Presentation Abstract with Reference List

Title: Interprofessional Collaboration: Developing Students Safeguarding Skills

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Morgan & Spargo (2017) identify that traditionally nurses and other professionals including medical, social work and education, feel underprepared by their undergraduate education to work in the field of safeguarding children. Furthermore, Paavilainen, Åstedt-Kurki, Paunonen-Ilmonen, & Laippala, (2002), Paavilainen & Tarkka, (2003), Bennett, Plint, & Clifford (2005), Pabiś, Wrońska, Ślusarska, & Cuber (2010) also report particularly for children's nurses that they have limited exposure to safeguarding during their pre-registration education. Morgan & Spargo (2017) further identify that this maybe as a result of qualified practitioner reluctance to allow those students to participate in safeguarding children practice because of what is termed a pervasive notion of protection. In that they wish to protect the student from the rigours of safeguarding work given the emotional context in which this takes place.

Thus as educationalists we need to examine ways to address this, and approach safeguarding education differently. Morrison (2000), Murphy (2004) and Munro (2008) suggest that collaborative and interprofessional education should also feature within safeguarding education, not only to develop practitioners but also to develop understanding of one another's roles. As Morgan (2013) identifies, often children's nurses feel isolated within safeguarding practice, but also do not feel that their role is valued through a lack of other professionals understanding. Thus in order to help address this, this supports a need for further collaborative education to foster closer working links and greater role understanding. Within the UK context for safeguarding, there is a requirement for collaborative practice and multiprofessional working which further necessitates the development of positive working relationships to be established, even at an undergraduate level. In order to promote a sense that not one professional can have all the answers to address the often complex trajectory that is presented in each case. This requires a network of professionals willing to work together to address these. Students may not necessarily understand the requirements of their role within this (Akister, 2011). Therefore there is a need to approach developing this network within undergraduate education to promote that role understanding which links to the need to consider authentic learning experiences to aid in developing this knowledge. Lund (2013), Logan, Quiñones, & Sunderland (2015), Houston & Thompson (2017) and Wood & Perlman (2017) also suggest that students learn and are able to apply information when it is based upon realistic situations. They extol the benefits of authentic learning experiences which allow for students to develop transferrable skills that support their development, which they can take forward into future clinical practice.

This is the frame of reference in which this project was structured. This presentation will report on the implementation of this pilot project to address preparation for safeguarding work with final year undergraduate children's nursing students and student social workers at one Higher Education Institute located in South West Wales in the UK. The project development period spans July 2018 – January 2019, and the initial pilot was undertaken in February 2019. This is part of a larger project currently

undergoing local research which will then be expanded to include our international partners, and will be the subject of future pedogical research, informed by the outcomes of this initial pilot.

Within the UK, procedural guidance structures how child protection and safeguarding procedures need to be followed by practitioners working in this arena. Within Wales, these are the All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008), which govern practice when safeguarding concerns arise. These procedures are used regardless of where in Wales the safeguarding concerns arise. It is arguable that this is a 'gold standard' approach given the uniformity of approach at a national level. This guidance informed the format used to support the procedural 'events' used for the authentic assessment modality utilised within this simulated learning event. The two selected components from this were a "strategy discussion" and an "initial child protection case conference", and involved professionals as actors in this, who helped to co-produce the learning materials and case for this simulated event. The rationale for selection is that anecdotally students often self-report that these two activities cause them the most anxiety because of rationalising their decision-making processes, and they lack understanding of these areas (Morgan, 2013). Student children's nurses and student social workers will be aware of these procedures from their education and their practice experiences.

A total of 40 students (20 from children's nursing and 20 from social work) participated in this integrated learning experience. This population was selected based on the cohort sizes of each group of students, and to ensure balance to the event. Students were then sub-divided into mixed groups so that there were equivalent numbers of students from each field within them which allowed discussion and ideas to be formulated and explored, based on the perceptions of the professional groups

represented. Furthermore the rationale for mixed groups supported the notion that practitioners need to develop understanding of one another's roles, even at an undergraduate level (Nayda, 2002; Bennett, Plint & Clifford, 2005; Rowse, 2009; Munro, 2011), thereby having mixed groups enabled this shared understanding to start to be developed. These mixed groups were facilitated by professionals and academics, during the groupwork activities leading up to the simulated initial child protection case conference. The professionals facilitating activities had extensive experience working within a child safeguarding context and could be considered experts in their role (Benner, 2001), and were practising in this context at the time of the learning event. This enabled appropriate discussions and facilitation of the learning activities.

As identified in the content outline these professionals were also involved in developing the vignette used to provide an authentic learning experience. There was also service-user involvement within these activities, who had the necessary knowledge and skill to participate and support student learning. The family vignette was based around concerns related to domestic abuse, parental mental ill-health and parental substance misuse. Both parents are professionals, one of which is involved directly in working with children so this activity is designed to explore some of the additional difficulties in working in this context also. These issues were explored within a safeguarding procedural context and enabled the professionals to identify key learning outcomes for students to help them develop their knowledge and understanding of the safeguarding processes involved when dealing with this.

Students submited formal feedback for this learning event based upon the method suggested by Hoon, Oliver, Szpakowska, & Newton (2015) of "Stop, Start, Continue". The student feedback from this event was overwhelmingly positive, and examples of this are provided below:

"I really enjoyed the mock strategy meetings! Having speakers from different professional backgrounds helped me to understand what goes on in reality"

 "I thought the mock meetings were very good, allowed you to learn what would happen in a situation. The inclusion of social workers was really useful"

 "The group work was really good, getting nursing and social work students to work together to share knowledge & skills"

 "Learning about the processes involved and working with health students allowed me to consider additional viewpoints & risks".

 "I enjoyed the group discussions and engagement with other professionals. The live conference was interesting, helpful and useful for all students from health and social care – really good to link theory to practice".

Based on the strength of this feedback, a collaborative research project is currently underway to further explore student preparation for practice related to safeguarding and child protection knowledge which will be the subject of future publications.

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