

Learner's name: Mair Heath

Learner's University Registration Number: 1602702



GRADUATE CERTIFICATE in Consolidation of Social Work Practice LEVEL 6 - 60 Credits

LEARNER PORTFOLIO (PORTH AGORED and UWTSD)

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Re-submission of Section 2

**WALES INSTITUTE for WORK-BASED LEARNING
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Section 2

Developmental review (a)

Guidance: This section should be completed by taking into account the work that you will have done since qualifying, and discussions with your mentor and supervisor/line manager as part of your First Three Years of Practice Individual Plan.

Based on your experience in practice identify and justify your agreed learning needs for the following outcomes:

- Working Collaboratively with service users & carers
Working Collaboratively with Other Professionals
- Applying analysis in assessment to inform interventions
- Intervention and application of professional judgement in increasingly complex situations

500 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section)

Communication and confidence have been a barrier for me when working collaboratively with individuals, their families, and carers. I have seen an improvement over my first year in practice however feel that this is something that needs continued development. This naturally affected my work as I felt self-conscious and awkward when talking to individuals. This was something I discussed with my manager during supervision as I am aware of how this impacts upon working collaboratively. Therefore, an agreed learning need has been identified as working on my confidence as a professional in order to improve the quality of my interactions with individuals. It has been agreed that I will work on improving this learning outcome through self-reflection, reflection during supervision and formal training.

I have been able to demonstrate some good examples over my first year in practice where I have worked collaboratively with families and carers. However, discussion in supervision and personal reflection on cases have highlighted that I need to develop my skills on working collaboratively with this group when conflict arises either between the families or with me. Due to my difficulty with confidence I have struggled to manage conflict. When there is a conflict between family members it is often difficult for them to keep the individual and their needs at the centre due to differing priorities and perspectives of all involved.

I have also found it difficult to manage when conflicts arise between families and myself. It can be difficult for families to understand the legal processes we have to follow. This can be a particularly challenging in terms of risk management and ensuring the least restrictive course of action is taken for someone who lacks capacity to make their own decisions. I

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have found this conflict between managing people's expectations and managing risk alongside issues with confidence which can make me doubt my decision making and professional judgement.

Discussion with my manager, consultant social worker and in supervision has highlighted that I have struggled to recognise the limitations of my role when dealing with complex situations. This has caused me to struggle when attempting to manage other professionals' expectations of me. My agreed learning need in relation to this is to manage situations differently by establishing the roles and responsibilities of all involved. This is a particularly pertinent learning need as I feel that this has caused me stress and anxiety in my role. Identification of this learning need stemmed from discussion regarding one particular case where I was receiving regular telephone calls from many other professionals involved informing me of their concerns and having an expectation that it was my sole responsibility to address these issues. It is this knowledge and experience of how working collaboratively can ensure improved outcomes for the individual that will prompt me to change my approach in the future.

In summary my identified and agreed learning needs are to improve confidence and communication, improve the management of conflict and to recognise and manage the limitations of my role. It has been agreed that these learning needs will be achieved by self-directed learning, reflective discussions in supervision and attending any relevant training.

Word Count 523

Section 6

Developmental Review (b)

Critically reflect on your development including reference to the training, learning, research and use of supervision since completing section 2. Consider in discussion with your mentor/ supervisor/line manager the extent to which those learning needs have been achieved. Identify additional learning needs to support your development in the transition to becoming an experienced practitioner. You will consider here, the feedback you have received from individuals using services, their families and carers, and how this has impacted on your practice.

800 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section)

This developmental review will reflect on section 2 of this portfolio using Borton's 1970 reflective model.

What

Firstly, I highlighted that I found communication with individuals difficult and this was exacerbated by my inexperience. I also highlighted that confidence was an issue for me when working collaboratively with families and carers particularly when conflict arises. Finally, I felt that the main issue I was struggling with at the time of writing the first developmental review was the limitations of my role and managing other professional's expectations of the social work role.

So What

The learning need in relation to communication and confidence was improved over this time period due to two main elements. Firstly, the natural progression over the course of this consolidation period has allowed me to gain skills and knowledge in this area. I have more experience to draw upon and have had to communicate with people in increasingly complex situations. Secondly, I attended training on collaborative communication which enabled me to reflect on how I have been communicating with individuals and families. This training enabled me to improve my practice by learning new skills and by reassuring me that I have been effectively communicating with people. The training allowed us to practice on fellow professionals using real life dilemmas that we were experiencing. Feedback from these individuals was that they felt comfortable and listened to; they also advised that they felt they had space and time to discuss what was important to them. Feedback I have personally received from service users has echoed that of my colleagues. I was also able to realise that I have the necessary communication skills and that my lack of confidence is unfounded. This has enabled me to take the confidence I have gained from peer feedback and utilise it

with service users to gather the relevant information for assessment. Further training was in regard to risk assessing and mental capacity act. I found that following this training I gained confidence in my assessing skills and that analysing something from a positive risk perspective can change the focus of risk, specifying the likelihood and impact of a particular risk. This enables a more balanced perspective upon a potential outcome and subsequent intervention as it informs decision making from a positive and least restrictive perspective.

In relation to the issue of confidence around working collaboratively with families and carers particularly when conflict arises, discussion with my mentor has highlighted that I feel more confident in this area but that I need to continue to work on this area. Dealing with conflict is something that I am learning to deal with through experience. I have learned that the legislative framework provides a basis for ensuring that the individual is at the centre. In particular, it is through the assessment process of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 or through the Mental Capacity Act 2005 that ensure focus remains on the individual. It can be difficult managing families who are in conflict, but I feel that over time I am becoming more confident at being more direct and not shying away from difficult conversations with people. This has also worked with managing families that are in conflict with me because my duties can go against what they want or believe should happen with their relative. I have found that by retaining core values about openness and honesty in my communication with families and carers it can often reduce conflict and aid collaborative working (Social Care Wales , 2017). I received verbal feedback from a family to say that they were very grateful for the sensitive and professional way I dealt with their mother having to move into a care home. This feedback has helped me to further gain confidence when dealing with families.

Through discussion in supervision I have found that I am improving with regards to the issue of realising the limitations of my role and managing other professional's expectations of the social work role. As a newly qualified social worker I was unable to recognise when I was required to be professionally assertive regarding other people's roles and responsibilities. The opportunity to critically reflect in a safe space has provided clarity and perspective on the issue and enabled me to confidently ensure that when such issues arise I can deal with them appropriately. My practice has changed as a result as I ensure that I meet with all involved to ascertain roles and responsibilities and decide how we can work together collaboratively to achieve the best outcome for individuals. My manager received an email from one of my health colleagues stating her gratitude for the professional way I challenged

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her during an MDT. This has assisted me to have the confidence that I am able to challenge in a professional manner.

Now what

It is now necessary to apply what I have learned from the above to further improve my practice. This will be achieved by continuing to make use of supervision to discuss areas for improvement and evaluate what went well with a case to inform future cases. Learning to reflect on the positive aspects of my work as well as what could be improved have greatly assisted me to gain confidence. I have requested further training to continue to improve on the identified leaning areas such as assertiveness and motivational interviewing training.

Word count 878

References

Borton, T., 1970. *Reach, Teach and Touch*. London: McGraw Hill.

Social Care Wales , 2017. *Code of Professional Practice for Social Care*. Cardiff: Social Care Wales .