

GCTP: New Genetic Counsellor Training Day 2018

The Genetic Counsellor Training Panel (GCTP) organised a brilliant New Genetic Counsellor (GC) Training Day held on the 12th October 2018 in Manchester. The day was attended by 25 New GCs from all over the country, including a number of NHS Scientist Training Programme (STP) Genetic Counsellors in their second and third years of training.

The first part of the day was a workshop on 'Time sensitive genetic counselling'; an invaluable learning opportunity led by with Alan Phillips, a vastly experienced psychosocial consultant, trainer and psychotherapist. This was followed by an afternoon of short case presentations and discussions from each attendee on an interesting case they had led or been involved in or some research they had undertaken.

Attendees were each asked to complete a feedback form about the day, including reflections from the day as well as suggestions for future meetings and activities/resources to support New GC training. Attendees also submitted a couple of key learning points from their case to help other New GCs benefit from their experience. Somya Ellis and Amy Goldman have collated the feedback and produced the report below.

On behalf of the New GCs, we would very much like to thank the GCTP for providing another wonderful training day and networking event for us. I know the New GC Day is much appreciated every year by all who are able to attend and this is especially reflected in the feedback.

S.Ellis

Somya Ellis

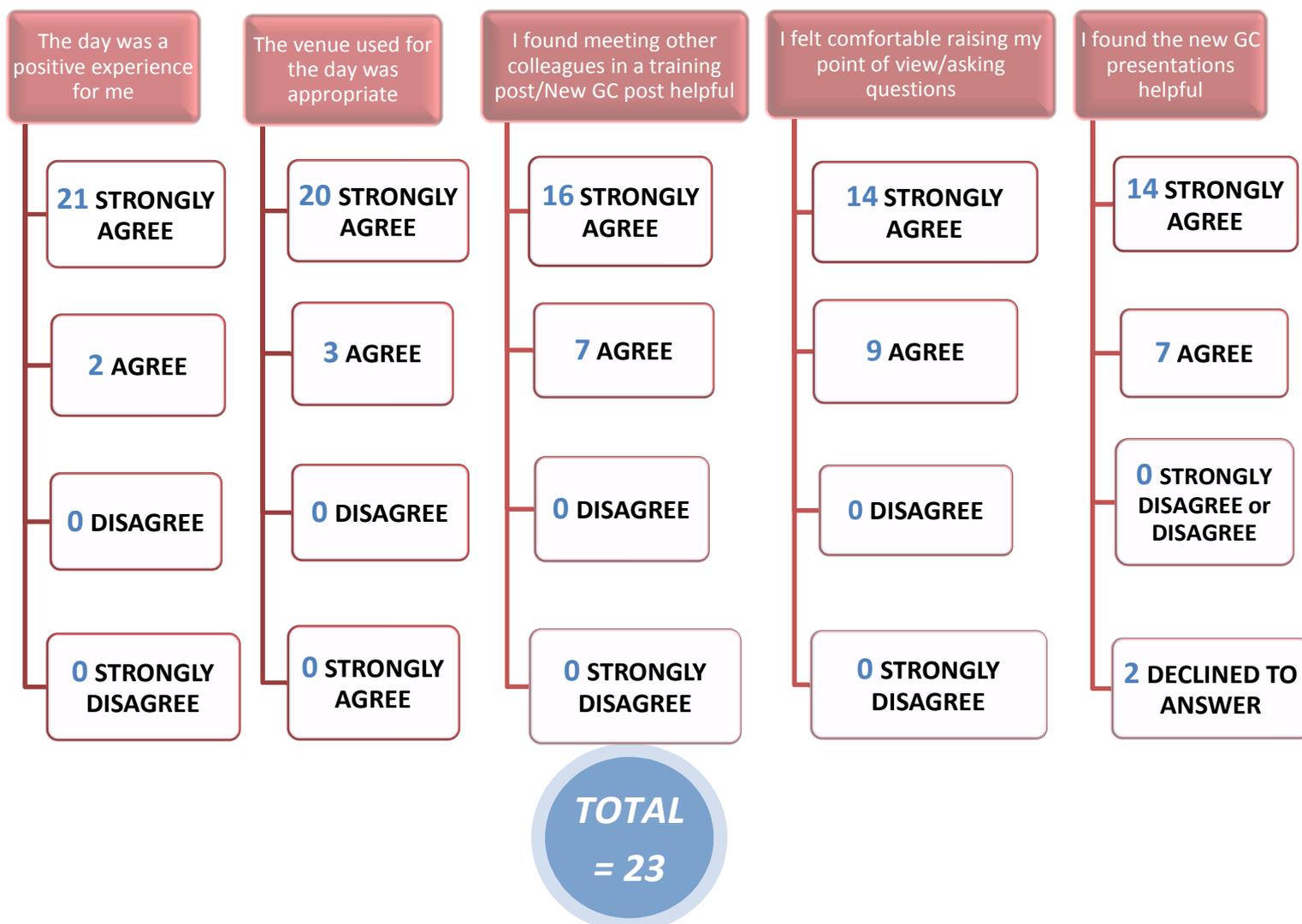
AGNC New GC Representative

Feedback and Learning Points from the Day

Summary

Feedback from the day was like last year and tremendously positive. All new GCs who attended the training day and submitted feedback said they would choose to attend a similar meeting in the future.

Like last year only 7 of the non-STP GCs in attendance were currently using the GCTP learning contract. The reason for this given by most was that they had never heard of this contract or were not sure what it was. One person said their department has not used it before so it was not especially encouraged, but they will do so for their registration. Hopefully, now the newly updated version of the learning contract is available, this will be a useful aid in the registration process.



Reflections of Attendees

“Really enjoyed the morning workshop – he (Alan) was really engaging and positive and I learned a lot/reflected”

“Liked the counselling focussed morning session and structure of the day... Cases were also interesting and timekeeping was well managed”

“Really good! Cases were good to discuss with other GCs”

“Loved the session this morning – really useful and great reminder of counselling skills. Feel confident in approaching challenges in a new way.”

“Gained a lot from the session with Alan Phillips – really liked the idea of watching video to see how skills applied. Enjoyed GC presentations – interesting way to learn and find out how things are approached at different departments. More time for comments/discussion towards end?”

“I enjoyed meeting people”

“”Found this very helpful. Enjoyed interacting with a wider group of new GCs. Nice to think about difficult cases. Really enjoyed the workshop with Alan!”

Do you have any suggestions for future meetings, including talks or activities?

- Experiences of different training posts
- Discussion around direction in terms of future job prospects. Also information about working in the private sector
- Please could presentation slides be added as they are emailed to organiser rather than alphabetically
- Family systems theory/counselling
- Tips on registration
- Continue to re-engage with counselling practice and literature
- Discuss fewer sessions but in more depth
- An optional social event post-meeting to allow for more interaction/networking

Do you have any suggestions for what activities/resources, outside your department, would be best to support you in your training as a new GC?

- ❖ More counselling theory work/ role play meet ups?
- ❖ Opportunity to develop psychosocial skills in professional capacity outside of department
- ❖ Increased awareness of useful courses and training days
- ❖ Updates via new GC rep on good/new counselling literature/research?

- ❖ Networking events
- ❖ Webinars/optional case discussions from new GC group members via Skype
- ❖ Regular case discussion, maybe more local groups could get together e.g. in regional training networks

Learning Points from Case Discussions

<p>Telephone counselling can be really challenging and you often can't prepare for what someone will tell you</p> <p>Look after yourself!</p> <p>Reflect on how emotionally challenging cases/patients that resonate with your personal life may influence your practice e.g. awareness of transference.</p> <p>Talk to colleagues/supervisor and make good use of clinical supervision.</p>
<p>Direct to consumer genetic testing is almost always the same test. Ancestry isn't so innocent in regards to the impact on families.</p> <p>It's the blind leading the blind.</p> <p>False positive rates can be as high as 40% (Tandy-Connor, S et al 2018)</p> <p>They don't consider the impact on healthcare services.</p>
<p>Remember to be explicit and up front about expectations and be clear about what you can extend in regards to testing/options sooner in the consultation when appropriate.</p> <p>Be aware of the transactional analysis occurring and be quicker to pick up on the shift in states. (e.g. someone we find very dominant may evoke a 'child' state) Made this trainee feel disempowered and overwhelmed which continued to frustrate the patient.</p> <p>If you recognise this and are very uncomfortable, be confident in asking a more experienced member of staff to be involved or to take over where possible.</p>
<p>Agenda setting is important especially given the example where the parents didn't know the diagnosis and referral did not make this clear.</p> <p>Role of a GC – being flexible and adapting to the changing nature of the appointment</p> <p>Following up the patients after the appointment</p> <p>Impact of this on us as professionals (use supervision, discussion with colleagues)</p>
<p>Limit to no. patients in a consultation if possible</p> <p>Have the confidence to do what is morally correct at the time.</p>
<p>One trainee knew a lot about the patient's family which they couldn't say to them and found it very hard to forget and concentrate on couple in the session.</p> <p>Learning points were that containing anxiety is a very useful skill to develop.</p> <p>Have self awareness and understand countertransference.</p> <p>You will be dealing with the patient's emotional rollercoaster and reconfiguration of thoughts.</p> <p>Provision of a supportive base is useful.</p>
<p>Never assume a person understands something just because they've agreed to be tested for it!</p> <p><u>Always</u> make sure you discuss testing for family members</p>
<p>GC job is not to 'downplay' difficult results. Listening is sometimes the best counselling approach.</p> <p>Time helps with difficult emotions. Trust your instincts!</p>