Being a trainee representative

Representing the views of others

Transcript

Finding out what other people think is really important.   A lot of the time, silence is interpreted as agreement with the status quo or as disinterest. Getting people to be engaged and give feedback is a really crucial part of being a trainee rep.

How will you find out those views? Think about the opportunities that you have to ask. Informal conversations are good but will miss some people out and a lot of people have survey fatigue. You may want to do focus groups, question and answer sessions at meetings, drop in zoom sessions or something different. Think about whose views you haven't heard and people in difficult to reach groups: whether that's trainees who are geographically isolated within your region, less than full time trainees, trainees with disabilities, etc. Ensure you're representing the entire region and make sure people know you exist and how to reach you.

Once you know the issues affecting your peers, think about how you will present this information. If a drug rep told you "this drug is really good and our competitor's drug is bad, everyone knows that" it might not convince you. What would convince you is evidence.

Let's look at two different examples and think about which one of the arguments is more convincing. On one hand we've got: "We never get enough time to do procedures. It's been a problem for years, everyone knows about it but nothing changes". Compare that to: "I surveyed 120 trainees within the region and had a 75% response rate. We're meant to do 60 procedures a year; we're now 4 months into the year and the average number of procedures people have done is 10. This puts the majority of trainees on track to fail ARCP if things don't improve."

You are much more likely to receive a positive response if you present solutions as well as problems. You can ask your peers to help you think of these rather than come up with them all yourself! Let's use the previous example. What you could say is: "Short term, I think protected time to go to procedural lists with scheduled "procedure day" would make the biggest difference. However in the longer term, it would be great if specific procedure lists could be set up in the appropriate settings. They do it in X hospital and it works really well."

Bear in mind that the people above you are likely to have been in the role for longer than you have and may be frustrated by the same things you are! They're probably also really keen to make things better.