

OT Clinical Educator Tips

“Pre Placement: Reducing Student Anxiety”

A student on placement is often in an unfamiliar environment facing new challenges. The situation may cause the student to feel anxious not only making them feel uncomfortable but possibly hindering their ability to take on new information and to learn.

Things that increase student anxiety

Clinical Educator-centred factors:

- Lack of feedback about performance
- Unclear expectations
- A supervisor that is not approachable
- Negative attitudes of staff/supervisor

Student-centred factors:

- Personal factors such as family, other relationships, finance
- Stress of other work and university deadlines
- Lack of confidence
- Not feeling prepared
- Poor quality of planning for placement
- Limited clinical experience
- Uncertainty of assessments used in the setting
- Uncertainty of therapy used in the setting

Caseload-centred factors:

- “Too-difficult” or the “First time” client
- Clients with whom previous sessions were unsuccessful

(The University of Queensland & Griffith University, 2008)

Ways to reduce anxiety

- provide clear expectations from the beginning
- provide regular feedback and consider making a written record of this
- provide a timetable for first two weeks of placement
- be approachable and display a positive attitude
- ask students about themselves
- ensure students have the opportunity to plan for client sessions, practice assessments or interventions and have the opportunity to reflect on their performance

Students perform best when the following is characteristic of the placement:

- There's a welcoming environment and a sense of belonging
- Quality supervision is provided (well prepared and balanced, timely feedback)
- The Clinical Educator is interested in the student
- There's a presence of peers (ie. other students and perhaps exposure to the new graduates)
- Students are well prepared prior to placement commencing
- Interprofessional teams are included in the placement (Capra, 2008)

References:

Capra, S. (2008). Clinical Education in Allied Health. Appraisal of the literature for Queensland Health.

The University of Queensland & Griffith University (2008). Interprofessional Workshop for Professional Practice Educators. Presented at Griffith University on 17th January 2008 by Anne Hill and Maria Constantinou.

Acknowledgements

This tip sheet has been developed by Melanie Roberts, OT Clinical Education Support Officer at the Gold Coast Health Service District.

Document History

Prepared By	Melanie Roberts, Occupational Therapy Clinical Education Support Officer; Gold Coast Health Service District	November 2009
Reviewed By	OT Clinical Education Leader – Adult Physical	October 2013
Approved By	OT Clinical Education Leader - Program Quality	October 2011
Next Review Due		October 2014

© State of Queensland (Queensland Health) 2013



<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/au/deed.en>

For further information contact Program Manager, OT Clinical Education Program, email OTCEP@health.qld.gov.au.

For permissions beyond the scope of this licence contact: Intellectual Property Officer, email ip_officer@health.qld.gov.au, phone (07) 3328 9862.