

Other Field Experience Guidance for Students and Mentors

Learning Disability Students

It is a requirement of the NMC Standards for Pre-registration Nursing (2010) that student nurses from all fields of nursing have an opportunity to experience nursing within the other fields and within maternity care. These placements are only for a short duration and will not be assessed but will provide student nurses with an insight into certain aspects of the other fields.

Whilst undertaking another field experience it is important that the student takes every opportunity to identify how to use this learning within their own field of practice to support service users/carers. It is also an opportunity to understand some of the care differences within the other fields to enable nurses from all fields to work more closely together in the future for the benefit of service user care.

A record of all other field experiences must be documented in the Ongoing Achievement Record and verified by the student's personal tutor. Placement Pathway pages or Testimony Sheets (for day visits) must therefore be completed with the Practice Assessment Document, depending upon the length of placement allocated and the timesheet must indicate the dates of any experiences undertaken.

This guidance has been prepared from the NMC (2011) Advice and supporting information for implementing NMC standards for pre-registration nursing education and is intended to support the student and mentor in enabling a positive other field experience that has value for the student nurse and future service users in their care. The following examples show what might now be important when assessing or delivering essential care that may not have been associated with the learning disabilities field of practice in the past.

Adult Field Experience

Within the LD field of nursing, service users may become ill with a physical illness or sustain an injury at any time in their lives. It is therefore, important that LD nurses are able to recognise physical illness, deal with an emergency first aid situation and refer the service user to the appropriate health care professional as required. It is also important that LD nurses can promote physical health in service users to try to prevent physical illness in the future.

LD students will be allocated to an adult placement in year one or year two of the course. During this placement students should access learning opportunities that enable them to develop their knowledge and experience in relation to people with common physical needs. They should be able to:

Recognise common physical health conditions of children, adults and older people who come into their care.

- Care for someone who becomes acutely physically ill or is injured.
- Make a baseline physical health assessment, monitor their condition, and recognise and respond to any deterioration.
- Provide safe immediate physical care, treatment or first aid and obtain emergency help where needed.
- Use direct care skills to meet basic and complex physical needs which exist alongside a primary mental health problem or learning disability, including those requiring long-term or palliative care. This includes help with breathing, positioning, mobility, hygiene, temperature control, fluid maintenance, nutrition and elimination.

- Safely use medical devices to assess and provide physical care or treatment, including those for moving and positioning, infection prevention and control, feeding, maintaining hydration, elimination, managing pain, wound care, and safe administration of medicinal products.
- Seek expert advice or support where needed to ensure ongoing safe, effective and evidence based care or when accessing specialist services.

Students can access further information/guidance related to the adult field of nursing on the Pre-registration Nursing Placement Learning Support WOLF topic, in the Other Field Outcomes folder, Adult Field document.

It would not be possible for LD student nurses to acquire knowledge in relation to all physical illnesses during a short adult field experience. Students are, therefore, advised to focus on physical illnesses that affect a large percentage of the adult population but where early intervention and sound health promotion advice could prevent long-term physical illness and so improve overall morbidity and mortality. National Service Frameworks (NSFs) have been produced by the Department of Health for many of these high risk areas and can be found at the following website address: <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/NSF/Pages/Nationalserviceframeworks.aspx>

The key NSFs related to physical illness are:

- Cancer
- Coronary Heart Disease (CHD)
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Diabetes
- Kidney care
- Stroke care
- Long-term conditions

The student is not expected to have an in-depth knowledge of all of these physical illnesses but some basic knowledge and understanding of some of them relevant to their adult placement experience would be useful. The above list is not exhaustive in relation to common physical illnesses but provides some guidance of key areas to look at whilst working in an adult field placement area. When considering the physical illness it would be useful to:

- have some basic underpinning knowledge of the physiology of the disease process
- identify preventative health promotion activities, e.g. early identification and management of high cholesterol or hypertension to reduce the risk of CHD or a stroke
- be able to identify key signs and symptoms where relevant
- recognise urgent care and treatment where appropriate, e.g. during an exacerbation of asthma or angina
- recognise long-term management aspects of care including opportunities for health promotion where relevant.

There may be other learning opportunities available that would be relevant to the field of LD nursing, such as tackling obesity or sexual health, which can be accessed if available.

One of the main aims of providing an exposure to adult nursing is to reduce the number of premature deaths in people with learning disabilities through the provision of safe and appropriate care. Students should access the Confidential Inquiry into Premature Deaths of People with Learning Disabilities (CIPOLD) <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/cipold/fullfinalreport.pdf> for further information.

Child Field Experience

All LD students will experience caring for children and/or young people as part of their usual placement allocations within the learning disability field. This may occur at any point during the three year course.

During these placements students should access learning opportunities that enable them to develop their knowledge and experience in relation to the following needs of children and young people:

Have a broad understanding of the development of children and young people within the family context and how this affects their individual needs, health, behaviour and communication.

- Work with children, young people, their families and others to provide family centred care.
- Understand common physical and mental health problems associated with childhood and adolescence, their effects and treatment.
- Deliver basic care required to meet essential needs.
- Recognise deterioration and provide safe care to infants, children and young people in an emergency, or act to protect them where there is risk of harm, prior to referral or when accessing specialist services.
- Learning disabilities and mental health nurses should also be able to meet the specific needs of children, understanding the connection between childhood and adolescence and their learning disability or mental health problem.

Whilst working within a child field placement the LD student would also benefit from developing their knowledge and understanding in relation to the following areas:

- ethical issues, in particular consent for children and young people and the Fraser Guidelines
- safeguarding of children and young people

Students are advised to access further information/guidance related to the child field of nursing on the Nursing Children (for MH, LD and Adult Field Students) WOLF topic (available from January 2014) and the Pre-registration Nursing Placement Learning Support WOLF topic, in the Other Field Outcomes folder, Child Field document.

Mental Health Field Experience

LD students will be allocated to a mental health placement experience in year one or year two of the course. During this placement students should access learning opportunities that enable them to develop their knowledge and experience in relation to the following needs of people with a mental health problem:

- Use basic mental health skills to reduce the distress associated with mental health problems and to promote recovery.
- Act promptly to reduce the risk of harm in a crisis and to protect people who are vulnerable.
- Have a basic understanding of mental health promotion, the links between physical and mental health problems and the aetiology and treatment of common mental health problems.
- Appreciate the impact of mental health problems and distress on a person's cognition, communication, behaviour, lifestyle and relationships.
- Be aware of the main provisions of mental health legislation, especially in relating to capacity, human rights and safeguarding.
- Recognise and address people's essential mental health needs when these exist alongside other primary health needs.
- Work and communicate with others to maintain continuity in meeting mental health needs in long term conditions.

Students can access further information/guidance related to the mental health field of nursing on the Pre-registration Nursing Placement Learning Support WOLF topic, in the Other Field Outcomes folder, Mental Health Field document.

Maternal Health Experience

During year three LD students will be allocated to a one day maternity care placement or simulation experience. During this placement students should access learning opportunities that enable them to develop their knowledge and experience in relation to maternity care in the following areas:

- Understand and meet the essential needs of pregnant or postnatal women in relation to a coexisting physical condition, mental health problem or learning disability.
- Recognise major risks and act quickly in an emergency to get expert help.
- Have a broad understanding of the physical and psychological effects of pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period.
- Have a clear understanding of the role of the midwife and midwifery care and be able to work in partnership with midwives and other professionals to achieve the best outcomes for pregnant and postnatal women and babies in their care.

It is not possible to achieve all of the above during a one day placement/simulation so the student is advised to access the online resources available during year two of the course to help develop this knowledge. Details of how to access these resources can be found on the Pre-registration Nursing Placement Learning Support WOLF topic.