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Evaluating placement experiences of mental health nursing students following the implementation of a Collaborative Learning in Practice (CLiP) model

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Background

The NHS Long Term Workforce Plan (2023) has highlighted the shortfall in mental health nurses is set to increase to 15,800 full-time equivalents by 2036/37. The target set out in the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan (2023) is to increase mental health training places by 93% to 11,000 places by 2028/29. Figures released by UCAS in 2023 show that applications to study nursing across the UK has fallen by 18% from 33,410 to 27,370 (UCAS, 2023). Despite the fall in nursing applications, there is still a push for increased placement capacity within mental health. The RePAIR report (Health Education England, 2018) highlighted that clinical placements vary considerably, with students reporting that they would not apply for a job where they had a negative placement experience. The report also noted that 16% of year one, 11% of year two and 2% of year three nursing students considered leaving the course due to their clinical placements and highlights the CLiP model as an example of best practice for improving retention of nursing students (Health Education England, 2018).

Review of the evidence

A systematic search of CINAHL database used the terms 'collaborative learning in practice', 'dedicated education units' and 'nursing'. Boolean logic was applied to refine the search, screening titles and abstracts for relevance. Eight articles were reviewed, and these suggested that students undertaking placements where a CLiP model is used, benefit from peer support (Williamson *et al.*, 2020), increased confidence (Wareing *et al.*, 2018), and feel more prepared for the transition into working in a registered role (Markowski *et al.*, 2021). The majority of the articles reviewed at this stage were limited to adult inpatient wards and general practice settings, with only one article being set in mental health inpatient wards (Wareing *et al.*, 2018).

Consequently, a further literature search was conducted to explore if CLiP had been implemented in mental health with the terms ‘collaborative learning in practice’, ‘mental health’, ‘C-PAL’, ‘coaching’ and ‘nursing’. Seven articles were retrieved and screened by title and abstract relevance. Two articles subsequently matched the relevant criteria and were reviewed (Wareing *et al.*, 2018, Hirdle and Keeley, 2020). The lack of available evidence reaffirms the need to evaluate whether a CLiP model would be successful in a mental health inpatient setting.

Project plan

The project plan aims to evaluate experiences of mental health student nurses who are on placement where a CLiP model is being implemented. The project is underpinned by the JBI Evidence Implementation Model (Porritt *et al.*, 2020). Key stakeholders were identified as students, ward staff and our partner Approved Education Institutions (AEIs). Focus groups and questionnaires will be completed by stakeholders, to measure their experiences of CLiP in mental health inpatient settings.

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