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BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care

**Module: Changemakers: Building your Personal
Brand for Sustainable Employment**

COMPONENT 1: ONLINE PORTFOLIO

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Introduction

This portfolio presents a reflective account of my learning journey throughout the Changemakers: Building Your Brand for Sustainable Employment module. Across the four units, I engaged with a range of interactive activities, discussions, and theoretical frameworks that enabled me to critically examine my personal and professional development within the health and social care sector.

Unit 1 introduced the importance of ambition, self-awareness, and personal branding, encouraging me to explore my strengths and values as the foundation of a sustainable career. Building on this, Unit 2 expanded my understanding of how globalisation, digital networks, and cultural diversity shape modern professional practice, particularly within multidisciplinary and community-based settings. In Unit 3, I learned to recognise opportunities, develop SMART goals, and cultivate a serendipity mindset, which together enhanced my ability to navigate career pathways with confidence and adaptability. Finally, Unit 4 deepened my insight into wellbeing, resilience, and mentoring, highlighting how personal growth and professional competence are interconnected.

Collectively, these units have strengthened my capacity for critical reflection, reinforced my commitment to compassionate practice, and prepared me to contribute meaningfully to the evolving landscape of health and social care.

Reflection on Unit 1: Ambition is critical

Introduction to the topics

Unit 1, focused on personal branding, self-awareness, and identifying strengths. Through reflective activities, I learned to align my values and skills to build an authentic professional identity in health and social care. Moreover, using tools like Johari's Window, I recognised my strengths and development areas, improving self-awareness and confidence for a sustainable career development and professional image in the health and social care sector.

The Role of Ambition and Motivation

Ambition and motivation are central to personal branding and career development. According to Deci and Ryan (2020), intrinsic motivation, driven by autonomy and purpose, promotes sustained engagement and personal growth. For example, social workers who dedicate themselves to supporting vulnerable families often demonstrate intrinsic motivation by prioritising client wellbeing and ethical practice over career advancement or recognition. This

contrasts with professionals focused primarily on promotions, who may neglect relational or empathetic aspects of care. Moreover, this aligns with Self-Determination Theory and Shepherd and Towler's (2020) view that ambition grounded in personal values strengthens personal branding. Similarly, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) suggests that individuals are motivated to achieve higher-level goals such as self-esteem and self-actualisation once their basic needs are met.

Therefore, the benefits include increased focus, resilience, and a strong sense of purpose, although excessive ambition may risk stress or burnout. Overall, in health and social care, intrinsic motivation supports ethical practice, professional growth, and long-term career satisfaction.

Setting Goals and Mastery

Setting clear goals is essential for professional growth and developing mastery. According to Locke and Latham's Goal-Setting Theory (2020), specific, challenging, and attainable goals enhance motivation, focus, and performance, while Dweck's Growth Mindset (2020) emphasises that skills can be developed through effort, fostering persistence. In addition, Pink's Theory of Mastery (2009) highlights that pursuing mastery, continual improvement in meaningful work, intrinsically motivates individuals to achieve higher performance and satisfaction. For example, in health and social care, I set a goal to improve my patient communication skills by attending workshops and seeking feedback from mentors, while a colleague aimed to learn digital record-keeping software to increase efficiency.

The pros of goal setting include increased focus, measurable progress, and motivation to achieve mastery. However, that overly ambitious or rigid goals can lead to stress, frustration, or burnout if circumstances prevent progress. Therefore, balancing ambition with adaptability ensures goals remain motivating without compromising wellbeing.

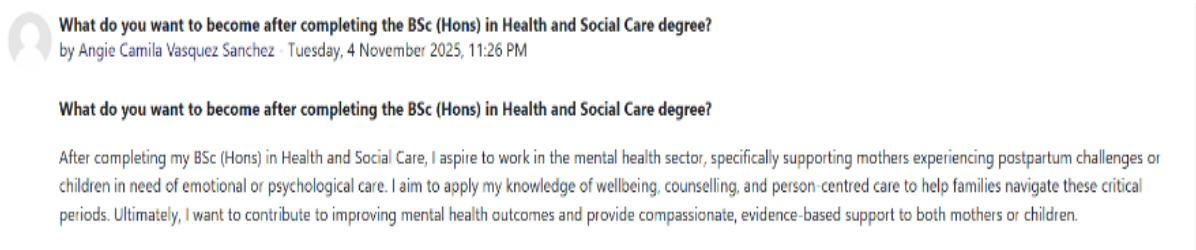


Figure 1: Career goals.



The meaning of Autonomy

by Angie Camila Vasquez Sanchez - Friday, 7 November 2025, 9:24 AM

The meaning of Autonomy

Autonomy means having the freedom to make your own choices and take responsibility for them. In Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (2020), autonomy is a key factor in motivation. It drives people to act based on personal values rather than pressure. In health and social care, autonomy allows professionals to make independent decisions that improve confidence, motivation, and quality of care.

Figure 2: Autonomy as key in motivation.



Meaning of self-determination.

by Angie Camila Vasquez Sanchez - Friday, 7 November 2025, 9:27 AM

Find out the meaning of self-determination.

Self-determination means having the freedom and ability to make your own choices, set your goals, and take control of your life.

Figure 3: Self-determination.

Reflection on Unit 2: It's a Small World

Introduction to the Topics

Unit 2, It's a Small World, I explored how global connections, digital communication, and professional networks shape modern health and social care. The unit encouraged me to examine how diverse relationships, cultural competence, and technology influence collaboration. I learned that networking is the action or process of interacting with others to exchange information and fundamentally about making meaningful relationships (Castells, 2023). For example, engaging in forum discussions allowed me to connect with peers from different cultural backgrounds and share insights about mental health support.

Networking and Bureaucratic

I examined the historical development of networking and saw how traditional bureaucratic systems limited collaboration through rigid hierarchies and top-down communication (Sherwood, 2024). This links directly to Max Weber's theory of bureaucracy, which provides structure and accountability; however, it also slows communication and reduces flexibility. For example, in a traditional hospital ward, a nurse may need approval from multiple senior staff before making even a simple decision, which consequently delays patient care. Therefore,

understanding these limitations helped me recognise why modern health and social care relies on more flexible, network-based approaches. In addition, during placement I observed that team-based working improved response times and patient outcomes compared to rigid hierarchical models, which further showed how networking supports both effective practice and professional growth.

Network Society and Digital Transformation

Castells' Network Society shows how digital networks transform communication and professional interaction (Yaquib & Alsabban, 2023; Castells, 2009). For instance, participating in online forums helped me learn new counselling techniques while also allowing me to explore global health issues such as maternal mental health. Moreover, digital networks enable rapid knowledge sharing and collaboration; however, information overload and digital inequalities can limit participation. Therefore, evaluating networks ensures they contribute meaningfully to outcomes such as improved health and community resilience (Boyle, 2023).

Making Connections and the Value of Diversity

Building meaningful, diverse connections is crucial in health and social care, requiring cultural competence. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions helped me reflect on how differences in power distance, communication styles, and decision-making affect teamwork (Edelist, 2024). For example, during a group project, recognising that some peers preferred collaborative decision-making enhanced inclusion and reduced conflict. Diversity enriches problem-solving but requires awareness, sensitivity, and open communication. Using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988) further helped me evaluate strengths and areas for development, linking theory to practice and enhancing my communication skills.

Overall, understanding networking, digital transformation, cultural competence, and reflective practice strengthened my ability to see how these skills will support my future career in mental health and family support, enabling me to assist mothers experiencing postpartum challenges (Thompson & Thompson, 2023).



What does networking mean to you?

by Angie Camila Vasquez Sanchez - Friday, 24 October 2025, 9:21 AM

Networking is the process of making connections and building relationships, providing you with advice and contacts, which can help you make informed career decisions. Networking can even help you find unadvertised jobs/internships and, furthermore, take place in a group or one-on-one setting.

Figure 4: Networking



Meaning of bureaucratic and hierarchy

by Angie Camila Vasquez Sanchez - Friday, 31 October 2025, 10:01 AM

- **Hierarchy** is a system in which people or things are placed at various ranks or levels according to their relative status or importance, visualised as a pyramid with power concentrated at the top.
- **Bureaucracy** is a governmental or corporate system or department established to create processes and implement rules and procedures that are necessary to implement the organisation's policies. It emphasises formal rules and impersonal relationships, aiming for efficiency and consistency in operations.

Figure 5: Bureaucratic and hierarchy.



Views on this week's Forum on Moodle

by Angie Camila Vasquez Sanchez - Friday, 31 October 2025, 10:31 AM

Why do you think that increasing networking in health and social care is important?

Increasing networking in health and social care is crucial for enhancing collaboration, improving patient outcomes, and fostering professional growth among practitioners.

How can you increase networking?

Attend industry events, leverage online platforms, maintain crucial relationships and follow up.

Figure 6: Importance of increasing networking.



Discussion

by Angie Camila Vasquez Sanchez - Friday, 31 October 2025, 12:47 PM

In what ways can professionals in health and social care make connections? And how would you connect with others in this field, and with whom?

Health and social care professionals build connections through networking, teamwork, and communication. Attending events, joining professional groups, and using online platforms help share knowledge and best practices. Working with colleagues, other care providers, and community organisations ensures coordinated, person-centred care. Building these relationships strengthens collaboration and improves the quality of support for individuals.

Figure 7: Importance of connections in health and social care.

Reflection on Unit 3: Opportunity Knocks

Introduction to the Topics

Unit 3, Opportunity Knocks, focused on recognising and using opportunities to develop personally and professionally. The themes included spotting opportunities, goal setting, personal development planning (PDP), recruitment, professional online presence, and building a serendipity mindset. I learned to view the health and social care environment from different perspectives, reflecting on how perception, communication, interpersonal skills, and networking drive success. And transform challenges into opportunities for growth.

Spotting Opportunities

I discovered that recognising opportunities involves not just planning but being open to chance, adopting a serendipity mindset. According to Busch (2024), this involves developing the ability to recognise unexpected but valuable opportunities. When combined with effective

communication and networking skills, this approach helps achieve success and seize “lucky” opportunities in health and social care by building strong professional relationships and remaining open to emerging possibilities. For example, during a discussion, I learned about a voluntary job by expressing interest and connecting with the manager, I was able to gain experience that enhanced my skills and professional network.

Goal Setting and Personal Development Planning

Using SMART goals and stretch goals, I set not only achievable objectives, but also ambitious ones that stretch my limits. For example, completing an advanced module and applying it in placement. Moreover, I used Gibbs’ Reflective Cycle to review progress, reflect on challenges, and refine my personal development planning. Throughout this process, I integrated Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (Huang, 2024; Carroll et al., 2025) to understand motivation: meeting foundational needs, such as belonging and esteem, helps me progress toward self-actualisation in my career.

Recruitment has shifted from traditional CVs and interviews to modern strategies emphasising networking, online portfolios, and social media. Building a professional presence on platforms like LinkedIn or through blogging is now essential. Using tools such as personal branding and content sharing helps promote expertise effectively. According to WifiTalents (2025), 73% of recruiters have hired via social media, and 92% use social channels for recruiting. LinkedIn (2024) also highlights these trends as key shifts in modern recruitment.

Furthermore, engaging in online forums allowed me to share reflections and discuss professional pathways. These interactions reinforced my work values, like collaboration and continuous learning. In addition, I also recognised the importance of maintaining an updated résumé and keeping my digital profile active to enhance my visibility and access to future career opportunities.



what does Serendipity mindset mean?

by Angie Camila Vasquez Sanchez - Friday, 7 November 2025, 12:13 PM

Serendipity, in this context, is a powerful phenomenon that can ignite innovation, strengthen relationships, and shape one’s path in life and work. It is not just about being in the right place at the right time but also about being open to and ready for unexpected opportunities. This mindset is not a genetic trait but can be developed and cultivated over time, allowing individuals to transform random chance into smart luck.

Figure 8: Serendipity Mindset.



How one can open doors for jobs opportunities?

by Angie Camila Vasquez Sanchez - Friday, 14 November 2025, 9:41 AM

How can one open doors for job opportunities?

You can open doors for job opportunities; one can adopt a growth mindset, network with others, and take proactive steps to increase the chances of finding and unlocking opportunities, even offering help and staying in touch with other people.

Figure 9: Pathways to Professional Opportunities.



Individual task

by Angie Camila Vasquez Sanchez - Friday, 14 November 2025, 10:17 AM

Do you have any professional online presence? Why is it essential to have a professional online presence in health and social care?

I have LinkedIn and Indeed. A professional online presence in health and social care increases your opportunities with the employers to find correct and professional employment, increasing visibility, credibility, networking connectivity and ethical conduct.

Figure 10: Online presence.



Short blog

by Angie Camila Vasquez Sanchez - Monday, 24 November 2025, 10:54 PM

Unlocking Career Opportunities in Health and Social Care

Success in health and social care depends on recognising opportunities and taking proactive steps to develop professionally. Setting SMART and stretch goals helps you push beyond your comfort zone while staying focused on achievable outcomes.

Networking, both in-person and online, opens doors to placements, training, and job prospects. Maintaining an up-to-date résumé and a professional online presence on platforms like LinkedIn or through blogging enhances visibility to employers.

Being open to unexpected opportunities, or adopting a serendipity mindset, can lead to valuable experiences you might not have planned. By combining goal setting, reflective practice, and strategic networking, you can create pathways to a fulfilling career in health and social care.

Figure 11: Blog unlocking opportunities in health and social care.

Reflective Essay on Unit 4: The Pursuit of Happiness

Introduction to the Topics

In Unit 4, I explored interconnected themes such as wellbeing, resilience, work–life balance, limiting beliefs, and mentoring, all of which directly impact professional practice in health and social care. These topics helped me understand how to actively develop my personal skills while adapting to the evolving demands of the sector.

Wellbeing and resilience

Exploring well-being through the PERMA model helped me to evaluate how Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment contribute to personal satisfaction and effective professional performance (Al-Hendawi et al., 2024). For example, I realised that while I focus on completing tasks efficiently (Accomplishment), I sometimes

skip short breaks or team check-ins, which reduces Positive Emotion and weakens team relationships. Reflecting on this, I recognised a pattern of limiting beliefs, such as thinking I must handle everything alone or that taking breaks is unproductive now as mom, which prompted me to adopt more balanced practices in work and personal life.

Resilience theory highlights protective factors like coping strategies, emotional regulation, and social support, that strengthen capacity to manage stress (Hollaar et al., 2025). For instance, during a challenging shift where a patient became distressed, I used deep breathing, sought guidance from my manager, and reflected afterward on what went well, which enhanced my resilience. Moreover, linking this with Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, I learned that believing in my own abilities boosts resilience and shapes effective behaviour in difficult situations (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, pausing, reflecting, and regulating emotions before responding also helps me avoid personalising challenges and better manage workplace stress.

These frameworks together allow me to actively improve my wellbeing and professional effectiveness by combining reflection, meaningful engagement, and approach my professional responsibilities with greater confidence and balance.

The Role of Mentoring

Mentoring is a powerful tool for professional development, supporting learning through observation and modelling, in line with Bandura's Social Learning Theory (da Silva Souza et al., 2023). For example, during my voluntary role at Charing Cross Hospital, I shadowed a support worker who demonstrated how to interact compassionately with patients and manage administrative tasks efficiently. Mentors also benefit by enhancing leadership and communication skills. Furthermore, effective mentoring strengthens professional networks, fosters a positive organisational culture, and supports both personal growth and high-quality care delivery (David and Pitman, 2024).

**Individual task**
by Angie Camila Vasquez Sanchez - Friday, 21 November 2025, 9:49 AM

What does 'limiting beliefs' mean?

A limiting belief is a thought, opinion, state of mind, or conviction you believe to be absolutely true, but that belief holds you back in some way. In essence, a limiting belief is a story you tell yourself to keep you in your comfort zone, and it prevents you from becoming who you are meant to be.

Figure 3: *Limiting beliefs meaning.*

**Mentoring**
by Angie Camila Vasquez Sanchez - Friday, 28 November 2025, 11:59 AM

Why do you think mentoring is important in health and social care?

Mentoring is crucial in health and social care because it improves skills, builds confidence, and supports career progression for both mentees and mentors.

Any examples?

- Formal mentoring programs
- Career Advancement
- Personal Growth
- Skills Enhancement

Figure 4: *Importance of Mentoring.*

Conclusion

This online portfolio demonstrates how each unit of the Changemakers module has meaningfully shaped my personal and professional development. Across all four units, I engaged with theory, reflection, and practical activities that allowed me to deepen my self-awareness, strengthen my professional identity, and build the skills needed for a sustainable career in health and social care. By progressing through the units, I gradually developed a clearer understanding of who I am as a learner, a future practitioner, and a contributor to the wider community.

Unit 1 enabled me to recognise my strengths, values, and ambitions, helping me build an authentic personal brand grounded in intrinsic motivation. Unit 2 expanded my awareness of global perspectives, digital networks, and cultural competence, showing me, how meaningful connections enhance collaboration. In Unit 3, I learned to identify and act on opportunities, set purposeful goals, and present myself professionally in both physical and digital spaces. Finally, Unit 4 helped me understand the importance of wellbeing, resilience, work–life balance and mentoring in sustaining long-term career growth.

Together, these learning experiences have strengthened my confidence, clarified my career direction, and equipped me with practical strategies to navigate the demands of the health and social care sector with resilience, purpose, and compassion.

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