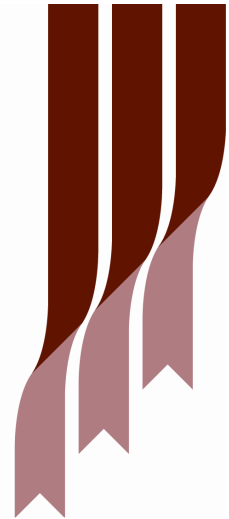


SCOTTISH INSTITUTE
FOR EXCELLENCE IN
SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION



INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT

Involvement of users and carers

Evaluation Report
Pilot 2: Reflective Practice Skills 2:
video role play with service users
and carers and joint assessment of videos
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Aim of exercise

The aim of the exercise was to develop students' communication skills and capacity for reflection through videoed role play with service users and carers, followed by joint assessment of videos by students, practice teachers/tutors and service users and carers. The exercise extended the process of working with service users and carers to teach and assess practice skills in social work students, following evaluated role play work with young people (see **Reflective Practice Skills 1**).

Format of the Exercise

Six service users and carers using four set scenarios worked with a group of 25 students carrying out their second role play exercise. Service users and carers had a brief discussion with the organiser to prepare for the role play. The scenario provided the basis for a videoed role play, with the student playing a social worker and the service user or carer playing the role described in the scenario. Feedback by the service user or carer was videoed at the end of the role play.

A subsequent session was organised to provide further assessment of practice skills. Small student groups were convened with service users or carers and practice teachers or tutors allocated to each student group. Each group watched their particular videos and jointly assessed the role play presented.

Unlike the session that took place one year ago with another student group, service users/carers and tutors/practice teachers had a joint preparatory session beforehand, lead by an experienced practice teacher who provided a reviewer's brief and a set of 'helpful hints' about giving feedback.

Evaluation of the Exercise

Questionnaires were used from four sources: 12 questionnaires returned out of 25 participating students; 5/5 tutors or practice teachers involved in assessing videos in groups; 4/4 service users and carers involved in assessing the videos in groups. A total of 21 questionnaires were used to evaluate the role play screening process. Five out of the seven service users involved in the actual role plays, three of whom were also part of the video assessment teams, were considered separately.

The evaluation is examined under four areas:

- i. preparation of service users and students for the task
- ii. the gains and drawbacks from the role plays
- iii. the process of giving feedback
- iv. overall comments
- v.

I Preparation: students

Students appeared to feel more prepared for the role play, some because this was their second time of doing direct role play work and some because greater detail was given to allow them to prepare.

Two students noted *Fine and well prepared.*

Nine felt – to varying degrees - better prepared.

Examples: *Felt it was much better this time as we were informed of the purpose of the meeting and our role*

Felt prepared with a significant reduction in nervousness compared to the first role play with young service users

As well as could be expected. I felt the timing of the exercise meant I couldn't do the background research I would have liked to. Nevertheless reasonably well prepared.

Two students felt nervous and thus unprepared

Very nervous, especially as I was unable to do the role play with a service user last time due to cancellations as service user was unwell.

Very unprepared – no experience in criminal justice

Students were asked **what would have prepared them better** – there were only a few suggestions – generally around having more background information

Maybe more detailed info of relevant options or More background of service user (5)

Possibly being in a situation like that beforehand – but that only comes with experience or Rehearsals

Preparation: service users' and carers' views

Generally service users and carers felt better prepared although some saw the need for further preparation.

I should have been better prepared – I should have sought out more information about what other role plays were about

I was better prepared this time because of the Helpful Hints sheet, perhaps also because it is the second time I have done this; but I do not know things like a practice teacher does. More briefing papers needed – perhaps a pack that can be used by all service users and carers in teaching work. A Clearer process of numbering and timing would have helped.

Well prepared.

I felt the meeting with all of us involved in the evaluation was helpful – and reassured me.

Preparation: practice teachers'/tutors' views

This group agreed with the service users and carers that the preparation meeting for all was useful.

I think that they would appreciate getting a preparatory session before the day of screening.

It was good to have the briefing session but it was all a little rushed

Service users had done this before so seemed well prepared

Suggestions for the future were:

The info should have gone out beforehand

Forms and formats at the start were a bit chaotic – clarity about the areas for feedback would have been helpful

More joint preparation time.

There was confusion over rooms and problems with TVs which was unhelpful

2. Views on the role-play process: students

On what worked best there were many differing views from students. These appeared to link to the more natural manner of this interview, to practical considerations, the reflective nature of the process and the experience of service user feedback.

The flow of the interview,

It gave an experience of role play with a stranger, chance to explore points as they arose, becoming aware of aspects shown up on the video

Because there was not a lot of info it was realistic to life

There was also a sense of the reflection the process provoked,

The insight I got at the end as to how well I performed,

A hard scenario – it gave me a lot to think about.

Some practical comments included:

The room set up and the camera were better than last time

I liked having the info beforehand and overall it was a good experience,

Meeting the service user beforehand I felt more comfortable – and having more information.

Views on the role play process: Practice teachers and tutors

This group were generally positive about the role plays.

Very well although there was one case where the service users views flooded the role play and the feedback given,

I think there was a significantly more serious approach taken by the students in preparation and in the role play – good shared discussion in the group reinforced this learning.

Felt this worked reasonably well and very well

A good variety of role plays

Views on the role play process: service users and carers

This group were also very positive

I think it worked very well / very well (4)

The role-play process: practicalities

All questioned came up with helpful suggestions for improving the process often emphasising taking more time over aspects of the process:

A number of **students** suggested students *be given more information/knowledge* (4) others suggested *a rehearsal* (5), *more time or in the role play* (5).

Service users and carers suggested:

A hidden camera,

More background information

It is best not having time to practice because that is not realistic and Maybe more practice

(Students) doing more homework beforehand – they ran out of questions and have more time to prepare

Practice teachers and tutors suggested a number of points regarding better camera angles, having a checklist and having a permanent video facility and a better preparation session with service users in role play.

3. Giving Feedback

Points made about giving feedback fell into three categories – regardless of who supplied them. The first category was those who felt that this process worked well (12/21):

very informative, useful, lots to reflect on

very helpful balance of positive and negative – much to reflect on

I found it easy to give feedback and found it interesting to listen to the students feedback on each others' skills

The second category felt that there was insufficient critical feedback given (11/21):

Service users should try and also focus on our weaknesses

They know better than anyone but they do not want to give criticism

Too often bland/positive

I think people still feel inclined to give positive feedback

Finally a variety of practical points were made; these included the suggestion that checklist sheets would help (5), that there were issues of consistency between service users that could be helped by training (2) and that feedback needed to be more specific (4):

Consistency of service users needed as each varied in type of feedback,

Not specific enough. Difficult to get the info out straight after the role play.

4. Overall Comments

A variety of additional points were made here, some of a practical nature:

A short break after the role play and before giving feedback would help

Better technology (2)

Organisationally this is very complex and students, service users and organisers simply do not have lots of extra time to give.

Excellent, could be used in other parts of the programme

A follow up session with groups of service users and social workers looking at skills required

Perhaps giving the service users the opportunity to write the scenario (3)

Service users and carers

This group made a number of additional reflective points:

When they are sitting around the table they are students, but the minute I saw them in front of the camera they were practitioners.

Perhaps we could work towards service users designing a module and delivering it

Some really thoughtful debates in group discussion

I found it a really helpful thing to be part of as a service user – no one else really knows how it feels as a service user – I wanted to take the opportunity to show them.

I am unsure how helpful my expert feedback is. What if I get it wrong? It is an opinion that comes with a history, not professional. Students need to realise that the service user does not come with a framework or a plan as they do. Their story does not have clear boundaries; the social worker needs to bring order to this.

Some final points were gathered separately from the service users who took part in role plays but did not take part in the video screenings

As with points made above it was seen as a positive experience (5/5)

I felt that it was very good. I found it helpful to put my point of view over and be listened to. I am teaching students about disability awareness. To me this is very important.

It was good getting individual students different perspectives and the different ways in which they dealt with the client.

Well done the students!

I thought it was particularly worthwhile especially because it was an opportunity to deal with it in role as a service user (as opposed to class teaching). Good from my own point of view because I gleaned a lot of understanding of the students concerns and perspectives.

Keep up the good work of involving service users and carers for their experience

I enjoyed it. It is a positive thing for the students.

Some felt it a good method of learning for students:

We helped build up the students' confidence for real practice – student to student there is often too much empathy to be constructive.

It helps to build confidence and to teach them not to make judgements on people before they meet them

They are getting the opportunity to work with someone who is a genuine service user as opposed to trying to take on the role of service user themselves and If they are doing it with each other they do not take it seriously – with service users it is nearer reality.

There was generally a positive attitude to difficulties, some saw no difficulties (2), alongside an acknowledgement that training and experience could help as well as further suggestions:

I didn't have any difficulties but I can see how someone not used to video work would need support – the service user and carers could support each other in a group.

It is not easy to get quickly into character, perhaps devising our role play based on our own experiences next time would be better

If we have more time next year we could take it a stage further and service users role play with each other as service user and social worker as a demonstration of what we might like.

The difficulty of *Having the students relax, knowing they are being video taped.*

Finally all those surveyed were happy to do role play work again. (5/5)

Discussion

Preparation

From the perspective of service users and practice teachers, it is clear that the preparation session before the video screenings was valued; yet many felt that more preparation may be useful, particularly for the service users prior to the role play. It might have been more useful to discuss how best to prepare at a much earlier stage with the service user and carer group, so that choice could be offered as regards preparation and the scenarios to be enacted. Some service users might have preferred to create their own scenarios. It was also clear that those who had already been involved in role-plays felt more confident. This seems to underline the point that service user involvement is a process over time and that process allows for expertise to develop.

Students also felt better prepared because they had worked with young service users in the previous term. However, throughout the questionnaires, points were made that suggested they felt that more preparation was needed. Perhaps some of the anxieties on the part of students may be linked to their assumed lack of knowledge as first year students who have yet to go on placements. Interestingly this may relate to the strength of a model of technical rationality, whereby the professional process is learnt theoretically and later applied to solve problems. When confronted with real situations, any amount of knowledge can not fully prepare students. If they believe they need to have such knowledge they may feel inadequately schooled. Students might have benefited from greater examination the centrality of learning to reflect as a basis for working with human problems.

The Role-plays

Clearly, as in the earlier exercise (see **Reflective Practice Skills 1**) the general view was that the role-plays worked very well. There was a greater sense of the reality of these role plays than was evident in the work with young service users and in comparison to that study, no concerns from any group were expressed about the ethics of working with service users, who could be experiencing issues painful to themselves. The students appreciated greater information and perhaps, given the anxieties present, the importance of thorough briefing should be stressed. There were technical difficulties that need to be worked upon.

Giving Feedback

Many respondents felt that the feedback – both on video and that provided during the video screening – worked well. However a significant number of students and a service user commented on a tendency for over-positive feedback. This has been identified in other research. Noting the earlier need for greater preparation, this concern could be tackled by the use video exemplars to develop skills in this area (see also **Project 3.2 Shared Assessment Exercise**).

Other Comments

Many additional comments gave practical suggestions for future role-play work; the most important addressing the need for good technology. More general, reflective and resonant were views of service users; one respondent appreciated the sense of their view being heard, whilst another respondent doubted their expertise to assess students. These, together with the clear learning gain for students, perhaps form the core of the argument that service user involvement in social work education is a benefit both to service users and to students.

Summary Points

- Feedback by service users and carers was generally regarded positively by all – no-one suggested it was not useful.
- Students felt more prepared for this second role play than the one earlier in the year as did service users many of whom approached role play for the second time. Learning to work in this way is a process that takes time.
- There remained anxieties, particularly on the part of students that they did not have enough knowledge time or practice for the process. They need to consider more the nature of human problem-solving and processes of reflective practice.
- Preparation for service users and carers both for the video work and the screenings was useful but could be improved, taking the lead from service users and carers themselves.

- Overall the role play process with service users was felt helpful, natural and thought provoking. Comments gave a sense of those involved being part of a thoughtful, reflective process.
- A large number of those involved in the process found feedback from service users and carers over-positive. This suggests further training to develop skills in this area