

This paper was prepared for HEE as part of the Midlands Practice Education Hub Project, and led to workshops in Developing Coaching Approaches in May 2021

Briefing Paper: Coaching models to support the delivery of innovative approaches to placement expansion

This briefing paper is for Higher Education England (HEE)

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Subject: Adopting a coaching approach to supporting placement expansion

Background

Addressing urgent workforce shortages in nursing is a key target of the people plan (2019), particularly given that nurses, are critical to the delivery of the 21st century care set out in the NHS Long Term Plan (2019). One solution to workforce shortages identified in the people plan is to significantly increase the number of newly qualified nurses joining the NHS. As Learning in practice is a vital and substantial component of pre-registration nursing programmes, comprising some fifty percent of dedicated learning time in practice (NMC, 2018). The expansion of the practice learning placement across the NHS and independent organisations is therefore a key factor to addressing the nursing workforce shortages.

The expansion, organisation and provision of effective learning in practice relies on strong partnerships between health and care providers, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Health Education England and the professional regulatory bodies. This reliance of partnership working is attributed to the roles each play in ensuring there is adequate number of quality practice learning placement to support students recruited to pre-registration nursing programmes. From the perspective of students, each practice placement is designed to support learning and achievement at a particular point in the programme. For placement providers, supporting students is a responsibility but a welcome opportunity to grow the health care workforce for the future. For HEIs that provide health professional programmes are not only familiar to the challenges of the real world of health care but are deeply invested in the co-development of successful models to support student learning in practice.

Reviewing models of practice learning, which focus on learning to nurse the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) identified coaching as a model of intervention that facilitates another person's learning, development, and performance. Indeed, Whitmore (2009) highlights such models as the four stage GROW (Goal setting, Reality, Options and Will) have been used successfully within coaching to support and facilitate learning and development. However, Faithfull-Byrne et al (2017) and Narayanasamy and Penney (2014) suggests coaching underpins the philosophy of learning and is an approach which has grown in popularity within clinical practice, and involves students being guided and supported to identify

solutions to patient focused care, to working collaboratively alongside other students under the guidance of a coach. Interestingly highlighted within the Wills (2012) review, was that coaching approaches when applied to students learning have a potential to boost leadership learning that is student led, less focused on following directions from a practice assessor/supervisor and more focused on students taking responsibility for identifying their learning goals and objectives. Nursing Leadership is strongly advocated within the People Plan (2019) in shaping a positive, inclusive and people centred culture across the NHS to support a more effective and efficient workforce.

Staff and students involved in coaching approaches in clinical practice both commented that coaching enhanced the preparation to registration. Particularly given some of the debate about the expressed doubts over newly qualified nurses being fit for purpose or fit for practice (Jewell, 2013; Ousey, 2009; Whitehead et al., 2013), potentially this could be a real strength of the model. According to Monaghan, (2015) many newly qualified nurses commented they feel unprepared for the reality and responsibility of registered practice, lack confidence in their own abilities and feel their clinical skills are underdeveloped. Therefore, it is essential models to support student learning in practice develop behaviours that enhance clinical learning and accountability (Perry et al., 2018). Hill et al (2020), findings suggest coaching approaches may hold a promise for these developments in behaviours changes, thus better enabling the transition from student to staff nurse. Whilst Williamson (2020) highlights a potential benefit with the adoption of coaching approaches is the reported increased of placement capacity.

Preparation is acknowledged, by Hill et al (2020) to be key in the success of coaching approaches, and the findings found this to be true for both student and stakeholders; these findings were also echoed in previous studies. Nelson et al. (2004) recognised the importance and necessity of preparing coaches so they might work effectively as a coach whilst Henderson et al (2010) found that student and staff preparation increased engagement. Importantly coaching approaches also aligns with the standards for student support set out by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (2018), as the approach emphasises peer collaboration and coaching, rather than individual mentoring (Hirdle et al, 2020). Recommendation of preparation referred in this paragraph would be:

- Ensure there is adequate preparation of staff and students
- Provide training in coaching skills to all staff before implementation
- Schedule an extended orientation period for students as soon as they start their placement
- Require students to use daily learning logs throughout their placement
- Ensure there is regular feedback between students and the wider team

Analysis

The people Plan (2019) identifies a significant urgency in addressing the workforce shortages in nursing to deliver the NHS long-term plan for the 21st century. The role of nursing leadership is strongly advocated within the People Plan (2019) in shaping a positive,

inclusive and people centred culture across the NHS to support a more effective and efficient workforce.

Within the UK, coaching is an expanding developmental approach that is believed to facilitate individuals to maximise their own potential (Faithfull-Byrne et al., 2017). The benefits coaching holds for promoting the professional development of nursing skills, knowledge and abilities are supported by (Faithfull-Byrne et al., 2017; Narayanasamy and Penney, 2014). Both student and stakeholders perceived increases in student responsibility, confidence levels and skill development while coaching approaches was also perceived to aid the transition to registered practitioner, enhance peer support and team membership, increase leadership skills and enhance the ability to act as a role model; all important traits for enhancing subsequent student experiences (Materne et al., 2017; Henderson et al., 2011)

Therefore, it would appear adopting coaching to support practice learning models could boost student nurse's leadership learning, has the potential for the expansion of practice learning capacity and clearly aligns with the Nursing and Midwifery Council Further Nurse Standards for practice supervision and assessment (2018). Whilst there is a recognition of the importance and necessity of preparing coaches so they may work effectively (Hill et al, 2020 and Nelson et al, 2004)

Recommendation

To adopt and disseminate coaching models master classes across HEI and practice learning partners to:

- *Support practice learning experience and expansion, enabling Universities to recruit more students to pre-registration nursing programmes.*
- *Significantly increase the number of newly qualified nurses joining the NHS to address the nursing workforce shortages outlined in the People Plan (2019).*
- *Boost the leadership learning of student nurses to meet the people plan (2019) in shaping the positive, inclusive and people centred culture across the NHS*
- *Provide the adequate number of competent, accountable and compassionate nurses, critical to the delivery of the 21st century care which is set out in the NHS Long Term Plan (2019).*
- *Peer coaching models to be embedded in the future workforce to support a culture of learning and supervision*

Cautionary Notes

Placement expansion and implementing of new models to support learning in practice all require time, resource, and energy from both HEI and practice partners. Given the impact of Covid19 on the resilience of individual clinical staff and the unprecedented changing context of service delivery, timing of the sessions are essential, to early and this could have a negative impact on the attendance and implementation, however getting the timing right could bring a very positive and welcomed change in focus for clinical staff.

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Step by Step approach to MYE Coaching sessions (2 hours)

Aim of the session

To support the development and implementation of coaching models to support student nurses in practice.

The session will cover:

- Background from change in support for practice learning
- Understanding why coaching is important in developing and supporting learning in a safe environment
- Core principles of coaching models
- How coaching can support the nursing expansion programme
- A Step by Step approach to implementation of coaching within the workforce: including group discussions

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