Supporting Additional Learning Needs in Organ Donation Education

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Introduction

As a Professional Development Team our role is to support qualified nurses in their six month training period to become competent in the role of Specialist Nurse Organ Donation (SNOD), and also update and professionally develop existing team members.

The 6 month training programme was developed to support qualified nurses receive structured quality and evidence based training to support SNODs to reach competence and practice independently, to facilitate organ and tissue donation. Organ and Tissue donation is a complex and sensitive role, and the nurses work towards NHS Blood and Transplant’s overarching aim to save and improve lives through the gift of donation.

The training period utilises a variety of teaching methods - classroom-based learning, reflection, clinical practice, competency-based assessment and self-directed learning for example. As part of my own development, I began to reflect and explore how we as a team could meet the needs of learners with additional learning needs such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or dyscalculia, and how incorporated these into our practice.

Background

- Nursing is a Profession is bound by the Equality Act (2010) that identifies nine protected characteristics.
- The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) have an equality objectives action plan and we are also required to meet the public sector equality duty.
- Some disabilities are acquired or identified during the course of a career.
- Any nurses with a disability have their rights protected by the disability discrimination act, which puts a duty on employers and helps both employers and employees to identify the reasonable adjustments and support on individual needs in order to start or continue a training post or job.

Outcomes

Simple changes were readily implemented by the team - adjustment of font colour in presentations, availability of handouts prior to taught sessions and learners given the opportunity to share their additional learning needs at the start of their training period if not already disclosed.

Recognising the additional qualifications these learners can bring with them to a team through readiness has been a positive outcome.

All learners must feel they are positively and equally valued and accepted, and their efforts to learn are recognized and judged without bias. The use of any resource should have a positive impact for the learner, and enable greater learner success. Within nursing, by supporting staff with specific learning needs it helps to create a diverse workforce.

Future plans and recommendations

Work to reformat the corporate data set organisation wide to be more suitable for dyslexic individuals is ongoing.Whilst it is hard to measure the impact quantitatively, further work into the benefits of changes for individuals and the education team, and organisation wide would be beneficial.

References: