

Portfolio and Reflective Commentary of workplace/voluntary experience

Gibbs Reflective Model

Description

For the Counseling Skills and approaches module at university one of the requirements was to engage in a placement where you could demonstrate counseling skills. For my placement I used my workplace which is a Domiciliary Care Agency. Danygraig is a domiciliary care agency that provides care for older people with physical and mental problems, dementia and sensory impairment (*Mission Statement / Ethos of Care*, 2015). I asked my workplace whether it would be okay for me to use them as my placement and they said this was okay. I sent a form to my tutor for this module with the placement details for them to contact them to ensure that the skills used would be beneficial and that it was okay for me to attend. During my time in placement there were some complications such as; staff shortages and lack of PPE provided to the social care sector. According to (Age UK, 2020) on average, 25% of frontline workers were unable to work by March 2020. Also, between March and July 2020 6.35 million staff sickness days were taken which is equivalent to 213% of what is usually expected from frontline care workers. Domiciliary care agencies were also put in a position where they lacked PPE due to the government's decision to prioritize equipping hospitals throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) provided the NHS with 1.9 billion sources of PPE (80% of PPE required) in comparison to 331 million sources of PPE for the social care sector (10% of ppe required) between the months of March and July 2020, Carter (2021).

Feelings

I was feeling confident when going to placement as I already work there. I knew all the clients and their routines from working there for four years prior. I felt as though this was a good way to get all of my hours completed with placement whilst being in a comfortable environment. However, when there was staff shortages and lack of PPE for the social care sector I felt as though we were under a lot of pressure to provide care to all clients and succeed in meeting all of their individual needs.

Evaluation

The good things about the experience were that I already had my DBS so there was no need to wait for that to come back before beginning to complete my placement hours. I also found that another good thing about the experience was that I had already completed my training needed including; food hygiene, fire safety, infection control, lone working. This was completed on an online database - Care Skills Academy.

Things that went well would be that care routines were easy to follow, and forming new relationships with clients and their families have been straightforward.

Some things that didn't go so well would be the shortage of staff levels and the demand on the company which meant long working hours to meet the needs of the individuals requiring care. At

one point Danygraig had to hand back packages due to having such a high demand of care but such short staff levels.

Analysis

Things went well as I already had the knowledge of the clients who were currently with us. I also already had the appropriate training required which made the experience more enjoyable.

Some things didn't go well as the demand for care throughout the pandemic was high with people requiring care at home. However, due to long working hours and the runs that were put on carers, this forced them to leave the job for various reasons including; spending time with family, not being paid enough, their own health and wellbeing. This then put more pressure on the carers there then with an even higher demand to meet individuals care needs with no new applications coming in for jobs outside of the company.

I think that if the pay was better and there was a good ratio of staff to clients then the company could have dealt with the pandemic better as carers were being overworked for average pay.

Recent research from (*Wages of Workers in the Frontline of the Pandemic below Average – New Research of WageIndicator* | EPSU, 2020) states that care workers were undervalued and paid which may be a reason for the frontline workers to feel obliged to leave when they are not feeling valued. Staff's health and wellbeing would be seen as a priority throughout their job and the covid-19 pandemic which some workers would have felt obliged to leave their job for. This may be due to having family members who would be seen as high risk, where they may need to isolate themselves from family in order to be able to work with peace of mind to protect their families, workers with families with young children and dependents at home may find that their work life and home life is overloading which may cause mental/physical illness, suffer from stress and anxiety, but health and wellbeing of staff members is vital in order for high quality care to be provided to clients.

Conclusions

I learned from this situation that you use more skills than you think during a daily job that can be transferable. I also feel as though you develop your skills with the more experience you have even if you do not realize it. I feel as though this situation could have been more positive if care workers felt valued for what they do and even working hours without feeling overworked. I feel as though the government has to make improvements to this area of the care sector (e.g. pay, rewards, working hours) to have more people interested in applying for care jobs. Skills I need to develop in order to handle a situation like this better would be confidence and time management skills in order to not be overworked and feeling exhausted.

Action Plan

If I had to do the same thing again I think I would choose to look for another placement in order to gain more experience in a different setting. I think going to a different setting would allow me to also identify areas of skills that need improvements so that I can develop them.

I will develop my skills by continuing with Danygraig as I do feel as though you use various skills day-to-day, however, I feel as though it's only when you're experiencing different opportunities where you develop on your skills for example; I feel as though when you see the

same clients everyday you get comfortable and don't realize the skills you use until you go to different clients and start from the beginning.

Danygraig's Mission Statement

Mission Statement

"Danygraig Domiciliary Care Agency provides community based services to older people with physical and mental health problems, sensory impairment and dementia in the Bridgend locality.

Danygraig aims to provide older people with tailor made packages of support which will enhance and promote independent living.

Our service endeavour's to ensure you receive a professional, quality service while giving piece of mind to you and your family, always ensuring safeguarding is adhered to at all times.

Our staff consist of experienced, trained and caring staff.

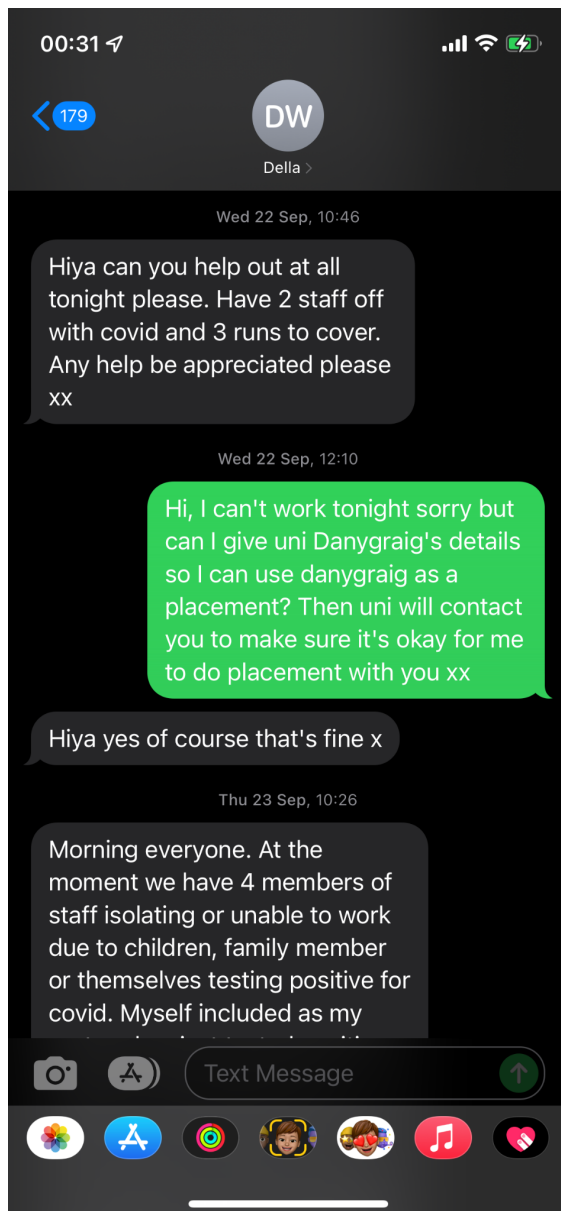
We are fully compliant with CSSIW minimum standards and regulations.

Ethos of Care

Danygraig Domiciliary Care Agency aims to ensure all clients who receive our services are treated with dignity and respect, confidentiality is adhered to at all times, putting your needs first.

The service aims to be flexible, to support your lifestyle, choices and preferences." - (*Mission Statement / Ethos of Care*, 2015)

Evidence of being accepted to do placement



[illegible][illegible]

Reference List

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