

417 The role of AHP support workers as co-educators within student education: a service improvement project [abstract only]

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CSP Student Conference Abstract

Title:

The role of AHP support workers as co-educators within student education: a service improvement project

General abstract data

Theme & Methodology: Evolving Workforce - Service Evaluation/ Clinical Audit / Quality Improvement

Please explain how your work fits with the conference theme you have chosen:

The increased recruitment drive as set out in the NHS long-term workforce plan (2023) highlights the need for additional staff across AHP roles. This requires more practice-based learning (PBL) capacity. Utilising support workers as co-educators could enable more PBL opportunities for students and improve the PBL outcomes.

Purpose:

Students are assigned a HCPC registered professional as an educator whilst on placement. Support workers (SW) are not registered and therefore cannot be educators. They can be involved as a co-educator as part of a practice based learning team (PBL). Due to the recruitment drive of the NHS long term workforce plan (2023), more AHP students are requiring placements. Educators will need help with the increasing PBL demand. SWs bring a host of experience to the PBL team including strong communication, understanding systems and policies, and collaborating with a diverse workforce (CSP, 2021). There has been little research into training for SW as co-educators. The aim of the project was to investigate the current support available for AHP SWs acting as co-educators, to make recommendations to aid SWs in this role, and to disseminate the findings.

Methods:

The AHP SW competency, education and career development framework (HEE, 2021) was analysed to gauge the ideal expectations for SWs. In-person SW training sessions were observed. Individual interviews were conducted with 3 AHPs with an interest in this area as well as SWs. SWs working with students were shadowed to gain an overview of their responsibilities with students. Data from a previous student project was analysed. A survey of educators was conducted using a questionnaire to ascertain opinions on SWs as co-educators.

Results:

Most SWs were not aware of the training available to them or had not attended formal training to prepare them for working with students. Training materials were reportedly fragmented and hard to access. The AHP SW framework (HEE, 2021) and expectations for SWs were not common knowledge - most SWs were not aware the documents existed. Most registered AHPs would happily release their SWs for

training. Data from a previous project found 50% of SWs reported a lack of knowledge around student education. Students and SWs valued collaboration and benefited from the co-educator roles. Most students received little education on what SW roles involve and how they may be working together in the future.

Conclusion(s):

Incorporating SWs as co-educators in student placement education is valuable to enhance placement capacity, benefiting both students and the wider healthcare team thus enhancing patient care.

Recommendations included:

- Awareness for all staff of the SW competency and career development framework and available training
- Education of managers on the value of SWs as co-educators.
- Education of SWs on the student education journey and EDI principles.
- Creating a central hub for training materials
- Mentoring to promote the role
- Training for students on the SW role

Impact:

Students and SWs benefit from a co-education relationship. However, little formal training is available for SWs. The NHS long term workforce plan (2023) is a clear directive to increase recruitment with more students needing training. By involving SWs as co-educators, placement capacity can be expanded. SWs are ideally positioned within teams to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) principles, advocate for students, and share their valuable skill sets. If successful, this approach has the potential to broadly and positively impact student education.

1st Keyword: Support Workers (SW)

2nd Keyword: Co-educators

3rd Keyword: Practice-based learning