

STUDENT FOCUS GROUP TWO

STUDENT LED SUPPORT SYSTEMS

OVERALL UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE WITHIN HEALTH SCIENCES DEPARTMENT

ATTENDEES

- Facilitators: Liz Wands-Murray and Matthew Jacobs
- Total of 7 students attended (open invitation sent to all 700 students)
- All 3 years of BSc represented
- PGDip/Integrated Masters represented
- Facilitators general observations were that the group were constructive, solution focussed and realistic regarding the current support systems in place and the changes/enhancements they would like to see going forward both for new and existing students

Q1 –What is currently available for students?

- Link Lecturers
- Personal Supervisors
- Open Door
- Student Hub
- Disability Services
- Student & Academic Support Service (Health Sciences)
- Careers Advice – Found Open Day at St George's really helpful
- University Student Buddy Scheme (Focus on Over 21's)
- Child Nursing Buddy Scheme (New Born, Child, Parent, Grandparent (Alumni))
- College Mentor (Second/Third Year Mentors) - STYM

Q2 - What are the gaps and issues?

- Understanding what's available and when
 - Where to find services – VLE, Info Card, Sessions at start/throughout
- Difference in being a student on Professional Programme as opposed to 'Regular Student'
- Access to Alumni Grandaunts
 - Talk to current students
 - not necessarily field specific (but useful)
- Willingness to be a Student Mentor/Buddy – Alumni
 - Benefits to 1:1
 - Understanding Boundaries

What would you need?

- Drill down 'Buddy' System - ways of linking with other students on specific grounds
 - like for like
 - lone parent, young family, carer, similar employment, mature student
- "Opt-In" system - students need to be motivated to undertake the responsibility
- Offer of training and support will be important
- MHFA training should be included
- Boundaries need to be clearly defined for all
- Structure is important but so is flexibility
- Incentives = NO! - this will potentially attract students for the wrong reasons

What are the main benefits?

- Emotional support especially when dealing with issues in practice
- Linking students on same/similar placements
- Self managed way to connect with other students
- 'Safe Space' to chat/connect
- Helping to build emotional resilience
- Voice of experience
- Support can be focussed
- Gives the ability to see a way through to the 'other side'
- Develops supportive, reflective, leadership skills in the mentors

**A FAMILIAR
AND
EXPERIENCED
VOICE WHEN
YOU MOST
NEED IT!**



Feedback about some of the things currently available/happening

- VLE Discussion Board

These are used by some students/staff- could we look at adapting the current system to make it more useable or useable for this purpose?

- Timetabling of induction/over-saturation in induction

Why, when, how - everything is covered in a short space of time and this isn't when you are likely to actually need support. By the time you do, you cannot remember what you were told in the first couple of weeks

- Use of handbooks - these have so much information in them and seem to change constantly so are not always that useful

New ideas

- ‘#’ search - is there a platform we can use where we can mimic the hashtag function to be able to link with people based on keywords?
- Social Media (Twitter) - is this a possible avenue? Would we need to consider a social media strategy to allow use for linking with individuals?
- Can there be more use of ‘Flash-ads’ on VLE? It focusses the mind and catches attention. This could be to advertise support available as well as advertising individual events etc
- VLE is the way forward - Rarely use Intranet/Handbook (only when things go wrong). Advertising what info is where would be helpful

Things we would like to see in future...

- Filter Guidance for emails
- Specific newsletter just for student's
 - Focus on student issues (Megaphone tends to focus on staff)
 - Student Editorial
 - Key Headlines
 - Advertising events
- Electronic Noticeboard
- You said, we did notifications (board/electronic noticeboard/VLE etc)

Other areas discussed

- **Reflection**

The art of reflection

- staff training, student training required
- should be embedded into curriculum but isn't
- robust mechanisms need to be put in place
- recognition of importance of opportunity but also building reflective skills
- reflective practice vital out on the job but not part of the experience during study
- a safe space to talk about practice & practice issues which has a direct impact upon emotional health. It doesn't need to be nursing field specific
- **CLG** - The value of CLG Groups
 - Should they be mandatory?
 - Student Attendance - why isn't it monitored and acted on - very frustrating

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