

# Nursing Practice

## COMMENT

### “Nurses can be confident about doing their reflective accounts”

Anything new can make us feel anxious, particularly if we feel that the change is being imposed on us. This is how many nurses feel about revalidation. This new system starts in April, and 30,000 nurses will revalidate between then and June.

One major cause of anxiety is the five reflective accounts required by the Nursing and Midwifery Council as part of the revalidation process. However, nurses need to realise that we have all been reflecting on situations, events and experiences on a daily basis throughout our careers. We are already in an excellent position to articulate these experiences with minimal mental effort. We just need to be confident in our knowledge.

A lot has been written about theories of reflection, many of which are over-complicated; for that reason I chose an easier way to complete this task. I have made myself more aware of my internal dialogues about situations, that is, events, complaints, disciplinary hearings, supervision, reviews of academic papers and so on, providing experiences that I can learn and reflect on. As a result, I find that I am now more at ease and confident in reflecting purposefully while actually doing or experiencing something and, if it is significant, writing it down soon afterwards.

The NMC has made the reflective-accounts component of a nurse's revalidation simple. You are not expected to write a 2,000-word, fully referenced essay but simply a reflection on an experience and what you have learnt from it. There is nothing to worry about. I found it helpful

to peruse the NMC's easy-to-read resources – *How to Revalidate with the NMC* and the revalidation workshop materials and presentations – which provide all the information you need to write a reflective account.

You can choose topics from your continuing professional development, practice-related feedback and events or experiences in your practice, then detail what you have learnt from these and how it changed or improved your practice. Then state how the reflective account is linked to one or more of the themes in the NMC Code (preserve safety; promote professionalism and trust; practise effectively; and prioritise people). In my experience, it takes about 40 minutes to complete each account. You may find sharing your experiences with a colleague in a similar role is mutually beneficial.

Your reflective discussion, which will include an examination of your reflective accounts, can happen at the same time as your appraisal. Reflection can provide you and your supervisor with the opportunity to measure your overall performance and to highlight your improvement in knowledge, communication, judgement, ability, cost-consciousness and working-ethics competency. In this way, you can promote your career development and progression pathways.

There is plenty of advice from the NMC on revalidation and, while reflection might seem daunting, you can use the process to challenge your own and others' practice – and ultimately improve patient care.

*Rami Jumnoodo* is project lead, relapse prevention, at Central and North West London Foundation Trust

## HIGHLIGHTS

The ethics of using surveillance cameras in care homes *p12*

How care homes address intimacy *p14*

Providing reading lists for nurses *p17*



## SPOTLIGHT

### Use the patient experience to improve care

Not long ago, the patient experience was given little consideration at organisational level. While health professionals would ensure their patients had the best experience possible, they received little support from employers or government.

Today, everyone involved in healthcare, from ministers to frontline staff, are expected to make the patient experience a key priority. While it may be shocking that it took the NHS about 70 years to get around to this, it is good to see the subject high up on the agenda.

But patient experience can do far more than measure the quality of healthcare providers' performance. It can be used to inform and improve care.

Our new seven-part series on using patient narratives as subjects for reflection (page 22)

illustrates how nurses can use the patient experience to improve their practice, and as part of their revalidation activities.



**Ann Shuttleworth** is practice and learning editor of *Nursing Times*.

[ann.shuttleworth@emap.com](mailto:ann.shuttleworth@emap.com)

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