



## Personal Outcomes Stories during COVID: Learning from practice

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### How have you been able to keep a focus on what matters to people during COVID?



As educators the needs and concerns of our students have been our top priority throughout the crisis. Like everyone across all sectors there was no time to prepare and we were very quickly thrown into a new world where we had to deliver our classes using technology in a way that was unprecedented for us. Our students at different stages in their programmes all had different worries and needs. For those nearing completion there were a range of anxieties to deal with – would they receive all the final teaching they needed? Would they be able to submit their final assessments on time? How would their dissertation supervision be affected?

At earlier stages placements were suspended and we had to figure out new and creative ways to ensure that students could meet practice learning requirements and how this could be assessed.

### What have you had to do differently and what made this possible?

Every aspect of our job has been adapted and we have had to come up with creative solutions. All contact with colleagues and students has been online using zoom. In the early stages we had to adapt very quickly and some early lecturers involved narrated powerpoint but as we learn about different software and technologies we hope to develop more engaging methods.

We have had to find new ways to assess practice learning and have had to make more use of reflective logs and case scenarios to do this.

### What have you noticed that has been better?

Ironically our communication as a team has probably improved. We have been having weekly or fortnightly meetings not only to address challenges as they arose but simply just to check in with one another and to offer support and solidarity where needed.

Some of my colleagues have gone that extra mile by setting up an online book group and a weekly quiz night. While not all of us are able to attend these events all of the time the effort to maintain a sense of community is very much appreciated.

**How did this make you feel?**

The situation can at times feel overwhelming and at times there literally aren't enough hours in the day to get through all of the work. Many of us are trying to juggle working from home with the demands of home schooling or other caring responsibilities. Some of us have long term conditions ourselves which put us at significantly greater risk or have family members or loved ones that do.

All of these things combined make it difficult to focus and concentrate at times. Some of the other important parts of our job such as the writing and research that we do have been affected as a result.

**What have you learned through this?**

What has become clear is that the challenges I mentioned above are exactly the same challenges that our students are facing. We hope that this makes us more empathic and more able to offer support when it is needed. Communication is vital and it so important that we keep an open and honest dialogue going – even when it is simply to let people know that we don't have the answers right now because the situation is too uncertain. It is better to say this than to say nothing at all.