

FINDING WONDER IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

NINEWELLS HOSPITAL, DUNDEE

INTRODUCTION

Emergency departments are operating under extraordinary strain. Rising demand, staffing challenges, and the emotional intensity of acute care have reshaped the daily reality for clinicians. Against this backdrop, we attended the Learning from Excellence Conference, themed Wonder, where Dr Alyson Walker's talk on "Wonder in Work" prompted us to pause and ask a deceptively simple question:

In the midst of stressful, chaotic, and often overwhelming shifts, do our colleagues still experience moments of wonder—and if so, where do they find them?



METHOD

Qualitative data was gathered by convenience sampling using postcards distributed to staff and medical students working in the emergency department over a two week period.

Completed postcards were collected and subjected to a thematic analysis. Responses were grouped by staff role, and dominant themes were identified within each group

KEY THEMES

TEAMWORK

The strongest universal theme that binds us together

BELONGING

SAFETY

PRIDE

PURPOSE

MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR PATIENTS

- Helping people on their worst day
- Providing comfort and care
- Feeling useful and impactful

APPRECIATION & RECOGNITION

- Feeling seen and valued

APPRECIATION DIRECTLY FUELS MORALE

LEARNING, GROWTH & TEACHING

- Hands-on Learning (*Students*)
- Teaching & Mentoring (*Doctors*)
- Skill Development (*Nurses & ANPs*)

ENJOYMENT OF CLINICAL WORK

- Procedures & Diagnostics
- Emergency Care and Resuscitation
- Skills in Action → **Saving Lives!**

CONCLUSION

The insights shared by our colleagues have reinforced our commitment to cultivating the best possible working environment - one that supports wellbeing, nurtures longevity within the team and ultimately enhances the care we provide to patients.

Reading the submissions has been both grounding and uplifting, offering us a renewed sense of wonder in our work and a deeper appreciation for the extraordinary individuals who make emergency care possible.