

Florence Nightingale Foundation - Leadership Development programme

Rachael Betty, Universal Crisis Team Practitioner/Education Support Nurse, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust



HEE committed to funding this year's Florence Nightingale Foundation Leadership Development Programme, offering mental health nurses a unique career development opportunity.

Since 1929, the Florence Nightingale Foundation has been committed to advancing the study of nursing and midwifery practice, promoting excellence, and preparing nurses and midwives to follow in the footsteps of its namesake.

It offers: 40 mental health nurses (2 cohorts of 20) and 20 nursing associates (working in a mental health setting) bespoke leadership development

How did your career change come about?

I was inspired to become a mental health nurse when I began working as a youth worker in the children and young person's crisis team and managed to ultimately return to my original team after being seconded to my nurse training. I had previously worked in SEN schools across the North East but I preferred the short-term intensive nature of crisis mental health work. As I have always enjoyed having students, I began delivering training and ultimately completed by PGCE alongside full-time nursing employment, where I taught social issues to prospective nursing students. Following this, I had an opportunity to develop the education support nurse role; primarily pastoral support for apprentice nurses, which is the first of its kind nationally.

What is a typical day like for you?

A typical day as a crisis clinician varies, which is the beauty of the role. I could be taking calls from concerned parties across Northumberland and North Tyneside. I could be assessing anyone under 18, or offering follow-ups to anyone under 25, or delivering intensive home-based treatment to prevent hospital admission or facilitate a smooth transition from an

inpatient unit. The challenges are mostly around the demand for the service. In terms of myths, I think some people still expect men in white coats who will put them in hospital unnecessarily. The reality is we are dedicated to avoiding admission, wherever possible.

Looking back, how have you benefitted from the programme?

It has been interesting to meet colleagues from across the country and I hope we are able to stay in touch. I have enjoyed the whole programme; the RADA workshops around intentions affecting our communication, Myers-Briggs preferences, learning about different management and leadership styles – it has been well run and interesting. I certainly feel I have become more assertive and more confident in seeking out and putting myself forward for opportunities.

What are you most proud of?

I am pleased with my quality improvement project and hopeful it will improve the experience of our apprentice nurses. I am really enjoying the variety in splitting my role, so I am still unsure as to whether I want to pursue a clinical or managerial post in the future, or possibly go into teaching. I would like to use my PGCE more in the future. I am currently working on a postgraduate educational leadership certificate which ends in 2021. I would definitely like to complete a research Master's and/or a PhD in the future.

What advice would you give to some considering applying for the programme?

I would recommend the programme. It is a brilliant networking opportunity and you will learn a lot about yourself and others. It pushes you helpfully out of your comfort zone and the workload is manageable.