Supporting social work students with additional needs when undertaking their placement: an exploratory journey of what is meant by additional needs and how support may be provided

Dr Barry Fearnley
Department of Social Work and Health
School of Social Sciences
Nottingham Trent University

The number of UK-domiciled entrants to full-time first degree courses with a known disability was 44,250 in 2015-16, which was an increase of 56 per cent since 2010-11. Of those with a known disability, about 18,750 (42 per cent) were in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA).

The most common type of disability is a specific learning difference, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. In 2015-16, almost half of those students with a known disability who started a higher education programme had a specific learning difference.

http://www.hefce.ac.uk/analysis/HEinEngland/students/disability/

Supporting students with additional needs when undertaking their placement

Headline news in recent months has highlighted the extent of student mental ill-health in the United Kingdom.
The media report that an increasing number of students in higher education are experiencing stress, anxiety, depression, self-harm, eating disorders and social and emotional problems.
Cases of student suicides have also been reported in the national press (Stones and Glazzard, 2019 p. 1).

Identified need through discussions
with students and PEs

Working Group with students

Identified and held meetings with:
- Student Support Services – Dyslexia, Mental Health, Social Sciences
- Access Statements
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- External partners
- Teaching Partnership

Practice Educator CPD Workshops / Teaching Partnership Events

- student - 'what can I do to support myself?'

- student - 'what can I do to support my practice educator in supporting me?'

- practice educator – 'what can I do for students with additional needs when on placement?'

Outline of the session

- practice educator – 'what can I do for students with additional needs when on placement?'
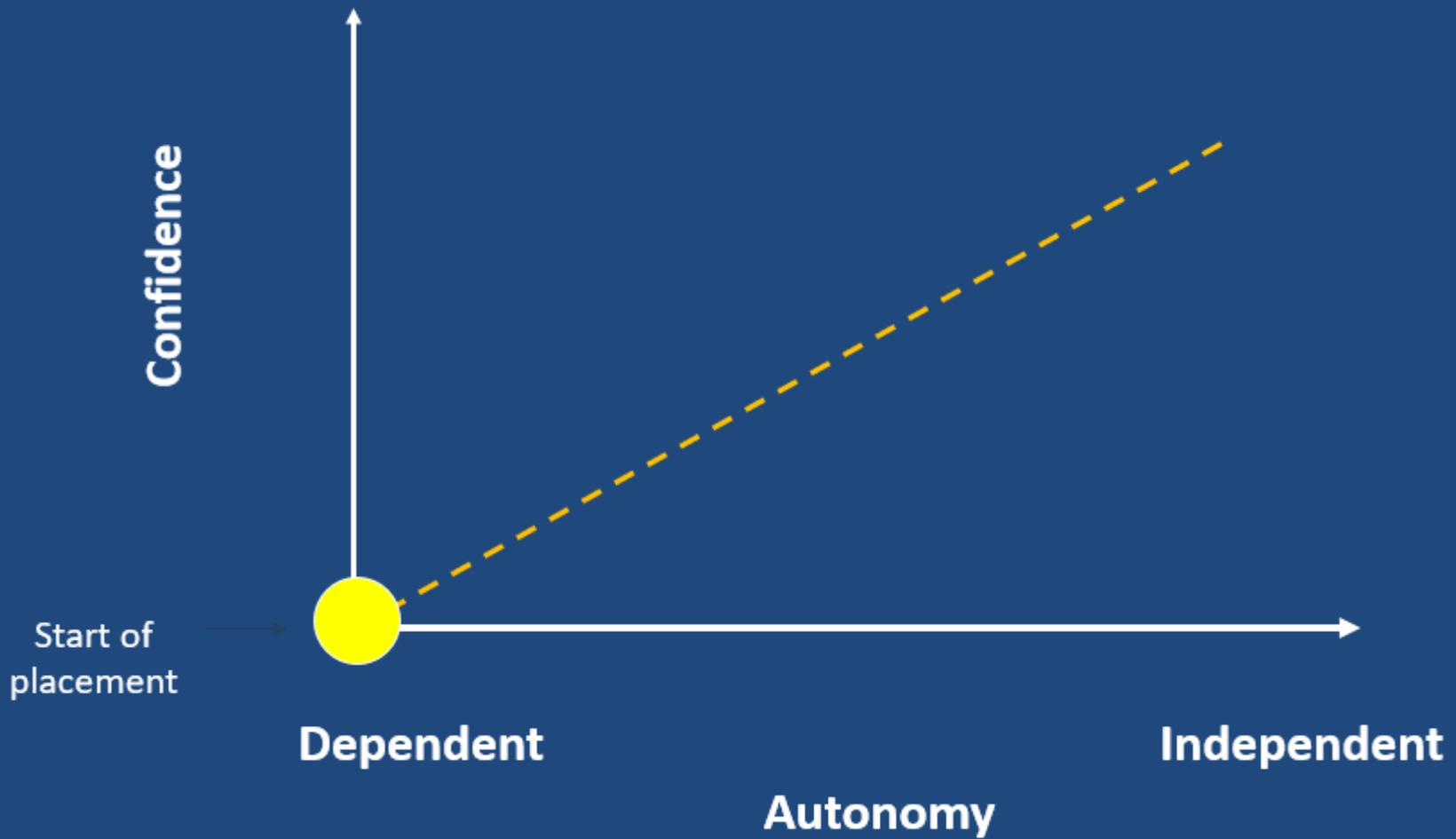
to think about what you do

and

why?

- supporting students with additional needs when undertaking their placement

- explore what is meant by additional needs

"We live in stories, not in statistics"

Gilbert (2002)

Placements

Confidence

Start of placement

Dependent

Independent

Autonomy

Fearnley 2017

Supporting Students with Additional Needs
when undertaking their Placement

Equality Act 2010

Under the Equality Act 2010 you are considered disabled if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010

HCPC

Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students

https://www.hcpc-uk.org/globalassets/resources/guidance/guidance-on-conduct-and-ethics-for-students.pdf

HCPC

Health, Disability and Becoming a Health and Care Professional

https://www.hcpc-uk.org/globalassets/resources/guidance/health-disability-and-becoming-a-health-and-care-professional.pdf

6 Manage risk

– You should make sure that you take all appropriate steps to limit the risk of harm to service users, carers and others.

– You should not do anything that you think will put someone in danger or at unacceptable risk.

– You should follow your education provider's or practice placement provider's policy on managing risk.

– You should be aware that you may put your service users or yourself at risk if your performance or judgement is affected by your physical or mental health.

– You should ask for appropriate support and adapt your study or stop studying if your performance or judgement is affected by your physical or mental health and could put service users, yourself or others at risk.

– You should get advice from a doctor or other appropriate professional if you are worried about your physical or mental health.

hcpc health & care professions council

Information for students and education providers

Guidance on conduct and ethics for students

hcpc health & care professions council

A guide for disabled people about becoming a health and care professional regulated by the HCPC – includes information for education providers

Health, disability and becoming a health and care professional

Staff in practice placement providers

By law, organisations which provide practice placements have a direct duty not to discriminate against disabled people, and must consider any reasonable adjustments they could put in place to make sure their placement is accessible.

Practice placements

All programmes we approve must include practice placements. These are an opportunity for students to gain workplace experience in their intended profession.

Telling practice placement staff about your disability can allow them to arrange any support or adjustments that you need to practise safely and effectively in the workplace. This can help make sure that staff are able to accurately assess your ability and whether you have met our standards. It will also make sure that you are not put in situations which might put you or your service user at risk.
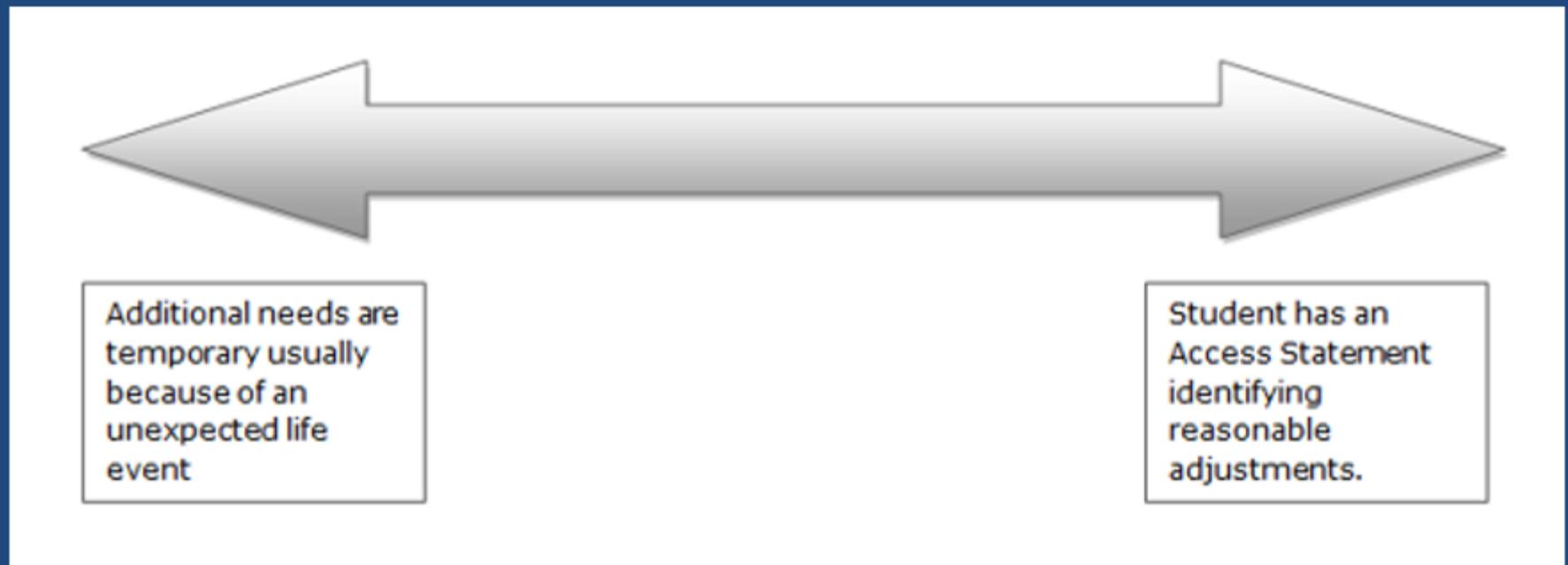
To make sure that you get the appropriate support and adjustments, it is important that you discuss your needs with your practice placement provider before you begin your placement. This will make sure that they are able to put the necessary support in place before you start. There are some examples of adjustments that providers can make to practice placements in the section for education providers on page 23.

Your education provider is likely to have systems in place to help with the move to your practice placement, such as a meeting before the placement starts, but you may want to contact your practice placement co-ordinator or disability services about these.

Reasonable Adjustments

➢ Learning Agreement Meeting

➢ Mid-Way Review Meeting

Supporting Students with Additional Needs when undertaking their Social Work Placement

Additional needs are temporary usually because of an unexpected life event

Student has an Access Statement identifying reasonable adjustments.

additional needs as a continuum

(Fearnley, 2018)

Action Research

Action research is a type of inquiry that is:

- ➤ *practical* as it involves making change to practice;
- ➤ *theoretical* as it is informed by theory and can generate new insights;
- ➤ *collaborative* as it encourages engagement with others in the process;
- ➤ *reflexive* as it requires practitioner researchers to keep their own knowledge, values, and professional activities under review;
- ➤ *contextual* as it acknowledges institutional, national, historical and societal influences.

Arnold and Norton (2018)

Focus groups - feedback

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                    ┌─────────┐
                    │ Student │
                    └─────────┘
        ↙           ↓      ↓           ↘
┌──────────┐ ┌───────────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌───────────┐
│ Feelings │ │ Relationships │ │ Fairness │ │ Resources │
└──────────┘ └───────────────┘ └──────────┘ └───────────┘
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Feelings

- like a burden
- uncertainty
- anxiety
- triggers

Relationships

▪ Practice Educator

- Judgemental
- stigma
- unreliable
- stereotypes
- power

▪ Tutor

- trust
- role of the tutor
- contact with the tutor
- scared

▪ Student Support Services

- mixed

Focus groups - feedback

Fairness

- assessment
- pass / fail

Focus groups - feedback

Resources

- Laptop
- Software
- Access to information

Students – looking after themselves

Placements -
- managing workload
- stress / anxiety
- vulnerabilities
- risks
- developing confidence
- building resilience
- emotional intelligence
- problem solving
- identity

University – academic work to be undertaken

Competing demands

Home / family life

Support

Individual – situation and circumstances

Action Plan ?

Supervision ?

A self-care framework for social workers: building a strong foundation for practice (Lee and Miller 2013)

Personal self-care is defined as a process of purposeful engagement in practices that promote holistic health and well-being of the self, whereas

professional self-care is understood as the process of purposeful engagement in practices that promote effective and appropriate use of the self in the professional role within the context of sustaining holistic health and well-being. (p. 98)

- ❖ workload and time management

- ❖ attention to professional role

- ❖ attention to reactions to work

- ❖ professional social support and advocacy

- ❖ professional development

- ❖ revitalization and generation of energy

Tutor
Social Work Team
+
Practice Educator
Practice Mentor Assessor (PMA)
Workbased Supervisor
Placement Co-Ordinator
Team Manager

Student

University
Agency
HCPC

Personal

Preparing students for professional practice –

Placement journey – learning and development

- Relationship(s)
- What helps or hinders your learning?
- What helps or hinders the student's learning? How do you know?
- Does the student feel comfortable, safe, or vulnerable when talking to you? How do you know?

Practice educator - what can I do for students with additional needs when on placement?

Social Work Students on Placement with Dyslexia

A toolkit for students, practice educators and university tutors

Based on the Royal College of Nursing document: Dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia : a toolkit for nursing staff

barry.fearnley@ntu.ac.uk

Next steps …

- questionnaire

Students

Practice educators /
workbased supervisors

Placement co-ordinators

- develop a resource 'toolkit'

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Dr Barry Fearnley
Senior Lecturer in Social Work

Direct Line 0115 848 4367

email barry.fearnley@ntu.ac.uk

Professional Capabilities Framework