

IN PRACTICE

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WHICH BRANCH? A VIRTUAL COMMUNITY PLACEMENT FOR ADULT, MENTAL HEALTH AND CHILD BRANCH YEAR TWO STUDENT NURSES

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Introduction: The use of simulated practice-based learning to compliment clinical practice has led to the opportunity to deliver novel approaches to placement experiences where students are able to take on the role of the registered practitioner in areas of practice with limited access for students, and with other branches of the profession that they may not necessarily collaborate with in clinical practice. One approach is the use of a virtual placement to allow students to work collaboratively over a week-long placement across three branches of nursing.

Methods: A week-long placement was designed to be delivered using existing virtual learning platforms (VLP). A virtual environment called Greenbrook was created, developed from the work of Wright et al [1]. Within this, the participants would be responding to the needs of a family with a mixture of clinical presentations. The interactions with the family had been pre-recorded by the faculty along the lines of common nursing assessments and turned into vignettes for the participants to view and pull off the necessary information to assess, plan and implement/ suggest care for each person within the family. Time was allocated for students to research the conditions and formulate plans of care. Collaborative approaches were required by the teams so that they could complete tasks and all work was tracked through attendance at meetings on teams and through interaction with the VLP.

Results: Ninety-seven students from the three branches undertook the placement over the week and provided care for patients with Sickle Cell crisis, Autism, Bipolar disorder and Diarrhoea & Vomiting. Anecdotal feedback from the placement was that the students enjoyed the ability to work with and learn about areas of practice outside their branch with one participant saying it was the first time they had felt that they were acting as a practitioner with their contribution having consequences for the patient and their family.

Discussion: The delivery of online/ virtual simulation can be challenging [2] however it can be undertaken without the use of expensive platforms using resources that are at hand within the average higher education institute. The ability to track the interaction and provide access to resources

through the VLP help to encourage engagement but there is still a need for faculty to facilitate catch up debriefs and end of day debriefs as well as technical support.

Ethics statement: Authors confirm that all relevant ethical standards for research conduct and dissemination have been met. The submitting author confirms that relevant ethical approval was granted, if applicable.

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