Embodying Trust: Enhancing the Sensuous and Sensory Nature of Nonverbal Communication in Clinical Practice
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Rationale: Most human interaction is nonverbal¹. Non-verbal communication is complex, encompassing a range of interactions (e.g. body language, touch, gaze, proximity and use of the environment), which impact how we build trust and relate to one another in clinical practice. Traditionally the focus of communication skills training has been on the verbal or content dimensions of interaction, with less attention paid to the highly communicative nature of bodies and silence. Yet it is through these embodied dimensions of communication that individuals negotiate, mediate, interpret and interact in their everyday lives and physical and social environments, building relationships and trust with others. This workshop uses embodiment practices from theatre² to highlight the importance of nonverbal communication and stimulate sensory awareness in healthcare professional education and day-to-day clinical practice.

Learning objectives: at the end of this session, participants will
Possess a series of drama based exercises to enhance awareness of visual interpretation, listening, movement and touch.
Experience and discuss diverse ways of using sensory awareness while communicating in clinical practice
Examine how drama exercises can translate into using embodied knowledge for trust and relationship-building in clinical practice

Instructional Methods:
Introduction, learning objectives and overview (10 minutes).
Playing with Embodiment: Theatre Games and Exercises (60 minutes)
This fun interactive workshop consists of theatre games and exercises designed to enhance listening skills, visual interpretation, and the use of touch to build trust in clinical interaction. Following each exercise, participants will reflect on the activity, and its relevance to clinical practice and health professional education. In doing so, we will examine how nonverbal messages can be encoded (generated) and decoded (interpreted). We invite participants to attend, ready for engagement, loose clothing advisable, but participation in each exercise is optional.

Reflections and Discussion (20 minutes)
The workshop will conclude with large group discussion, building on ideas generated through the workshop including implications for healthcare education.
Teaching materials: Reflective prompts, reference list for games and methods used
Evaluation: After each exercise, participants will ‘debrief’ and themes will be charted. These will be summarized and fed back to the group for further discussion. A post-workshop evaluation sheet is available. If participants consent, polaroid photographs of images generated throughout the workshop will be projected as part of the final discussion (these will be destroyed after the workshop).
will be displayed to stimulate reflection and alternative interpretations (destroyed after the workshop).