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Dealing with learning disabilities

Northumbria University is working in partnership with MENCAP between Monday 15 – Friday 19 June to raise awareness amongst students and staff of how people can be affected by learning disabilities.

Every day, more than 1.4 million people with a learning disability and their

families face issues including poor healthcare, hate crime and social isolation. Around 1,200 people with a learning disability die needlessly in the NHS every year and over half of disabled people have been victims of hate crime.

After adopting four children – three of whom have learning disabilities – Ross Wyatt embarked on a nursing course at Northumbria which specialises in caring for people with learning disabilities and their essential needs. Now in his second year, he explained how the course is transforming his life.

“I have always had an interest in the caring sector; however I fell into banking and became comfortable, climbing the corporate ladder,” he said.

“My redundancy gave me the opportunity to re-evaluate my career options and I stumbled upon learning disability nursing through my experience with my children. I didn’t really know much about the effects that learning disabilities can have on an individual or what interventions could be used. I was pretty naive to be honest.

“When supporting my children, I quickly realised the benefit of using appropriate communication and person-centred approaches would have on their quality of life. At this point I wasn’t actually aware of the role of the learning disability nurse.

“My wife and I found ways to help our children and were in awe with how the smallest changes could make the biggest differences to quality of life. It felt really good to see the difference this made not just to the person struggling, but to their family, their friends, and their place in the community. When I found out I could do this for a career that sold it for me. In my mind if I could help one person feel the way we did after getting that light bulb moment, I wanted to be a part of this.

“Through my course I now get to work with the most diverse group of people and professionals, who are fantastic. I love to spend time and work to help them meet their goals and objectives, and to ultimately help them achieve fulfilling and meaningful lives. There are no two days that are the same, in fact more often than not no two hours are, but that’s what is rewarding about this job.”

Ross went on to say: “Northumbria is linked to some of the UK’s best Learning Disabilities services, giving students like myself access to some fantastic placement experiences to help us develop our professional skills. The staff have a clinical background so bring the expertise from this field to the classroom, shaping the skillset and theoretical evidence base we will take in to practice.

“Northumbria is a great location to study with state-of-the-art facilities to enhance our learning and development. I would say that if learning disability nursing is something you are passionate about and want to make

it your career, then Northumbria will give you the tools you need to succeed, giving you a solid platform from which to launch your career.”

Angela Ridley, Programme Leader BSc/Pre Registration Learning Disability Nursing Northumbria University, said: “Northumbria is one of the rare Universities that offer courses in all fields of nursing, Learning Disability Nursing is an extremely rewarding and fulfilling career, the diverse range of professionals and service users make every day different and better than the one before. ”

During Learning Disability Awareness Week the University will be working with local service providers and MENCAP to showcase information on learning disabilities. Members of the public can also take part in an interactive activity stall where they can paint the colour of disability.

A limited number of spaces are available for high-quality students through Clearing to study Northumbria’s Nursing Studies (Learning Disabilities) course. For more information on the course and to apply for a place visit www.northumbria.ac.uk/ldnursing

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focussed, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to www.northumbria.ac.uk

If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk or call [0191 227 4571](tel:01912274571).

Contacts



Rik Kendall

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Business and Law

rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk

07923 382339



Andrea Slowey

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences

andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk

07708 509436



James Fox

Press Contact

Student Communications Manager

james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk



Kelly Elliott

Press Contact

PR and Media Coordinator

Arts Design and Social Sciences / Engineering and Environment

kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk



Rachael Barwick

Press Contact

PR and Media Coordinator

Health and Life Sciences / Sport

rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk

07377422415



Ruth Lognonne

Press Contact

PR and Media Coordinator

Health and Life Sciences / Sport

ruth.lognonne@northumbria.ac.uk



Emily Morris

Press Contact

Corporate Communications Coordinator

emily.l.morris@northumbria.ac.uk