Adapting Approaches to MECC – for Pre-registration Nursing Education

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Background:

The Making Every Contact Count (MECC) (PHW, 2017) approach aims to support behaviour change through opportunistic advice in a healthcare or community setting. Although health-promoting practice is a key role of the nurse, many express concerns about having the right skills and confidence in delivering MECC interventions (Bennett, 2015). MECC training is core to delivery of Public Health Training for student nurses at Swansea University. However, practical application for students to deliver this is viewed by them as being limited as part of their practice. Face-to-face MECC training was previously delivered to ~200 second year nursing students per year, comprised of ~20-30 students per sessional group. Students evaluated these sessions quite poorly as they struggled to apply this to practice and also because of large group size per session. Therefore, new ways of delivery were attempted to address student feedback concerns regarding this training.

Initial:

Where we were:

- Student nurses undertake MECC training within the first module in year two - mixed evaluations of effectiveness and student comments suggest there appeared to be perceptions of lack of applicability to practice.
- Additional challenges related to timetabling constraints leading to large group sizes - limited overall interaction and limited engagement.

Therefore, consideration was made to change how MECC was delivered, given wider timetabling challenges.

First steps:

- We opted to use the e-learning package provided by Public Health Wales [PHW] (2018).
- Students were provided with protected learning time to undertake e-learning.
- Enable students to lead on own learning, aligning with androgogical approaches.

However, this met with mixed results:

- Significant number of student's failed to complete the e-learning, despite having protected time to complete this.
- Rationale: being formative, being self-directed and lacking practical application.
- Thus, having limited impact on student learning.

Adaption:

Adopting blended learning:

- In 2017, Welsh Government commissioned Swansea University to provide a part-time nursing programme.
- Philosophy for part-time nursing programme supported a blended learning approach to delivery for education.
- Blended learning is a hybrid approach utilising online resources supported by face-to-face interaction to support learning (HEA, 2017).

Blended learning approach was therefore adopted to support MECC training for part-time nursing students commencing their studies from September 2018.

Next steps:

- Students completed the online (e-learning) package provided by PHW (2018) and provided written evidence of completion.
- Students attended a facilitated 2 hour workshop by a MECC trainer, to feedback and explore learning from online package.
- Further supported by focused role-play relevant to MECC themes to provide confidence in using the relevant 'tools'.
- Feedback from peers & facilitator to assist with application of learning to support practice.
- Part-time nursing students evaluated this new approach positively following implementation.

Review:

Where we are going:

- Further roll-out of this adapted approach to next cohort of part-time nursing students, once they commence the relevant module.
- Formal student evaluation of the adapted blended learning to inform how approach can be implemented into the full-time nursing programme.
- Consideration of further adaptions to MECC training include additional person as part of role-play activities to enhance student learning further.

Learning so far from this:

- We have identified that this appears to be a more sustainable way to deliver MECC, but further evaluation is needed.
- Students appear to engage more with the activities through the blended approach to the feedback session activities.
- Further consideration is needed for amending role-play activities to include third person.
- Appears to align with key policy and the need for students to recognise their role and responsibility in contributing to prevention, improving individual and population health outcomes (Nursing Now Cymru Wales, 2019; A Healthier Wales (Welsh Government, 2018)).

Student Evaluation Comments Following Adaption Implementation:

"The [scenario] roleplay was really useful and helped me understand how to apply this in practice".

"Studying the online pack then doing the roleplay was good, it helped me learn in my own way and then was good to practise this".

"Prefer doing it this way to be honest, much better than doing it in a classroom".

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