

Mentor Guidance for Helping Students to Gain an Insight into Providing Care and Understanding the Issues of Clients with Health Problems Related to Other Branches of Nursing

Due to extreme difficulties in accessing placements for all students to experience care provision across all branches of nursing, we have had to explore innovative ways in which students can gain an understanding of client needs in certain nursing disciplines. Understanding of other branches of nursing also helps the student to see the relevance of needing to know about other branches of nursing and how it relates to their own branch. The attached paper (Non Branch Pathway Programme 09/09) gives a detailed overview of the input the students are expected to have, and which outcomes they need to achieve.

All areas have clients who also have associated health problems that are not directly related to the branch of nursing that they deliver e.g. clients who have a long-term condition such as chronic obstructive airways disease may also be depressed, or clients with a learning disability may develop pneumonia. Hence, it is really important to understand how to provide and manage care for clients who cross their normal boundaries of care.

How can I prepare for these students?

It will be really useful to have some discussion in your placement meetings to explore and discuss with your team what sort of things you could help the student with – it will help to pool experience of other health problems and help decide what resources you have available to help students.

The mentor role

The theoretical preparation and activities will be organised by the Division of Nursing but it is expected that as a mentor you will support the students in applying what they have learned to your own care setting. How you facilitate this as a mentor will depend on your environment of care. There are lots of ways in which you can help to facilitate the student's learning:

- It may be that you assist a student by selecting a client that they can provide care for, allowing them time to talk to the client with the aim of providing the student with some insight into the individual's experience of your specific healthcare setting and how that matches or differs from how they manage their own healthcare needs
- You may be able to provide an insight visit to another part of your patient's care pathway to enable the student to observe care relating to problems that arise
- It can be helpful to reflect with the student on how you, as a mentor, have dealt with non branch issues you have experienced in the past, and what sort of issues arose for you and the client as a result of your experience
- It can be helpful to compare the facilities that you have in your placement to deal with clients compared to the facilities in other settings
- It is useful to look at the similar aspects of care that you and other branches of nursing provide as well as how aspects and resources available to nurses can differ.

- It is useful to explore issues of social inclusion with clients in relation to diverse health problems.

How can you get help?

If you get really stuck and are not sure how to help the student you can get help from:

- Other mentors in your placement area
- Your PLT education representative
- The student's personal tutor
- Any of the programme leaders in the university