

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

Module code: BMHP5015

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Word count: 2000

Submission date: 5th December 2025

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Online portfolio

1. Introduction

This online portfolio shows how I think about things. I learnt more about the skills and behaviours that are expected in the health and social care sector as I finished the four Moodle units: self-awareness, values and professional identity, communication for employability, and career development planning. The self-awareness unit helped me figure out what I am good at and what I need to work on. It also helped me see how my personality and motivations shape my professional identity. The unit on values and professional identity helped me see how my personal values fit with what is expected in the field and how this makes me a better fit for care-based jobs.

The communication unit helped me feel surer of myself when it comes to writing and speaking professionally, which is important when working with coworkers, service users, and employers. Lastly, the career development planning unit helped me improve my CV, make my personal brand stronger, and set realistic goals for my future growth. Using theories like Health Education England's (2015) framework on employability in the health sector, I learnt how reflective practice and values-based behaviours help people get ready for work. In general, this portfolio shows how each unit has helped me become a more reflective, confident, and employable health and social care professional.

2. Task 1 – Developing My Professional Identity Through Personal Branding

I looked at how personal branding, self-awareness, and professional values affect how I present myself in the health and social care field. This unit taught me that to build a professional identity, I need to keep thinking about it, make sure my digital presence is in line with what employers want, and work on it on purpose.

Self-awareness was a big part of what I learnt, and I got better at it by doing activities based on the Johari Window model. This framework helped me see that some of my strengths, like empathy and active listening, are clear to other people, while others are

still in my "blind spot." For instance, I showed empathy during a group discussion task by comforting a classmate who was unsure of their skills. However, I often do not realise how much this behaviour affects my professional identity. This understanding is in line with recent studies that show that being aware of yourself makes you better at your job and more flexible (Ciarrochi et al., 2021).

I also used values-based practice to think about how compassion, respect, and safety affect my work. I did this by using the NHS Values and National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) principles. While doing the online case study, I realised that I naturally put dignity and person-centred communication first. But I also found a problem: I sometimes have trouble being assertive, especially when I do not agree with someone. The CIPD (2022) says that being assertive is an important skill for getting a job, so I need to work on this area for my future practice.

The unit also helped me learn more about personal branding and how to be professional online. After doing the digital footprint activity, I realised that my online presence

did not fully show what I wanted to do professionally. Because of this, I changed my LinkedIn profile by adding a clearer headline about health and social care, rewriting my summary to show off my values and strengths, and deleting older posts that did not fit with a professional image. I see personal branding as a way to empower myself, but I also see a problem: branding can make people seem too simple and make them feel like they have to show a polished version of themselves instead of a fully authentic one (González-Gascón et al., 2022). This made me want to find a balance between being real and being professional.

**Week 4 Forum -> Connecting with Others in Health and Social Care**
by Ketrina Bardi Or Bardhi - Friday, 7 November 2025, 12:01 PM

How Professionals in Health and Social Care Make Connections

Professionals in health and social care make connections by communicating regularly with colleagues, sharing information, and working together to support individuals and families. They build relationships through team meetings, multi-agency discussions, training sessions, and community events. Using digital tools such as email, online platforms, and professional networks also helps them stay connected and updated.

How I Would Connect With Others in This Field

I would connect with others by taking part in team meetings, attending training or workshops, and asking questions to learn from experienced staff. I would also communicate clearly with nurses, social workers, support staff, and other professionals involved in a person's care. Building positive relationships, showing respect, and working collaboratively would help me become part of the wider professional network in health and social care.

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**Week 4 Forum -> What I Think Networking Is**
by Ketrina Bardi Or Bardhi - Friday, 7 November 2025, 11:54 AM

Networking is the process of building and maintaining professional relationships that can support your personal, academic, or career development. It involves connecting with people, sharing ideas, exchanging information, and creating opportunities for collaboration. Effective networking isn't just about meeting new people—it's about forming meaningful connections based on trust and mutual benefit. This can happen face-to-face, such as at events or in the workplace, or online through platforms like LinkedIn. By networking, we gain access to new knowledge, insights, advice, and potential opportunities that we might not have found on our own.

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3. Task 2 – Exploring Global Perspectives and Cultural Competence in Health and Social Care

I understand more about how globalisation affects health and social care by showing how health systems, workforce mobility, and cultural diversity are all linked. I learnt more about how international policies and global health inequalities affect local practice through the learning activities. The unit stressed how important it is to be culturally competent when working with communities that are becoming more diverse. This is in line with WHO's goal of promoting culturally responsive care.

When I worked with a classmate from a different culture on a group project, it was a meaningful moment that helped me understand better. They did not speak English as their first language, and they did not seem sure if they wanted to help. I changed how I talked to them by speaking more slowly, making sure they understood, and encouraging them to share their point of view. From this experience, I learnt that being culturally competent is not about knowing things; it is also about changing how I act in real time to help others. This also taught me about cultural humility, which means always thinking about myself, being open to current ideas, and learning instead of thinking I know everything about someone else's culture (Hook et al., 2019).

Globalisation has its pros and cons. On the one hand, it can help people share knowledge, produce current ideas, and raise the bar for standards of practice. On the other hand, it can also make things harder. Communication problems can lead to

misunderstandings, and global inequalities mean that some countries lose skilled workers when they hire people from other countries. Thinking about these issues helped me see that globalisation is complicated. It can help health get better, but it can also make inequalities worse. To act ethically, you need to be aware of these tensions.

In the future, I want to improve my cultural competence by taking training on how to communicate with people from different backgrounds, asking for feedback from coworkers from different backgrounds, and thinking about how I interacted with service users from different cultures. NHS England (2020) says that caring and culturally aware practice is a basic requirement for everyone who works in health and social care. I want my professional identity to show these values. I can keep improving this skill by talking to people from different cultures, reading case studies from around the world, and practicing cultural humility.

**Week 2 Forum -> Example of a Gig Economy in Health and Social Care**
by Ketrina Bardi Or Bardhi - Thursday, 23 October 2025, 11:03 AM

Another example of the gig economy in the health and social care sector could be agency care workers or freelance support workers. These professionals are not permanently employed by one organisation; instead, they work on a temporary or flexible basis, choosing when and where they want to work.

For instance, agency nurses, healthcare assistants, or home carers often use online platforms or staffing agencies to find short-term shifts in hospitals, care homes, or private households. They may work for different employers each week, depending on availability and pay rates.

This approach gives workers flexibility and independence, allowing them to balance work with personal commitments. However, it can also lead to job insecurity, lack of benefits (such as sick pay or pensions), and less continuity of care for service users.

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**Week 2 Forum -> Key Features of a Boundary less Career**
by Ketrina Bardi Or Bardhi - Thursday, 23 October 2025, 11:02 AM

- Mobility: People often move between organisations, industries, or even countries.
- Self-directed growth: Individuals take responsibility for their own career development rather than relying on one employer.
- Transferable skills: Success depends on developing adaptable skills—such as communication, leadership, and digital literacy—that can be applied in many settings.
- Networking and learning: Careers are built through professional connections, continuous learning, and lifelong education.

In the health and social care sector, a boundary-less career might mean:

- Moving from community care to public health or policy work.
- Combining clinical practice, education, and research roles.
- Working across NHS services, local authorities, and charitable organisations.

Professionals in this field may choose to develop a portfolio career, where they hold multiple roles or projects simultaneously—such as working part-time as a care coordinator, teaching health courses, and consulting for community health programmes.

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4. Task 3 – Recognising and Leveraging Opportunities for Professional Growth

The third task made me think more strategically about how I find, assess, and use opportunities that help me grow personally and professionally in health and social care. This unit taught me that opportunities can come from more than just job openings. They can also come from networking, transferable skills, volunteering, and continuing

education. I learnt more about how being proactive can have a significant impact on my future job prospects as I did the online activities.

One important topic that stood out was opportunity awareness, which means knowing how to use my skills and experiences in new situations. The skills-matching activity helped me see that my strengths in communication, empathy, and organisation are especially useful for jobs like support worker, care coordinator, or wellbeing assistant. This is like what Jackson and Bridgstock (2021) said, which is that graduates are more likely to get jobs if they can explain their transferable skills and use them in different fields.

To put this knowledge to use, I recently went to an online safeguarding workshop offered by a local group. This not only taught me more, but it also helped me see how taking part in small, easy-to-reach opportunities can boost my confidence and help me grow as a professional. This is in line with Planned Happenstance Theory, which says that career paths grow through purposeful involvement with unplanned chances (Mitchell, Levin, and Krumboltz, 1999).

The unit also talked about how important it is to network and make connections. I talked to classmates who had worked in care settings during the discussion forum activity, and their ideas helped me see career paths I had not thought of before. This made me think more about how talking and learning together can lead to new opportunities. Studies show that professional networks can really help you move up in your career, feel more confident, and get more attention (Bayerl et al., 2020).

As part of the National Careers Service activities, I also set a SMART goal: to finish two more accredited online courses in health and social care (like dementia awareness and communication skills) in the next eight weeks to make my resume more appealing to employers. This goal gave my growth more meaning and structure.

I also saw some things that made it hard for me to take advantage of opportunities, like not being sure where to start, not having enough time because of other responsibilities, and not being confident. To deal with these problems, I plan to break tasks down into smaller steps, make learning a regular part of my week, and keep asking my peers and tutors for support.

**Week 1 Forum -> Career Goal in Health and Social Care**
by Ketrina Bardi Or Bardhi - Thursday, 23 October 2025, 10:50 AM

Step 1 – Short-Term Goal:
My short-term goal is to successfully complete the BSc (Hons) in Health and Social Care degree and gain practical experience through placements or volunteering in school and community health settings. I aim to apply the knowledge and skills I have developed in modules such as Safeguarding and Protection of Vulnerable Individuals, Public Health and Wellbeing, and Communication and Interpersonal Skills in Health and Social Care. These modules have strengthened my understanding of child development, professional responsibility, and the importance of health promotion.

Step 2 – Medium-Term Goal:
After graduating, my medium-term goal is to pursue additional training and qualification in school nursing or public health nursing. I would like to work as a school nurse, supporting children and young people with their physical, emotional, and mental health needs. I plan to continue developing my professional skills in areas such as health assessment, early intervention, and multi-agency collaboration.

Step 3 – Long-Term Goal:
In the long term, my goal is to advance into a senior school nurse or public health specialist role, where I can design and implement health promotion programmes, mentor new staff, and contribute to policies that improve children's health outcomes. I aspire to make a lasting difference by promoting wellbeing, safeguarding vulnerable children, and fostering a healthy school environment that supports learning and growth.

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**Week 1 Forum -> Career Aspiration: Becoming a School Nurse**
by Ketrina Bardi Or Bardhi - Thursday, 23 October 2025, 10:45 AM

After completing my BSc (Hons) in Health and Social Care degree, I want to become a school nurse. I am passionate about promoting children's health and wellbeing and supporting young people to make positive lifestyle choices. As a school nurse, I would play an important role in providing health education, offering guidance on physical and emotional wellbeing, and working closely with teachers, parents, and other professionals to safeguard children.

In the future, I also hope to continue my professional development by undertaking further training in public health nursing and child health, enabling me to make a meaningful contribution to improving health outcomes within the school and wider community.

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5. Task 4 – Reflecting on Wellbeing, Motivation and Happiness in Professional Practice

It helped me understand how emotional regulation, motivation, and wellbeing affect both personal growth and work performance in health and social care. The unit made me think about what makes people happy, like having a purpose, good relationships, and work that matters. I learnt through the online activities that wellbeing is not just the absence of stress; it is a balanced state that lets me work well, stay motivated, and care for others with compassion.

One important thing I learnt is that positive psychology ideas like recognising strengths and being grateful can help people be more resilient and change their way of thinking. Using the happiness scale and values activity helped me figure out what makes me happy, like having a structured routine, supportive relationships, and chances to learn new things. Research indicates that cultivating psychological

resilience improves performance and mitigates burnout in caregiving professions (Rosenberg et al., 2022).

Recently, I had a moment that made my learning deeper when I felt overwhelmed during a busy week when I had to balance schoolwork and personal responsibilities. I noticed that I was getting emotionally drained and less patient, which made me realise how much emotional work it takes to stay calm and supportive even when I am having a tough time. This situation made me realise how quickly burnout can happen and why it is so important to have strategies for staying healthy and happy in health and social care jobs.

The unit also helped me understand motivation better, especially the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. I learnt that intrinsic motivators, like wanting to make a difference and feeling like my values are in line with my work, are stronger and last longer in health and social care jobs. This is in line with Self-Determination Theory, which says that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are key factors for well-being and performance (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

It also made me think more about how to stay healthy. From now on, I will use journaling to keep track of my feelings, time-blocking to deal with stress, and reflective logs to work through tough situations. I also plan to use supervision because structured guidance and emotional support from experienced professionals can help me avoid burnout. These strategies will help me stay grounded, strong, and able to give care that is safe and caring.

Week 8 Forum -> Reflection on the Benefits of Mentoring in Achieving My Ambitions
by Ketrina Bardi Or Bardhi - Thursday, 4 December 2025, 11:15 AM

Having a mentor can play a significant role in helping me achieve my long-term ambition of becoming a Physician Associate (PA) within a GP setting. Mentoring provides structured guidance, emotional support, and informed feedback, all of which are essential when working towards a complex professional goal. A mentor helps to clarify the steps required for progression, encourages reflective thinking, and builds confidence by identifying strengths and areas for development. This support is particularly valuable in health and social care, where learning is continuous and practice must be evidence-based.

One example of how mentoring has helped me relates to a previous goal I set during my studies. I had difficulty managing academic expectations and felt unsure about the pathway into a clinical career. My mentor (or role model) provided reassurance and practical advice, such as helping me break the process into smaller, achievable tasks and encouraging me to seek relevant work experience. Through regular discussions, they helped me recognise the skills I already possessed—such as communication, empathy, and problem-solving—and how these aligned with the responsibilities of a PA. Their guidance increased my motivation and supported me in staying focused on my development.

Reflecting on this, the benefits of mentoring extend beyond immediate problem-solving; they help build resilience, accountability, and a clearer sense of direction. As I continue working towards becoming a PA, having a mentor will be invaluable in navigating challenges, strengthening my professional identity, and maintaining the confidence needed to achieve my ambitions.

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Week 8 Forum -> Reflection on an Unachieved Goal
by Ketrina Bardi Or Bardhi - Thursday, 4 December 2025, 11:12 AM

One significant goal I previously set for myself was to progress towards becoming a **Physician Associate (PA) within a General Practice (GP) setting**. Although this ambition remains important to me, I have not yet been able to achieve the steps required to move closer to this career pathway. The main reasons for this include competing personal and academic commitments, limited time for preparation, and a lack of consistent focus on the qualifications and experience needed for the PA role. These challenges contributed to delays in developing a clear progression plan.

Applying antifragile thinking could have led to a more constructive outcome. Antifragility encourages individuals to grow through uncertainty and use obstacles as opportunities for development. If I had adopted this mindset earlier, I might have interpreted setbacks—such as time constraints or academic pressures—as chances to reassess my strategy, break the goal into achievable milestones, or seek guidance from professionals already working in primary care. By responding adaptively rather than feeling discouraged, I could have maintained momentum and strengthened my preparedness for the PA career pathway. Therefore, incorporating antifragile thinking may have supported greater resilience and helped me progress more effectively towards my long-term goal of becoming a PA in a GP practice.

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6. Conclusion

The portfolio outlines four key tasks focused on personal and professional development in health and social care. Task 1 emphasizes the importance of personal branding and self-awareness, highlighting tools like the Johari Window for recognizing strengths such as empathy while identifying areas for improvement, such as assertiveness. Task 2 explores cultural competence within global health contexts, illustrating the necessity for adaptability and communication strategies in diverse settings. Task 3 discusses leveraging opportunities for growth through networking and proactive engagement, emphasizing the value of transferable skills in career advancement. Lastly, Task 4 reflects on the impact of emotional regulation, motivation, and well-being on professional practice, advocating for strategies such as journaling and supervision to maintain mental health in caregiving roles. Overall, the tasks underscore the integration of personal values, cultural sensitivity, and self-care in fostering a robust professional identity.

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