefit of the safety huddle is reflected in the high standards of quality of care provided by the team to the patients and their carers. There is a constructive and encouraging approach to learning and working collaboratively as a team.

wellbeing needs that any staff want to raise so we can monitor this throughout the day with regular check-ins. We also explore staff training needs and establish who in the team are on training.'

'We have safety huddle information printed out and kept in reception so all staff can review what has been discussed. We also have actions that are given to staff and signed off on the sheet or handed over to the following day. The nurse in charge of each shift also signs off the actions on the sheet.'

'We continue to use this time effectively and it is open to any team member wishing to join where the staff levels enable this. We value everyone's input from house keepers, admin staff, HCA's, nurses and members of the MDT.'

Ward 19, Priestley Unit also use safety huddles who are finding it is improving communication around all aspects of needs on the ward.

The safety huddles on Ward 19 include discussions about patient safety concerns covering mental health needs relating to self-harm, and violence and aggression. Often the safety huddles support patient safety linked with physical health needs, nutrition, falls risks, and environmental concerns.

Outcomes

On Beechdale Ward, a review of Datix data has shown a **24% reduction in falls** since safety huddles were introduced, and a **42% reduction in patient safety events** which involve verbal threats or physical violence on the ward.

The reduction in safety related incidents is reflected in comments from staff on the wards about how they have made a difference to practice:

Consultant: 'It is a great way to meet up to discuss Datix's, Datix patterns and associated learning points to incorporate into future clinical practices.'

House keeper: 'keeps me informed of any environmental issues and safety risks.'

Physiotherapy team: 'The safety huddle is extremely effective in improving communication between the different disciplines in order for us to all work effectively as an MDT. It's a great opportunity to hand over salient information and to gain clarity from the team'

Future

We hope the successes seen on Beechdale, Horizon Centre and Ward 19, inspire other wards and services to trial safety huddles.



For more information, search 'safety huddle' on the intranet or contact the patient safety support team – datix@swyt.nhs.uk

If you require a copy of this information in any other format or language please contact your line manager or healthcare worker at the Trust.

With **all of us** in mind.