



University of
Chester

The Benefits of Networking and Communicating in Austere Times

- Presented By:
- Graham Burrell – 2nd Year Learning Disability Dip HE
- Sandra Costall – 3rd Year Learning Disability Dip HE

Introduction

- A collaborative piece of research between University of Chester and University of Cumbria Students brought about by our attendance at the National Network for Learning Disability Nurses (NNLDN) conference at University of York in July 2010.
- Exploring intellectual disability student nurses knowledge and experience of networking.
- How and why is networking important in professional practice?

What Is Networking?

- Networking has had many connotations attached to it, by numerous authors.
- Networking can assist with dissemination of information and the co-ordination of diverse activities.
(Thomas, Griffiths, Kai, O'Dwyer, 2001).
- If nurses are to meet the Government's ambitious modernisation agenda then networking is essential.
(Sale, 2005).

Why Network?

- *The challenge for learning disability nurses is to understand research as a way to answer day-to-day clinical questions either through networking, accessing evidence, or conducting research. These activities should not be seen as the domain of the few but as one part of each nurse's broader role.*

Shaping The Future: A Vision For Learning
Disability Nursing. Royal Collage of Nursing (2010)

What Networking Achieves

- Networking encourages professional support by making successful professionals accessible to their colleagues.
(McGonigle & Mastrian, 2009)
- Networking is essential to the development of intellectual disability nursing in the future and is a key tool for sharing best practice and in improving and enhancing practice
(Horan & Brown, 2009)
- Networking and communicating helps build and maintain effective relationships with many people whose support and collaboration is needed.
(Yukl, 2010)

What Networking Achieves

- Provides greater insight of your organisation's functioning.
- Clinical effectiveness leads to increased productivity.
- Individuals careers and skills are developed.
(Sale,2005)
- As nurse mentors its an opportunity to introduce your students to the concept as part of their professional development.
- Good communication is crucial in achieving prioritized use of resources so that service user/patient needs are met in the most cost effective and resourceful way.
(Philips, 2005)

What Are the Barriers to Networking?

- Having to measure every single outcome.
- Lack of Time.
- Lack of financial resource/budget cuts e.g. This is the biggest learning disability networking event and there are nurses and university lecturers unable to afford the time or money to attend.
- Being unmotivated.
- Worried about own job security.
- Lack of confidence.
- Lack of support from colleagues or management.
- Not seen as a priority as we are not measured on it.

Example of a Money Saving Idea

- At a LD CAMHS placement.
- Nurses spent time in the office manually calculating sleep diaries for children with sleep problems.
- I saw that the process was time consuming and non-efficient – meant the nurses had less time with the families.
- I devised and developed a sleep calculator in a computer spreadsheet for them and it saved nurses time in the office.
- Can be formatted in an easy to read way of presenting data back to families/service users.
- It's more accurate and utilises the nurses time more efficiently.
- This is a service improvement that helps the families and children and the nurses.
- When nurses save time – money is saved. Plus no layout on extra paperwork also saves the trust money.

What and Why are We Researching?

- What intellectual disability student nurses perspectives of networking are.
- Our research study aims to evaluate:
- Student nurses networking experiences.
- What importance student nurses place on networking.
- How student nurses perceive professional networking.

Student Nurse Networking Research

- In nursing literature, networking within nursing receives little attention. (Nicholl & Tracey, 2007).
- As a result there is little evidence of literature providing information on networking and the benefits of networking between intellectual disability nursing students.

Where are We Now?

- Autumn 2010 – March 2011 Feedback to our own universities and discussed our plans.
- Gained support from our academic supervisors for our research.
- Our academic reader in Mental Health and Learning Disability is University of Chester's Dr Andy Lovell.
- Wrote our separate ethics applications for each university and submitted them.
- Currently awaiting ethical application from University of Chester. Ethical Approval granted by University of Cumbria in April 2011.
- Presented at Positive Choices University of Hertfordshire April 2011.

Challenges

- Both novice researchers.
 - Not knowing where to start
 - How to design a study
 - Ethics Application
- Geographically distant.
- Studying full-time with our courses.
- Both have family and work commitments.

Conclusion

- Despite the challenges we have designed our study, submitted the ethics applications and are enjoying the new experience as student researchers.
- We feel that networking and research as students has had a very constructive influence upon us both as individuals.
- As you have heard times are hard and time and money are short
- Networking and good communication shares finite resources

Thank You

- The senior lecturers Sara Bell and Dr Andy Lovell at University of Chester and Tony Dennison at University of Cumbria for the support they have given us which has helped us get to this stage.
- Thank you to the conference organizers and the NNLDN committee
- Graham Burrell:- S0908897@cumbria.ac.uk
- Sandy Costall :- 0905443@chester.ac.uk

Useful Networks

- Linked in professional network
http://www.linkedin.com/home?trk=hb_home
- CHAIN (Contact, Help, Advice and Information Networks): free, multi-professional online networks for people working in the sphere of health and social care.
- Establishing effective communication channels will help underpin the effectiveness of the Institute in improving the delivery and quality of health care.
- Scottish Community Learning Disability Nursing Network
- The All-Wales Senior Nurses Advisory Group
- The UK Learning Disability Nurse Consultant Network

Useful Networks

- Janet Cobb Networks <http://www.jan-net.co.uk/>
- A2A Network <http://a2anetwork.co.uk/>
- Debra Moore Associates
<http://www.debramooreassociates.com/>
- British Institute of Learning Disabilities
<http://www.bild.org.uk/index.html>
- Royal College of Nursing learning Disability Forum
[http://www.rcn.org.uk/dz/viewforum.php?f=25&dest=
http://www.rcn.org.uk/dz/viewforum.php?f=25](http://www.rcn.org.uk/dz/viewforum.php?f=25&dest=http://www.rcn.org.uk/dz/viewforum.php?f=25)
- The Foundation for People with a Learning Disability host the Health and Disability network – Membership is FREE

References

- Clark, L. Diack, G. (2007). A Vision For Learning Disability Nursing: Where To Now?. *Learning Disability Practice*. 10 (2), p16-19.
- Horan & Brown (2009): An International Evaluation of Networks and Networking in Learning Disability Nursing. *Learning Disability Practice*. October 2009. Volume 12 / Number 8
- Learning from Past, Setting Out The Future – Developing Learning Disability Nursing in the United Kingdom. Available at: http://www.rcn.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/359367/003871.pdf. (Accessed 6th February 2011)
- McGonigle, D., & Mastrian, K. (Eds.). (2009). *Nursing Informatics and the Foundation of Knowledge* (pp. 374-375). London: Jones and Bartlett.
- McKenzie, K., Kwaitek, E., MacGregor, L., & Powell, H. (2006, June). Encouraging Learning Disability Nursing Research. *Learning Disability Practice*, 9(5), 10-14.
- Nicholl, H., & Tracey, C. (2007). Applied leadership. Networking for nurses. *Nursing Management - UK*, 13(9), 26-29. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.
- Phillips, J. (2005). Knowledge is power: using nursing information management and leadership interventions to improve services to patients, clients and users. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 13(6), 524-536. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.
- Sale, D. (2005). *Understanding Clinical Governance and Quality Assurance: Making It Happen* (pp. 170-174). Basingstoke, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Shaping the Future: A Vision For Learning Disability Nursing. Available at: http://www.rcn.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/354384/Shaping_the_Future_Vision_document_July_2006.pdf. (Accessed 13th March 2011)
- Thomas, P., Griffiths, F., Kai, J. O'Dwyer, A. (2001): Networks for Research In Primary Health Care. *Br Med J*. 322: 588-90
- Washer, P. (2002). Professional issues. Professional networking using computer-mediated communication. *British Journal of Nursing (BJN)*, 11(18), 1215-1218. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.
- Yukl, G. (2010). *Leadership in Organizations* (7th ed., pp. 78-80). Basingstoke, NJ: Pearson