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Liverpool John Moores University
Edge Hill University
University of Liverpool

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Brief interventions programme

Pre-registration training programme

Background and rationale

Encouraging healthier lifestyles is the job of all staff working within the health service, not just those working in that area. Primary prevention is the prescription for reducing the healthcare systems burden and thereby reducing costs associated with treating preventable conditions. Primary prevention has a proven track record and has the potential to save more if applied comprehensively and strategically (Kicking Bad Habits: Kings Fund 2008).

The role and contribution that the practitioner and wider workforce have with regard to delivering key public health messages has long since been recognised.

Helping people make positive lifestyle changes supports the Wanless vision of a 'fully engaged scenario' in healthcare (Securing good health for the whole population: Wanless 2004).

Interwoven throughout public health white papers and DH policy documents is the vision to transform the NHS from a sickness to a true 'health' service. This can only be achieved if staff at the front line have the knowledge, skills and opportunity to provide individualised care that focuses on preventing illness as opposed to treating it (Darzi 2008).

Ensuring that newly qualified nurses have the knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver public health messages in a wide variety of settings can be achieved by adding brief intervention training to the undergraduate nursing curricula.

The aim of this additional training is to ensure that promoting health becomes a core part of the nursing role. By collaborating on a common set of resources, health messages can be consistent and delivered utilising a client-centred approach.

The government's white paper *Choosing Health: Making healthy choices easier (2004)* outlined, for the first time, a strategy for health professionals to ensure they embed health promotion as part of their day-to-day role with patients. This new approach requires health professionals to:

- inform people about the key components of a healthy lifestyle
- encourage and assist patients to change their behaviour to improve their own health.

There is now overwhelming evidence that this approach works in practice and in April 2005, NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence) was asked by the Department of Health to develop guidance for primary care and other settings on:

'the most appropriate generic and specific interventions to support attitude and behaviour change at population and community levels.'

Choosing Health states that this approach should be adopted to, 'Make the most of the millions of encounters that the NHS has with people every week and ensure that all NHS staff have training and support to embed health improvement in their day-to-day work with patients' (DH, 2004).

However whilst promoting health in primary care and other NHS settings is proven to be effective (Naidoo and Wills, 2009) there is an acknowledgement that there are problems associated with this approach. Many health professionals report:

- lack of time
- lack of knowledge and information
- lack of personal skills and confidence

These are real reasons why many frontline health care staff and other allied professionals fail to regularly and consistently support patients with healthy lifestyle change (Ewles and Simnett, 2005).

Therefore, it is important to provide healthcare professionals with good quality training and support to enable them to take on this role with

confidence. Training should be targeted and relevant to the trainees concerned enabling them to see opportunities for its application. Training delivered to pre-registration nurses would also give an opportunity to influence attitudes prior to them fully adopting their clinical roles and responsibilities.

Training programme

This six-day training programme is designed to support student nurses to develop the skills and understanding needed to enable them to integrate health promotion activity into their nursing role.

The main drivers for promoting health related behaviour change include:

- *Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services, (DH, 2006)*
- *Choosing Health: making healthy choices easier (DH, 2005)*
- *Behaviour change at population, community and individual levels (NICE, 2007).*

The training programme has been developed in line with good practice and the evidence-base identified by NICE and Darzi, 2008. It also follows regionally developed guidance set out in the document, *Commissioning training for behaviour change interventions: evidence and best practice in delivery* (Centre for Public Health Research, University of Chester, 2008).

To enable pre-registration nurses to develop skills to deliver health promotion as part of their role this training programme will aim to:

- a) provide the rationale and theoretical background for behaviour change interventions helping students gain an understanding of the impact of their role on public health
- b) encourage nurse students to consider their own health related behaviour and the part this plays in their career
- c) to contribute to the further development of student's interpersonal skills within their nurse training

- d) to encourage students to be enquiring and motivated to identify services and support in the wider community environment that support healthy lifestyles both for themselves and their patients
- e) to encourage students to continue to increase and maintain their skills and knowledge in the area of health promotion in their future nursing careers.

Trainer's handbook

The handbook provides health lecturers with a format for delivering the two-day programme on each year of the three years of nurse training. Whilst the programme has been written in three two-day blocks, it is expected that the programme will be delivered flexibly to meet the requirement of the institute. The materials can be used in a variety of different ways. For example:

- four half days each year
- a full two-day block
- two separate full days
- can be interwoven within other training/teaching components of the nurse training curricula.

The handbook includes:

- aims and objectives for each year's learning programme
- suggested lesson plan and teaching notes
- handouts - task sheets
- PowerPoint presentations
- evaluation options
- some suggestions for individual student work
- provides links between Knowledge and Skills Framework and Public Health Skills and Career Framework.

Please note:

The evidence based and best practice guidance about the adoption of healthy lifestyles is for the adult population. The healthy lifestyle messages are for the whole population and some lifestyle behaviours have a children's message, for example physical activity; however there is no evidence based behavioural approach for children identified formally by NICE at this time. This aspect is under review and as such this training module will need to be kept up to date both on healthy lifestyle topics and behavioural approaches used.

Behaviour change theory

There is growing evidence that support provided by a health professional or frontline worker can motivate and encourage health related behaviour change in patients and clients. There are a number of evidence based theoretical models that seek to explain and understand the processes involved in changing health related behaviour. Evidence suggests that interventions with a clear theoretical grounding are more effective in producing longer term changes in behaviour. Therefore, students should be encouraged to explore different models and approaches enabling them to have a good understanding of theory that will underpin their skill acquisition. Some examples of key theories are:

- the transtheoretical stages of change model
- the health belief model
- social cognitive learning theory
- diffusion of innovations theory
- the theory of planned behaviour.

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Behaviour change theory

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