

Developing a Comprehensive Support Package for Neurodiverse Student Nurses

Louise Jones

Swansea Bay University Health Board/Open University, the United Kingdom

Abstract

This Oral presentation will introduce the support package which is aimed at enhancing the clinical placement experience of Neurodivergent student nurse. The support package has been developed in response to the growing recognition of the unique challenges faced by student nurses who are Neurodivergent. The support package is comprised of three key components: informing the Practice Supervisor/Practice Assessor (PSPA) prior to clinical practice, PEF (Practice Education Facilitator) check-ins, and a detailed individualised guidance plan.

The support package allows Neurodivergent students to self-refer and access a personalised support package which is tailored to meet their specific needs during the length of their programme if required. It ensures that student nurses can have applied reasonable adjustments in their clinical environments. Regular PEF check-ins provide ongoing support and a structured platform for feedback, encouraging an environment of continuous reflection and adaptation of reasonable adjustments. These check-ins are essential for identifying potential challenges early.

The guidance plan serves as a tool for Practice Supervisors and Practice Assessors, offering strategies by providing information for them to overcome barriers in clinical settings. It includes recommendations for reasonable adjustments tailored to each individual student. Another key element of the package is proactive communication with Practice Supervisors and Practice Assessors before the student begins placement. This helps break down barriers by easing the initiation of difficult conversations for the Neurodivergent students. By informing Supervisors and Assessors in advance, the support will encourage and enable open dialogue, which can reduce anxiety for Neurodivergent student nurse, and promotes a more supportive and inclusive placement experience from the outset.

This impact of this package on Neurodivergent student nurses within our Health Board, has the ability to reduce attrition rates, improve placement outcomes and encourages a more inclusive clinical placement. If implemented, there is a potential that this support package could be disseminated to support all Neurodivergent students within clinical environments, ensuring they thrive and contribute meaningfully to their profession.

Keywords: Neurodivergent, Support Package, Inclusive