

'Buddy Support'

What is 'Buddy Support'?

In light of the current constraints on all staff (ward staff, preceptors, CPC's and Link Lecturers), a 'Buddy System' for students is being proposed. The premise behind this would be students supporting students, while on clinical practice. This would be an informal arrangement between senior and more junior students.

What are the benefits to 'Buddy Support'?

There are many potential benefits to the system.

'Nurses are busy, as students we are left unattended very often, as we progress through the year, the expectations from us are high and we really don't have enough experience in all aspect of nursing e.g. reports, discharge, where to get information, etc. Sometime personalities clash which makes it more difficult to ask questions when we are uncertain or simply don't know how to carry out a task. So for all this reasons I believe a "Buddy Support System" is of great advantage' (student nurse).

- For senior students and future preceptors, it would give them an insight into working with junior students and experience in listening and dealing with some of their potential concerns.
- For junior students, it would be an informal peer support network which would augment the current support systems that are in place.
- For current preceptors, CPC's, ward staff and Link Lecturers, it would be an additional recognised support for their students.

How 'Buddy Support' works?

The concept of 'Buddy Support' will be introduced to all students within timetabled sessions prior to clinical placements by the branch leaders/practice module leaders. The aim of this session would be to make students aware of this additional support available to them, and for them to commit to the concept. It is hoped that the all students would participate in 'Buddy Support', which may assist them in demonstrating personal and professional development within the clinical setting.

When on placement, it would be necessary to remind students of their fellow students within their clinical area. Where possible, senior students will be paired with a junior student and identified to each other at the beginning of placement, this would make the 'Buddy Support' more meaningful for all. It was proposed that this would have to be with the agreement of CPC's, as they would be in the best position to pair students.

What is expected of students, if they participate in the 'Buddy System'?

There is **no** formal expectation of the 'Buddy System', for example, no formal written or oral feedback or assessment of students is expected or required. Students are **not** be asked to report to preceptors, CPC's, CNM's or Link lecturers about any other students' progress. It is envisaged that the 'Buddy System' would be an informal support for students by students.

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