

The Social Work Degree Apprenticeship
Clare Stone and Mary Shannon
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Reviewed by Hayley Heasford

Summary

This book covers an overview of the Apprenticeship but not any specific course. It encourages the reader to consider key elements of being an Apprenticeship student e.g. how to adjust to being a student and studying as well as the demands of continued working, especially in year 1, in Chapter 2. It does not focus on a particular provider but does a history as well as a discussion about the benefits of the Apprenticeship programme for those unsure whether to do this or to do Academic Degree as a full time student in more 'traditional' sense. This book also allows to understand recruitment processes and to reflect on what 'conscious' knowledge you have that you can bring to this as a possible Apprenticeship student in Chapter 3. There is a flow chart so that the reader can understand the timescales involved in a recruitment journey pictorially which may be useful for more visual readers. For a potential applicant this means they can go 'fore armed' in understanding what they may be signing up an have a clearer understanding of the differences for this course against other programmes and/or providers.

Students understanding how to incorporate experiential learning from the workplace alongside their course is given a focus as well as looking at other ways of developing your learning in Chapter 4.

In consideration of key social work skills recognition of understanding assessment skills are drawn reference in Chapter 6 in order that the complex nature this involves is reflected up and allows the reader to reflect on continuous development of this.

A key aspect for any student is Supervision and a Chapter 7 focuses on how to prepare for supervision and how to create safe and supportive relationships therein but also how to overcome any challenges.

Continuous development is explored in Chapter 8 developing the critical self-reflective practitioner and moving to a competent social worker.

Chapter 5 outlines the Apprenticeship competencies that need to be evidenced throughout their course and for completion and Chapter 9

explore maintaining social work registration and the CPD process

The students, mentors, Practice Educators and Tutors involved in creating this text introduce themselves to give a more 'relationship-based' introduction to this book.

Useful tools

There are Top Tips included within chapters and Activity's to allow a reader to explore their own reflections on the relevant topic areas and enhance their reflection and understanding of key aspects/ concepts. For instance, there are Top Tips on being a Social Work Degree Apprentice. An activity example would be around the Social Work Professional Standards (from Social Work England) and how a student could evidence from their existing practice what they can already complete.

There are useful tools as examples provided such as devising study timetables and breaking down a what you have covered daily in respect of employment task/Academic task and Personal activity.

Additional templates are available to reflect on your values and how these are present in your practice as well as seeking feedback in Chapter 9.

There is a useful Appendix at the back of the book which gives a quick glance for key aspects in values and Ethics, Skills for Advocacy, Evidence based decision making and analysis, personal and professional development Safeguarding, Communication, Working with Others and Use of Technology. Additionally a glossary is supplied of key terms.

Theory

Chapter 4 explores the component parts of an Apprenticeship course such as PCF, KSS and Apprenticeship Standards-Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours. These are broken down into an activity so that student could understand what their knowledge base is, what skills do they have existing what behavioural they do already.

There is also an exercise in Chapter 7 on Supervision and how to start reflective conversations in Supervision. Additionally in this Chapter it discusses about handling areas of tension within relationships. Given that this is a small book there are not differing reflective models discussed within this chapter to any breadth.

Overview

This book provides a baseline for a potential student to understand

what there are 'signing up' for in an Apprenticeship course within social care and key aspects to consider for their learning journey. The book is less than 200 pages long and therefore gives a 'flavour' but no more. The tools provided are useful for a student however I think for a Practice Educator would prove more 'basic' and therefore less helpful for them especially as a student develops both their skills, knowledge and reflective practitioner skills. As a text for a potential student it allows them a baseline at a 'broad brush' level of understanding what the course they may be applying for will give them and how they can contribute to it also.

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