Using simulated practice to enhance pre-registration nursing students’ interpersonal, communication, assessment and handover skills.

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Seeds of inspiration

• Experiences as patient, care partner, registered nurse, nurse teacher, researcher
• Action research study: “Exploring the Patient Journey: a collaborative and person-centred approach to improving healthcare and services”
• Emphasised importance of lived experience and learning from patients & staff
Interpersonal & communication skills: at the heart of everything we do & vital for safe, effective, person-centred care and practice.
Ideas
Inspiring
Innovation

Opportunity: Pre-registration unit: Therapeutic Communication in Adult Nursing
Therapeutic Communication in Adult Nursing unit – overview of topics

• Communication and relationship building at individual level & overcoming barriers e.g. communication skills & tools, initial assessment, person-centredness, shared-decision-making, care planning, breaking bad news, e-health, diversity and inclusion, advocacy

• Communication and teamwork at group level & overcoming barriers e.g. hierarchy, oppressive practice, assertiveness, promoting person-centredness & improving culture & safety e.g. via handover

• Applying theory, research and policy to practice; bridge gaps & evidence-based practice.

• Preparing for professional practice consistent with requirements of Nursing & Midwifery Council
Aims & objectives for simulation

To apply and consolidate learning from unit and further enhance student nurse understanding of the importance of communication and interpersonal skills to person-centred, safe & effective nursing practice by:

1. carrying out a history-taking admission assessment and gaining understanding of the patient’s perspective.
2. handing over key patient information to a clinical team using an evidence-based, structured approach
3. receiving feedback on both activities from those with first-hand experience as service users or providers
4. reflecting on experiences and identifying what has been done well, or where further development is required to improve current practice.
Why simulation?

An opportunity for students to practise in a safe, supportive, unpressured environment without risk to self or patient.
Simulation: learning by & from experience

‘I want to feel heard and understood. I want to know about my options, and I want to be supported to make a decision based on what matters to me.’

A personal view of shared decision making

‘I can plan my care with people who work together to understand me and my carer(s), allow me control, and bring together services to achieve the outcomes important to me.’

A narrative for person-centred co-ordinated care
Design and development of assessment activity:

- August 2014 initial discussions and preparatory session with 10 service users
- Identified what mattered to ‘patients’
- Developed ‘patient’ feedback form offering ‘patient’s’ perspective of students’ developing communication and interpersonal skills.
Form developed with & used by service users to formatively assess:
1. Initial impression and professionalism of each student
2. Their nursing assessment technique and skills
3. Communication and interpersonal skills
Simulation sessions: 3 key stages

**Part 1:** Students, working in groups of up to 3 as assessor (1), mentor (2), novice student (3), undertake an admission assessment of a ‘patient’ (SU) using current NHS documentation.

**Part 2:** Information gathered from the ‘patient’ is used to prepare a prioritised and structured, verbal handover report using iSBAR which students deliver to a ‘clinical’ team.

**Part 3:** Feedback, reflection and evaluation.
Since January 2015, simulation events have been delivered on six occasions (in Jan, March & May each year) & attended by over 400, 2nd year pre-registration nursing students.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_pCgzXqt5k&feature=youtu.be
Challenges

- Large numbers of students (approx. 90 - 130 per event)
- Heavily reliant on people on the day e.g. service users, practice colleagues, nurse teachers, clinical skills labs technicians, students.
- Resistance from students to engage in ‘role play’/perceptions of simulation as different to real life therefore not valuable
- Student anxiety about being assessed even if only formative.

But:

- After participating, students understand the value of simulation
- “Although resource intensive it is worthy of the degree of investment. Love it!” (Practice partner, Dorset CCG)
- “Service user involvement doesn’t just happen! But the outcome is definitely worth it!” (Angela Warren, Co-ordinator, BU Carer & Service User Partnership)
It was a rewarding day with appreciation from the students that we had given them the chance to 'have a go' in as real a situation as we could. I was particularly pleased to witness a group of students participating in their own and each other's learning.

Service user: “Safe and effective handover of patients in hospital or community settings is essential. This practical exercise for the students is an excellent way of helping them to develop these skills. It was a privilege for me to take part in this and I am so looking forward to the next one.”
Final year student: “Feedback from the service users and the staff after the simulation and handover allowed for students to reflect on how they performed ...this was extremely beneficial...”

Final year student: “If I had been given the opportunity this would have beneficially helped me...”
Student nurse: “I will remember this for the rest of the course. It helped me to understand some areas of improvement that could help me in practice.”

Student nurse: “made me realise how my assessment skills impacted the patient.”

Student nurse: “Simulated assessment has been very helpful.”

Student nurse: “I feel I have more confidence now I have been able to practice in a relaxed, friendly environment.”

Student nurse: “Good to have feedback from the service user.”
Student nurse: “Never done a handover before so it was nice to be able to structure it.”

Student nurse: “It was good to get feedback on how we handover patients by peers.”

Student nurse: “..made it clear what is required to achieve a good handover.”

Student nurse: “Made me feel confident and definitely able to handover again.”

Student nurse: “It was a great guideline; do not miss any important details.”
Tutor: “What a buzz! Students returned on a bit of a high after the patient assessment. They seemed to have really enjoyed themselves and connected with their patients. Real life problems were raised e.g. not knowing the drugs patients spoke about... lots of discussions about practice as a result...”
“The activity provides a visual picture, although only a snapshot, but indicates to facilitate skills in:

- Listening
- Communication style – verbal/non-verbal
- Physical/non-verbal approach
- Emotional intelligence
- Nursing knowledge – assessment/diagnosis/process/treatment/need for MDT intervention etc.
- Documentation
- Dissemination
- Interpretation
- Taking notes
- Prioritising
- Selection of important information
- Managing information
- Team working.” (Practice partner)
Influence of service user involvement on student learning and development

23. Please briefly explain how the involvement of service users and gaining an insight to their lived experiences, e.g. through the simulation activity, will influence your learning and development as a future nurse.

- To be more patient and give time for client responses
- In a more informal setting we were able to ask question that we may not have confidence to ask in a ‘real’ care situation
- Helps with gaining insight to how their lives are managed
- It gave a perspective of how you actually come across to service users
- There were certain health conditions that the service user had that she did not admit to when asked but were uncovered through after questions
- Importance of confidentiality
- To try not to assume
- Their history can be affiliated to their anxiety and feelings
- Everyone’s priorities are different
- Makes it feel more like practice
- Applied theory to practice in controlled environment
- What the patient comes into hospital with is not always the full picture, often lots of other issues to raise
Any

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