

Role emerging placements: making connections to further the profession

Jami, a London based charity that provides mental health services to the Jewish community, and the University of Essex began their association in 2014. The aim, to develop the profession of occupational therapy (OT) through role-emerging placements.

Role-emerging placements:

- Develop initiative, creativity, problem solving and professional identity (Cooper & Raine, 2009)
- Increase employability (Clarke et al, 2015)
- Foster passion and drive for the profession (Palmer & Williamson, 2016)

Jami:

- Able to work in a flexible and creative way, without the constraints often found in statutory provisions, enabling students to have a wide and varied placement experience.
- Culturally specific element to the service enables students to explore the occupational nature of culture and religion.

Process:

1. Initial telephone call and visit from Role emerging placement tutor to discuss potential role emerging placement opportunities.
2. Role emerging placement tutor visit to the proposed role emerging placement site to assess the suitability of the service and devise an information sheet for students.
3. Long arm clinical supervisor completed an audit and checklist required by the university for quality assurance of the placement provision.
4. Long arm clinical supervisor to attend one day workshop for local managers and placement educators at the University of Essex to find out more about how a role-emerging placement works and how students get involved.
5. Role emerging placement tutor delivered in-house training to the service team, involving guidance on the long arm model of supervision in preparation of the placement.

Structure of support:

Long arm clinical supervisor

- Weekly supervision

On-site supervisor

- Day to day reporting and feedback

Role emerging placement tutor / university

- Provided telephone, email support, a half way visit and telephone debrief

Benefits:

Organisation

- Strengthen the role of OT

Long arm supervisor

- Contributing to continuing professional development
- Less demands on time compared to a traditional placement

On-site supervisor

- Added an extra layer of skill to the service
- Evidence for service needs

Team

- Enhanced the team's understanding of OT
- Develop different ways of working

Student

- More autonomy

Clients

- Enabled clients to be more involved in decision making
- Focus on independent living skills and improving motivation
- Service users felt listened to, understood and believed in because of working with the OT student

Challenges:

Organisation

- Getting people on board
- Time and resources

Long arm clinical supervisor

- Feeling 'unavailable'
- Distance between student and clinical supervisor

On-site supervisor

- Lack of office space and availability of space to run group sessions

Team

- Pressure on staff to continue the work that had been started once the student had left

Student

- Introducing a new profession to the team
- Maintaining and developing professional identity

Key ingredients for success:

- On-site supervisor's involvement is crucial to the placements success, it is through the leadership of the team that the optimum environment is created for the student to meet their objectives.
- Key to have someone who is able to work independently and able to use their initiative.
- Spending time developing a working relationship with everyone involved getting people within the organisation on board.
- Having a clear understanding of the aims from the perspective of the university, organisation, student, on-site supervisor and long arm clinical supervisor.
- Identify potential barriers to its success and strategies to implemented.

In summary, the partnership between Jami and the University of Essex has benefited the service users, team, organisation and student placement opportunities. Jami are now looking at ways of developing the OT service in NE London, using the evidence provided by the student.

Louise Palmer

Deputy Head of Services - Jami
Louise.palmer@jamiuk.org

Nikki Williamson

Role emerging placement tutor – University of Essex
nwill@essex.ac.uk