Answer Guidance

# Chapter 8: Resilience

## Activity answer guidance

### Activity 8.1

Outline two activities that you could try to increase your resilience.

#### Answer guidance:

*Examples include:*

 *Read a nursing journal or a book on a topic that interests you.*

 *Make the most of opportunities on placement and ask lots of questions*

 *Keep a diary with a jobs list, but make sure you schedule a personal time to see friends and family, etc.*

 *Be sure to regularly reflect on your learning experiences.*

 *Join a society, club, charity, or take up a hobby that enables you to have a sense of belonging.*

 *Develop a strategy for your own well-being, e.g., uses the 5 ways to wellbeing guide or the Calm App.*

 *Consider the well-being of others and how you could develop an initiative to support others, e.g., a student newsletter or peer mentor scheme.*

 *Make your voice heard- become a student rep, complete module evaluations and the National Student Survey (NSS). Make sure your feedback on the positives as well as the negatives!*

### Activity 8.2

Draw a Johari window relating to your self-awareness. Include your thoughts and feelings relating to any feedback, formal or informal, that you have received from peers, patients, carers, practice educators, and lecturers.

 When you have completed your window, can you see any discrepancies between your view of yourself and those held by others? Where does this occurs, what do you think the reasons are?

 How has this activity helped you to develop and learn from your own view of yourself? How might this new knowledge influence your future actions?

 How can being self-aware enhance your resilience as a nursing student?

#### Answer guidance:

This is an example of a Johari window.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Open: My name and age. The city I live in. I love to run and am in a local running club. I am a student nurse. I love chocolate! | Hidden: I have huge imposter syndrome and can’t believe I managed to get a place on this course. I am the first person in my family to go to university and I am so proud! |
| Blind: My partner tells me that I always have to have the last word and I am “never wrong.” It’s important to know this as I will be more self-aware when communicating with friends and colleagues in the future. | Unknown: this week I joined an “inclusivity reading group” which explores perceptions around race and inequality. I was surprised to explore my own perceptions and that I view things through a “white lens,” I never realised this and always thought I was very inclusive! I will change my practice because of this. |

### Activity 8.3

Think of a situation that you have experienced during your course in which you can remember feeling emotional. This could involve your interaction with a service user, carer, or colleague.

Identify the emotion/s that you felt

How did your feelings inform how you thought about this situation?

What were the complexities of emotions for yourself and the other/s involved here?

What have you learned from this situation, and how might you apply this learning to future situations?

You have started to think about how your EI will influence your ability to both understand some of the stressful interpersonal interactions which are part of nursing practice and to positively influence the outcomes of these for the benefit of both yourself and others (Foster and McCloughen 2020)

#### Answer guidance:

*Here you will think of a recent experience and reflect on it. You might use a model of reflection, as previously discussed. Here is a short example:*

***What:*** *I recently spoke to a patient who was very angry. She was keen to be discharged home as soon as possible and was annoyed that it was taking so long. As a student nurse, I fully understand that we have to wait for a doctor to complete the discharge paperwork and prescribe any tablets to take home, which we then have to wait for the pharmacy to dispense. This often takes a long time as the pharmacy is busy. I felt irritated as the lady appeared to be impatient and in a rush to leave.*

***So what:*** *I sat down with the lady to reassure her and offer her some company whilst she waited. She disclosed to me that this was the first time she had ever been admitted to the hospital and no one had explained the discharge process to her. She had been in hospital for three weeks and was missing her children so much. Her husband was on his way to collect her, as the ward had said she could go home. But he needed to be back to collect their youngest child from school and he would be late if he needed to wait very long. This was making her anxious and worried that her husband would be annoyed and her children would think no one was coming to collect them!*

***Now what:*** *I was able to identify my own emotions of annoyance and then my patient’s emotions which were actually anxiety and a desire to ensure her children were ok, not anger. The patient did not have all the information she needed and so I was able to explain the process to her and reassure her that I could ring the pharmacy to chase up on her medications. Upon hearing the patient’s personal situation I was able to see her as a person and recognise that I would feel the same if separated from my children for so long. This helped me to manage our relationship in a different way.*

## Case study answer guidance

### Case Study 8.1: Darika

Darika is six months into her nursing degree. She has been enjoying her course and nursing has been her lifelong ambition. Recently, Darika’s parents told her that they are going to end their relationship. She is very shaken by this news, as is her sister, who is a year younger than her. Darika is confused about what has happened at home since she left and feels guilty about being away at university. She is also worried about the financial implications of this, as her parents have been helping her to pay for a car, which she has found very helpful for travel to her placements.

In addition to this, Darika has recently failed the first submission of a summative assessment – an essay focusing on legal and ethical issues in nursing communication. She has always been successful in previous studies, never failing anything else. Darika is beginning to doubt herself, wondering if nursing is for her. Darika’s friends on the course all seem to be very successful, which puts her off sharing some of her own doubts. She does not want to discuss the situation with her sister or parents as she feels that they have sufficient worries of their own. Spend ten minutes answering the following questions:

 If Darika was at your university, what sources of support would be available to help her cope with her current situation?

 What personal actions can Darika take to improve her current situation?

 If you were Darika’s friend, what would you do?

#### Answer guidance:

*The sources of support and guidance to help Darika cope with her situation are many and these are likely to include university wellbeing and counselling services as well as those which provide financial advice and formal and informal peer support. Darika may also benefit from careful consideration of assignment guidelines, handbooks, Virtual Learning Environment (such as Blackboard), and library resources. Darika is likely to benefit from* *seeking advice, for example from, her Personal Tutor, Module Organiser, and Course Director.*

*Darika’s actions to improve her current situation could include: listing her particular concerns in order of priority and thinking about strategies to manage both the emotional and practical impact of these. She could investigate the resources which are available to help her to cope at this time. It may also benefit Darika to talk through and make sense of her feelings. Re-reading guidelines and seeking advice to inform the resubmission of her work is likely to be important and by following university policies Darika may be able to seek an extension to the deadline of her course work.*

*As a friend providing a listening ear to Darika could be very supportive. You could support her to face up to her situation and plan how to manage her circumstances. Encouraging Darika to take the initial step of seeking further help and advice may be very helpful.*

### Case Study 8.2: Jack

Jack is an adult health nursing student on placement in a busy surgical ward. He feels uncomfortable with the dynamics of the ward team and has questions regarding the way in which the work is organised. Jack is unsure if his perceptions are accurate and are conscious that he can have a tendency to externalise his stress rather than considering all perspectives—he has become aware of this through previous feedback and some of his reflective work on the course. Jack has been feeling particularly stressed recently. Three other students are also currently placed on the ward and Jack thinks these individuals are all having a very successful placement. It is his view that they seem to have more access to learning opportunities than he does, and he is wondering why this is. Spend ten minutes answering the following questions:

 What could be making Jack think that the other students on his placement are having access to more learning opportunities than he is?

 What personal actions would you advise Jack to take to improve his situation?

#### Answer guidance:

*Jack’s situation could be influenced by a number of factors and his self-awareness is likely to be significant in these circumstances. The other students at Jack’s placement may have access to more learning opportunities than his or Jack’s perception of this situation may be different from the perceptions of others. Jack’s views could, for example, be influenced by his lack of confidence and/or poor self-efficacy beliefs. It may be that other students are showing more initiative and willingness than Jack when opportunities arise or it could be that Jack’s supervisor/mentor is not as proactive in helping him to identify the opportunities which are available. If Jack is becoming worried and this could manifest in him avoiding situations and not recognising that he is doing so. Jack may look outwards for factors that could be influencing his situation but identifying possible actions that he could take to respond to the challenges he encounters may be a helpful first step.*

*As Jack’s friend you could encourage him to reflect on his situation from different perspectives, for example, his own, the other students involved and the practice-based staff who are supporting his learning. Jack may then be able to identify actions to take, e.g., to adopt behaviours that show more initiative and willingness to be involved and/or to discuss the situation with his supervisor/mentor. Jack’s increased engagement and involvement may create a virtuous circle in which his confidence begins to grow and he increasingly puts himself forward for the available opportunities.*

### Case Study 8.3: Carla

Carla is a learning disabilities nursing student. The recent unexpected death of a service user with whom she had been working has left her feeling emotionally exhausted. Carla is shocked by the impact that this experience has had on her and is beginning to question whether she has the resilience to fulfil a professional role where death may be encountered unexpectedly.

 What type of support do you think Carla needs to seek to answer her questions?

 What advice would you give Carla if she asked you how she could develop her resilience?

#### Answer guidance:

*Carla may benefit from the opportunity to talk about her feelings and to make sense of these. Carla could come to understand that experiencing grief when a service user or patient dies is not a weakness and can be part of resilient nursing practice. Being resilient involves experiencing emotions and managing these. As well as supportive conversations which explore her feelings and experiences Carla may benefit from theoretical learning about the processes of loss and grief.*

*As a friend you could advise Carla that being resilient involves being flexible and able to “bounce back” and this is not about being rigid and/or tough. Carla could be encouraged to think about her personal coping strategies and what helps her to relax when she is feeling challenged or emotional. Good advice to Carla could include that she develops and invests in positive support networks. Carla could also be made aware that self-belief is likely to be an important part of her resilience.*

### Case Study 8.4: Chandran

Chandran is a mental health nursing student. He considers himself a hard-working and understanding nursing student, and he is dismayed that on several occasions the service users he has met have commented that he could not understand their circumstances. Chandran feels that these perspectives are related to his age and is becoming disheartened, as he is juggling the competing demands of his theory and practice assessments and beginning to question his commitment to a profession in which he feels unappreciated.

 What advice would you give Chandran to help him feel more appreciated?

#### Answer guidance:

*You could advise Chandran to stand back from his personal feelings and reflect on the many factors which are likely to affect peoples’ behaviour when they are receiving healthcare. Delivering healthcare involves working closely with people and sometimes their negative, or at least lack of positive, responses can feel very personal. This can be difficult, but it might help Chandran to consider the long-term nature of some service users’ needs and begin to understand that for some people the benefits of and positive feelings about their healthcare may only come over time. Chandran could reflect on the reasons why people may seem unappreciative of his actions. His efforts to understand how to develop and maintain therapeutic relationships and to show empathy to the people he is working with may be significant here.*

### Case study 8.5: Abha

Abha is a Child Health nursing student at the beginning of her program. Nursing is not as she had expected and she has experienced the distress of the children she has cared for during her placements as very difficult to cope with. Abha has also found herself making unhelpful judgments about the parents she has met during her first placement. Abha has been hospitalised for long periods herself as a child and is wondering if her own experiences are impacting her ability to cope with her initial experiences in her programme.

 Who could Abha discuss her current feelings with?

 What support is available at your university to help Abha ensure her personal experiences do not negatively impact her nursing programme?

#### Answer guidance:

*Abha could benefit from discussing her thoughts and feelings with her Mentor, Link lecturer, and/or Personal Tutor. Abha is having new experiences and exploring these will be important as she becomes professionally socialised into her new role as a student nurse.*

*Similar to Darika in the previous case study, Abha’s other sources of support and guidance to help cope with her situation are likely to include university wellbeing and counselling services as well as those which provide formal and informal peer group support.*