

Editorial



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Practice development: supporting the practitioner during times of uncertainty and change

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The term Practice Development (PD) is recognised by some health and social care professionals for its facilitative and supportive approach to fostering innovation and change through collaboration and team working (McSherry & Warr, 2006). Originating in the United Kingdom (UK) in the late 1970s and early 1980s as part of the nursing profession's strive to provide quality nursing care based on the adoption of a patient-centred approach to care delivery (McCormack et al., 1999). The term PD and its associated characteristics, qualities, skills and methodologies have gained growing interest in the UK, Australia (Walker 2005), New Zealand (Walsh et al., 2004) and United States of America (Haag-Heitman & Kramer (2004). So what is PD about and why should we as practitioners embrace the key characteristics, qualities, skills and methodologies it purports to offer during these times of uncertainty and change?

First, PD is about promoting continuous patient-centred care and quality services within a clinical governance framework. This is achieved by engaging, enabling, empowering and encouraging patients, carers and staff in the decision-making processes using best available evidence. Second, PD is about using a facilitative approach to promoting innovation and change of oneself, others and teams. It is about promoting an organisational culture and working environment that is based on openness, honesty and transparency. It is about being proactive and not reactive in the way individuals, teams and organisations value and celebrate success as well as learning from untoward incidents, complaints or feedback from our own or patients' and their carers' experiences of services. Third, PD is about supporting each other to get the best out of what we do by communicating and sharing our good or not so good experiences both with and from our service users and colleagues. Finally, PD is everyone's business because as part of our professional accountability we want to provide safe, efficient, effective quality services through multi-disciplinary team-working and partnership building. The future challenges of PD is in developing and designing new methodologies to demonstrate the impact of what we do with our patients in promoting a patient-centred approach (McCormack et al., 2006). By embracing PD yourself you may find a new and alternative way of looking and reflecting on your own, your team's and your organisation's practice(s) in the future. Good Luck during these times of uncertainty and change.

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