Lynne's revalidation story

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Lynne is a learning disability nurse. Here she reflects on the challenges she faced when she switched to working remotely and what it has meant for her revalidation.

Area of practice

"I'm a learning disability nurse and, until just over a year ago, I was part of a multi-agency community learning disability team. Last year I took on a new role for Learning from Lives and Deaths of People with a Learning Disability (LeDeR) as a reviewer."

Providing care during the pandemic

"My work involves helping people understand their health needs, educational needs and making the journey easy for them. We liaise with GPs and hospital consultants to make sure reasonable adjustments are firmly embedded in anything that they're providing. Switching to doing that remotely was quite a change in how we usually work and took some getting used to.

"During the first few months, a lot of our attention was on making sure that care homes had appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and providing support to services that had outbreaks of Covid-19.

"Following on from that, we supported care providers and service users around their mental health due to the impact the pandemic had on their social lives. The day services were no longer open, so we had a lot of elderly carers that suddenly had their adult children at home.

"These were difficult times for some people who don't have that understanding of why they can't go outside anymore or have autism as well as a learning disability. Their routines suddenly changed, which led to increased anxiety and challenging behaviours. We supported care providers to help bring structure and activities back into their lives."

Opportunities to reflect on practice

"Before the pandemic, I'd often have time to reflect on how a visit went during my car journey, and again by discussing with colleagues after having returned to the office, which helped to provide validation. It was strange to no longer have that and was something that I really struggled with initially.

"But since then, my training log has never been so good! I have a little A5 notebook that I keep with me and immediately after I've attended training or a meeting, I now think 'I'm going to log that and write something about it.'

"The use of Microsoft Teams for meetings, online training and working from home has allowed me to capture more reflections immediately."

Gathering feedback

"At LeDeR, we send out an evaluation form to families or carers to capture feedback, but I also try to capture my conversations with them, which can often be difficult conversations taking place during a sad event in their lives, such as the death of a loved one. I find that capturing feedback this way can also help to provide further support to patients and carers.

"One person I spoke to had lost her brother. I was able to give reassurance that her brother died very peacefully, and the hospital really had tried.

"I could reassure her that he hadn't been in pain. She thanked me deeply for that because she was unaware of all the steps the hospital had taken. She said that I enabled her to sleep a lot better at night because I was

able to give her that information.”

Top tips for people working remotely and revalidating

“Keep a notebook handy! Jot everything down as you go along. I use my notebook whenever I think that there's going to be an opportunity to log something.

“Revalidation is not something that you just do at the end of your three-year cycle, you've got to be continuously embracing the process and doing it constantly. I think that mindset is very important. I think working from home has allowed me to do it, as I’m no longer caught up in that madness of dashing off everywhere.”