

Choose an appropriate model of reflection to look back at ONE aspect of your experiences of studying this module and completing the video assignment. What you have learned from studying this topic

It is important to reflect on work which you have completed as this offers one the opportunity to gain a more critical and in depth understanding of their work. Along with this it allows you to analyse what you have learned, picking out the positive and the negative points in both the work itself and in the way in which you completed the work in terms of your thought process, your time keeping and your efficiency. Reflective practice also allows one to pick up on discrepancies in their work, as understanding what you may have done wrong or less successfully allows you to build on this in future tasks (The University of Sheffield, N/D).

I aim to use Boud and others model of reflection in order to reflect on what I have learned from studying the topic of loneliness and social isolation in my video assignment, focusing on social prescribing (Boud, *et al*, 1985).

#### Returning to experience

When researching this topic and completing the video assignment for assignment 2 SJSI021 I learnt about social prescribing. Social prescribing is a method of prevention which is becoming increasingly popular in the UK for dealing with social isolation and loneliness, and a method which is encouraged by government (South., Higgins., Woodall and White, 2008). NHS Wales (2018) describe social prescribing to involve medical professionals and GPs prescribing social activities such as exercise, dancing, coffee groups, knitting groups etc to help individuals to cope with loneliness and social isolation in replacement for more traditional treatments such as medications and anti-depressants. The idea is to link individuals with support within the community.

#### Attending to (or connecting with) feelings

Initially I felt unsure about social prescribing as a concept. Holt (2016) explains that apprehension is a virtue of thought which occurs when one is unfamiliar with an event or concept. He explains that this process occurs for one to develop understanding concerning the concept in order to work out how they feel about it, and whether they trust it. Also, understanding that when one feels apprehensive about a concept, one often needs to develop better understanding of the efficiency of the concept in practice in order to overcome their initial apprehension. Understanding Holt's theory assisted me in understanding why I felt

apprehensive about social prescribing. It was only once I had researched examples of social prescribing in practice and evaluated the positive impact it had had on assisting individuals to overcome social isolation and loneliness until I felt comfortable and satisfied with its utility (Holt, 2016).

### Evaluating experience

Prior to studying this topic, I did hold some stereotypes and prejudices in relation to social prescribing. Cole (2017) explains that prejudices can hinder one's academic performance in higher education along with their ability to maintain high marks or grades in their assignments. He explains that when one holds stereotypes or prejudices towards a group or context it creates barriers to them wanting to research it and generates barriers to gaining a true and just conclusion regarding the topic, therefore hindering chances of success in the given assignment.

My prejudices were concerned with my knowledge of health care being predominantly revolved around the medical model of health care. This model is concerned around the belief that medicine and medical treatment is the best approach in 'curing' illness or disease (Healthy London Partnership, N/D). As this was the model of care, I was most familiar and comfortable with, I was predisposed to believing this method was best, and would work more efficiently in practice. The Scottish Government (2015) explain that education and broadening knowledge is key to overcoming prejudices, I believe this to be true as studying this topic taught me that social models of health care and methods of treatment which are underpinned by this model such as social prescribing can be significantly beneficial for one's mental health, psychological state and physical health. Researching this topic and gaining better understanding of the impact in which it can have on individuals struggling with social isolation and loneliness I no longer adopt the prejudices I previously held (Rogers and Robinson, 2004; The Scottish Government, 2015).

While studying this topic I have come to understand how combining primary care and voluntary sectors with public health boards can provide an essential link in tackling social isolation and loneliness, along with the importance of the social model of health care. Although at first I was surprised by this, it was beneficial for me and for my knowledge and understanding as it is a fundamental model concept which underpins a plethora of care strategies across the UK (Busby *et al*, 1999).

What will I do differently next time?

If I were to study this topic again, or to undergo a similar assignment the key changes I would make would be in relation to my attitudes towards the topic. Cole (2017) has taught me that going into a topic with an open mind, free from both prejudices and stereotypes can have significant influence on ensuring you do not subconsciously put yourself in a position that can disadvantage your academic success and grades.

Furthermore, in the future I aim to use The Scottish Government's (2015) strategies and advice of ensuring to become fully educated on a topic before letting previous knowledge shadow your opinion towards it. Along with this, I aim to become more familiar with using Holt's theory of overcoming apprehension, in doing this I hope that the likelihood of not trusting a concept will be less probable (Holt, 2016). Furthermore, allowing me the opportunity to use my assignments to learn new ideas and concepts with an open mind free from prejudice and stereotyping.

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