



Enhancing nursing placements through practice supervision

Lizzie Hilliam the Registered Manager at Collingwood Care Home shares her reflections on completing a Practice Supervisor programme and the impact it's had on her confidence, knowledge and being able to provide student support.



What was your knowledge of the practice supervisor role prior to completing the programme and what made you decide you wanted to do the programme?

Entering this programme, I had very little knowledge of what a Practice Supervisor was, what their role within a student's placement was or how it worked with the student's studies.

The practice supervisor we have currently at Collingwood is a registered nurse, and she manages the student nursing placements within the home. I had assumptions based on what I have seen of her work, and what she does with the students within the home. However, due to the busy nature of our work, I have never fully appreciated what this role involved. On reflection after completing the programme, I can appreciate that my knowledge was very little. I wanted to be able to support the clinical lead with our student nurse placements.

Students are an important part of our home and an area that I am personally passionate about. For me and my development, this was an obvious next step. The placements that we offer are crucial for that person's training and we aim to provide them with the best placement experience possible.

What did you enjoy most about the content of the programme?

The first unit really sets the scene for the learning. It explains why this programme is so important and how it will achieve its aims. I enjoyed the varied learning methods – the written explanations and the video's showing real exchanges within care settings. This for me, brought the learning to life and I could see how the theory was being put into practice. The way that the programme is set out makes it easy to follow and you

can track your progress throughout. The resources are brilliant, meaning you don't need to re-invent the wheel, by being fully downloadable.

What were some key learning points that you took away from the programme?

I learnt a lot from the programme. The key points were how I would fit into the students learning journey within their placements. Also, what would be expected of me as the student's Practice Supervisor and how I can achieve this.

The programme takes you through the student's journey right from the moment of them stepping through the door. This was brilliant as it boosted my confidence at helping a student settle in right from the first meeting.

The importance of setting clear objectives is important for the students, and this part of the programme was a great reminder of how to do this.

How to negotiate reflective practice which is such a key skill for our emerging nurses was important, and the training helped to break this down and show how to encourage this.

What bits of the programme did you find most useful when hosting a student nurse on placement with you? For example, were you able to complete their initial interview/orientation and provide them with some feedback?

Before our first student of this academic year arrived, I spoke to our Clinical Lead and planned how I was going to support the student alongside what the Clinical Lead would be doing. This included their initial interview including their orientation of the home and its staff. I felt a bit nervous completing this as it is so important to set the tone for the rest of their placement, however I was able to check back through the learning programme to re-fresh what I had to include. When I led the initial interview, I felt confident in what I needed to cover and what paperwork I needed to fill in with them.

Did you provide feedback to the practice assessor on the progress you felt the student was making? How did you do this?

Having completed the student nurse's 4-week review, I was able to pass on feedback to the practice assessor on:

- how the student felt the placement was going
- what progress they had made
- what learning points they had gained
- how they felt about their reflective accounts
- what they wanted to complete during their next 4 weeks

- what they wanted to improve upon
- how they wanted to achieve this
- how they would transfer the skills and knowledge that they are gaining here, to their next placement.

I was able to input to the Practice Assessor where the student wanted to improve and how. An example would be to continue to work with the District Nursing team and to do a ward round
Alongside the ANP that comes into the home.

Do you feel more confident in hosting students and supporting them as a practice supervisor having completed the programme?

Yes, yes and yes! The programme gives you all the information you need. It's then down to you to consider what you need to add in for your own individual home environments and how you manage your home environments. The key to this is to keep the communication going and check in on a regular basis. I feel as a new Practice Supervisor, it is also important to get feedback from the students after their placement to see where I can improve and grow within this new role.

What impact do you feel this resource will have in terms of developing nursing placements in social care for your organisation and how will this benefit those who draw on care and support?

At the moment, Collingwood has a registered Nurse that is the lead for our student nursing placements. Her plan is to hand over the management of the student placements to me on her retirement. This course has allowed this transition to happen, which will enable us to continue to be able to host student nursing placements after she has retired. In the meantime, the completion of the course enables me to support the students alongside our Clinical Lead, meaning the students have two people that can offer support and feedback throughout their time within the home.

When the students are in the home, the residents benefit from being involved with their projects / studies also having a different person caring for them. They bring with them fresh perspectives and the most up to date skills, information and practices. This means we can also learn from them and keep up to date.

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