

Lee [01:00:04]

Hi, welcome to your first of everything podcast series. My name is Lee and I will be hosting today's podcast, and I'm very fortunate that I have Daisy with me today who is a student occupational therapist. Thank you for coming to join me, Daisy, and come and speak to us about some of your experiences. Thank you for having me. Very, very welcome. So you're going to be sharing, some of your experiences around a very specific placement that you've had in your third year of study. Is that correct? Yes, my.

Daisy [01:00:37]

Third year of study, my third placement.

Lee [01:00:40]

Wonderful. Join us to give us a bit of background to that place.

Daisy [01:00:43]

So it was a real emerging placement which is essentially implementing OT provision where it hasn't been before. Which is a really interesting opportunity for both us learning as occupational therapy students and for the place that we're doing it to see whether OT could be helpful. Ours was in a university in the UK and we were based within a mental health and wellbeing team. So we did it alongside disabilities and transitions and counselling. Yeah.

Lee [01:01:15]

So really sort of multi professional team within that placement as well.

Daisy [01:01:22]

Yeah. And they all blended so well together and I feel like OT was just that final thing that kind of wove them all.

Lee [01:01:29]

The cherry on top. So what was that experience like for you as a whole working with so many different types of professionals during that placement?

Daisy [01:01:41]

I found it absolutely brilliant. It can be a challenge at the start to try and find where you can sort of find your place when there's so much already happening, especially when it's been going on for so many years and there's so many different established teams, seeing where OT can actually fit in without stepping on toes, can be complicated, especially as I feel like quite a lot of people are not particularly confident in what the role of OT is. So actually just starting to educate more people on what OT is and how it can make a difference. Was really important. And then seeing how you can work with teams to better what they're already doing or help where there's gaps.

Lee [01:02:28]

That's what it's really, really. And you are very right. I'm. I'm a child nurse by background, and I think I properly learned what an occupational therapist was actually post qualified. I didn't have that much of a stand understanding before that time, but I suppose that sort of learning opportunity that there's loads of scope there for sort of skill development and like around leadership. Was that your experience?

Daisy [01:02:56]

Absolutely. I obviously I've come straight out of school into university. So for me getting started and being a professional and taking on leadership and that it's also new to me, you know, not just the academic side of things, but actually just developing as an adult and finding my way in a profession. But I found that because you go in within a role emerging placement, you go in with two students as a partnership. So as well as all these individual teams that we were part of, we were our own team in itself. We had our own office space. We did everything as a pair. There was very little involvement of other people in terms of the actual interventions we were providing. One of us would describe, one of us would ask questions, vice versa. And so just getting to develop together and learn, kind of like. What's the word? You know, just navigate how to be a professional alongside a student, being given that time to be more independent and not necessarily be spoon fed the whole way through. There were so many learning curves that we discovered through making our own mistakes and going away and doing our own learning and being able to have that opportunity to be more independent.

Lee [01:04:18]

I suppose it allows you to sort of like, say you're navigating those challenges and overcoming them with your own solutions and giving you opportunity, I suppose, as well, to be solution focussed and navigate that, like you say, without being handheld. I think that sounds like a brilliant opportunity. Did you have any when when you saw you had that sort of placement, placement allocation? Did you have any sort of preconceived ideas that were maybe. Were you bang on with what was what you expected, what you got, or was it more so?

Daisy [01:04:53]

Yes and no. When we first heard about it, both of us were a little bit like, not that we didn't want to do it, but it was just this huge step. We've only just done our second placement, so we've only just started getting a feel for what it's like to do things outside of just observing people. And all of a sudden we're taking this giant leap into doing everything on our own. And of course, it wasn't like that. That was one of the things that we discovered right from the start. There was an absolutely brilliant long distance educator who wasn't all that long distance. He actually worked at the place, and we had check ins every day, whether it be in person or via teams. So there was no point where we were left to do something. We didn't know what we were doing. It was all very safe and very controlled.

Lee [01:05:39]

So some of the skills that you've you've talked about there and within that opportunity kind of linked a lot to leadership and those sort of like autonomy skills. Do you think having that sort of placement experience or that placement allocation has supported maybe your preparation for transition, which I know for you isn't isn't far away now is it you're stepping into?

Daisy [01:06:03]

Absolutely. I found that going into it. I had very little confidence in myself and the things I was doing, even down to some of the more basic theories and models, I was still getting to grips with them and having the opportunity to kind of explore those on my own. I feel like I gave myself time to develop professionally and individually, so that I can now go out and explore the profession with so much more confidence in doing things on my own. I'm very much the kind of person that if I can depend on someone, I will. I've always done that. You know, I'm still living at home. I've just come out of high school. I've gone straight into a degree. And so I'm I'm building these skills as a professional, but I'm also challenging myself growing up.

Lee [01:07:01]

So sort of reflecting on that wonderful experience that you've clearly had it clearly you got an awful lot from it for maybe somebody else who was allocated a placement like that or, practice learning opportunity like that. What would be your top tips or, or your, the advice you would give to somebody who was about to start that sort of placement?

Daisy [01:07:25]

I would absolutely say, just go for it. No matter how scary it seems, the opportunities are endless, and it's a brilliant experience to become more of a professional and more confident in yourself. As you're sent out in a student pair, one of my top tips would absolutely be to lean on the other person. There's much more opportunity to stand on your own two feet and be more autonomous in what you're doing. So it's so important that you two are communicating effectively, and you've got that partnership down so that you both can navigate this extremely exciting opportunity together. And we were also really lucky in the fact that we had the student partnership, along with both an educator and a supervisor, so we could access them for all kinds of different support. And the educator, especially with the academic side of things and applying theories, ensuring that we were doing everything properly and safely and so to utilise them would absolutely be one of my top tips. Keep in touch with your key contacts, and make sure that everything that you're doing is well supported.

Lee [01:08:36]

It sounds absolutely wonderful. And actually some of the things you've talked about there, it almost seems like the placement was quite transformative for you in terms of, maybe how you walked in to how you left in terms of that development of, autonomy and partnership working and that knowledge of the MDT. It sounds really, really beneficial.

Daisy [01:09:02]

Definitely. When we walked in, you know, we did reflections throughout the whole thing, and my reflections from my first week were probably very much focussed on the fact that I felt lost and that I was still trying to navigate the purpose of voting in this setting and who I could go to for this, that and the other. And by the end of it, we had such positive feedback from all the people that we'd worked with, from the different teams. Even our own educators from university were saying how they could see this huge developmental leap in the people that we were becoming and the theories that we were applying. We definitely both came out of it feeling like we had

grown in a way that another placement in a more traditional setting might not have allowed us to at that point.

Lee [01:09:46]

Well, that's really, really wonderful. And what what a fantastic thing to be able to look back on and sort of really hang your hat on that experience. It sounds amazing. And I suppose in there you've given a bit of a tip as well around the use of reflection in terms of tracking your own development during a placement, and using that as a valuable tool.

Daisy [01:10:06]

Yeah, definitely. I've reflected on all of my placements and I've found that, you know, you do a placement and then within half a year you've sort of forgotten what you've done and who you've been with and what you've learnt at specific points, and being able to track that for yourself and understand those individual points of learning and where they came from, and even use things that didn't really go so well as points of improvement is essential. In this placement we actually explored graphic reflection. So as well as doing your traditional models of reflection written, we also did verbal interviews. We picked out images and charts and graphics that reflected with our learning and the learning objectives we were referring to, and explored that kind of new way of developing professionally and academically. Not not just the traditional writing, but also what what places your strengths.

Lee [01:11:02]

It sounds absolutely amazing. I'm slightly jealous that I haven't had that hearing you talk about it. I'd quite like that placement, I think. Thank you so much for coming to share your experience, with us here today. It's been wonderful to listen to and it's been lovely to hear your passion for it. So thank you so much for your time. Thank you. Thank you for listening to your first of everything. If you enjoyed this episode, don't forget to subscribe and leave us a review wherever you get your podcast from.