

*‘A multitude of fears coupled
with excitement’*

Children’s nursing students’
experiences of their first
practice placement

Mary Brady & Dr. Jayne Price, Rachael Bolland and Dr. Gina Finnerty

Background

- First placement instrumental in shaping views about chosen career
- ‘Sense of unease’ with existing preparation for practice, especially first placement
- Evidence from the literature: Brien (2012); Melling (2011), NMC (2010)

1. Explore the anxieties experienced by students prior to and during their first practice placement
2. To identify strategies which helped prepare and support students during their first practice placement
3. Explore the perspective of professional staff regarding how the anxieties of student nurses prior to their first practice placement can be addressed

CHiPP objectives

1. Explore the anxieties experienced by students prior to and during their first practice placement
2. To identify strategies which helped prepare and support students during their first practice placement

Part 1: Self-administered, questionnaire from 21 children's nursing students prior to their first placement

Part 2: A focus group was held with 5 students following the placement using the Nominal Group technique

Data from questionnaires (n=21)

- **Excitement**

- Contact with placement
- Pre placement visits
 - Investigating types of children
 - Reading around illnesses

- **Ownership**

- My mentor
- My placement

- **Use of ‘jargon’**

- Doing the ‘obs’

Data from questionnaires (n=21)

- **Concerns**

- Fitting in and getting on with mentor
- Making mistakes
- Professionalism

- **Anxiety**

- Appear helpful and get things right
- PAD
- Especially from those with no or little previous experience but not all

Data from focus group (n=5)

What helped prepare the students	ranking	votes
Talk by Sept 2013 student	1 st	7
Pre-visit to placement and phone call	2 nd	5
Peer support helpful tips	2 nd	5
Placement website	2 nd	5
Zone induction	3 rd	3
Advice from lecturers about being open-minded	4 th	2
Found out what specialist services are involved	4 th	2
Speaking to my PT or another lecturer about my anxieties	5 th	1
Having a student from the same cohort in the same placement (beforehand)	6 th	0

“...one **previous student**... she came into one of our learning practice sessions ... and she gave us loads of information ... like she brought some bubbles ‘cos that really does work... so previous students from last year about their anxieties, that really helped me as well”

Ownership: “...**My** placement was great...” , “**My** health visitor”
“**My** placement”

Fear: I was at a children’s centre and so... it’s not a ward based thing but they all really welcomed so that ...obliterated my **fears** anyway...

“We knew which days she (mentor) was going to be in & she **planned from the first day** when we’d do our, sign off PADs and stuff, so that was really nice ...instead of trying to chase her for when it’s going to be done.

Data from students' focus group

What helped support the students	ranking	votes
Mentor relationships ongoing support	1 st	10
Feeling involved by ALL the team, thanked and valued	2 nd	5
Fellow student support on placement	3 rd	4
Mentor creativity in identifying learning opportunities	3 rd	4
Rota so that she knew what she (student) would be doing each day	4 th	3
Awareness that link lecturer was available	4 th	3
Visit by the link lecturer	5 th	1
Learning in practice session: 'saying good bye'	6 th	0

*“My placement was amazing, really supportive **mentor**, I actually wasn’t with my **mentor** all the time ... but ...I quite liked that because in the environment that I was in I felt like if she was with me all the time felt like I’d be being watched, and I wouldn’t have been able to be as comfortable to just get on with interacting with the children as much”*

*“...My **mentor** was always with me, not too much but ... the last two weeks she ... grew confident...in me, “Oh do you want to lead this session, you know what to do, and that was quite helpful, for someone to actually believe in me ... a lot of support which I felt was quite strong”*

*“I was very, very anxious but my **mentor** was very, very nice, we just connected straightaway, it was like magic, very, very helpful”*

*“My **mentor** had a rota ...for both me and the other students ...knew... we’d always be in the nurseries in the morning, but in the afternoon for almost every day she’d give us something else to do...and she’d rotate us each week... even though we had a rota, it wasn’t rigid, we could change things if we wanted to...so that was really supportive and ... she planned from the first day when we’d sign off our PADs ...”*

Conclusions

- Students develop a sense of ownership of their experience
- Joint preparation helped buffer their anxiety
- Peer support & knowledge sharing through a senior student in a preparation for practice session is a clear recommendation
- A welcoming, interested mentor contributed to positive learning experience

Thank you
and
any questions?

Mary Brady, Dr. Jayne Price, Rachael Bolland and Dr. Gina Finnerty