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# ESTABLISHING AN ACCREDITED CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SHORT COURSE TO DEVELOP PRACTITIONERS WHO SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH FRAILTY - THE CHALLENGES AND HIGHLIGHTS

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## BACKGROUND

With Frailty issues continuing to increase in the UK, health and social care workers require a better understanding of how they can support individuals living with frailty and improve services (British Geriatrics Society, 2020).



A range of local Trusts asked Buckinghamshire New University to provide accredited Frailty modules (L6 & L7) for post registration health care professionals. A Senior Lecturer was recruited and modules were written.

## COURSE DEVELOPMENT

All BNU modules are designed in collaboration with local healthcare providers. Their ability to release staff guides the amount of study days included in the module design. Weighing up the needs of content vs. practice, 8 days were thought to be appropriate.



Frailty is a complex concept (NHSE, 2014), so to distil this complexity into 8 teaching days was a challenge. Though there is guidance on areas for frailty education (SfH, 2018), to meet the needs of diverse professionals, consideration of approaches to learning and priorities for individual students was essential. These approaches included: theory lectures, group discussions, case studies (e.g. the Queen, Sir Tom Jones and Sir Elton John were discussed) and the use of experts by experience.

## CHALLENGES

- Recruitment of students to the module was attempted twice before it successfully ran
- We believe this was reflective of the staffing issues across healthcare providers and the continuing impact of COVID-19
- Modules with low numbers is a challenge for any HEI as they have to achieve a balance between delivery and financial viability
- The Department decided to run the module even with a low number of students to establish the module and gain valuable feedback
- Attendance of students across the run was also a challenge due to understandable prioritisation of practice needs (including study leave being cancelled)
- For these students a range of learning materials were provided online to supplement attendance



Experts by Experience



## HIGHLIGHTS

- The course was evaluated using quantitative and qualitative data, and appears to have had a significant impact on the learning of students
- There were high levels of student satisfaction and all felt that it met their learning needs/could not identify what else they should have learned.
- All students identified key learning that they could utilise in future practice and/or share with colleagues
- The experts-by-experience including people with frailty and a carer of someone with frailty were highlighted as a particularly useful opportunity for learning
- Students all said they would recommend the module to colleagues and felt it was suitable for a range of health and social care professionals
- 100% success rate for module completion

## THE FUTURE



- A blended learning approach will be tried as a result of student feedback
- Development of the non-accredited version of the module, for practitioners who wish to develop their knowledge without wanting/needing academic credits
- Potential for development of a distance learning/online version of the module for prospective students at a geographical distance

The next intake of the modules will commence in September 2023 - For more information please contact: [Fiona.Chalk@bucks.ac.uk](mailto:Fiona.Chalk@bucks.ac.uk)



BNU webpage for the modules

### References -

British Geriatrics Society (2020) Frailty Hub: Education and training. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/frhubedn> (Accessed: 20 June 2023).  
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