“Obtaining feedback is a great way to keep people engaged”

From 1 April 2016, as part of the requirements for revalidation, NMC registrants need a minimum of five pieces of practice-related feedback within the three years preceding renewal of registration.

The NMC invites nurses and midwives to demonstrate how they have used feedback to improve practice when writing their reflective accounts. Practice-related feedback is about seeking out the views of others concerning aspects of our behaviours and abilities that affect them. Those views can help inform, influence and improve what nurses and midwives do, and how and why they do it.

Practice-related feedback allows people you educate, care for or work with to put concerns, praise and suggestions for improvement into their own words. Obtaining feedback is a great way to keep people engaged, and show that nurses and midwives care about what others think.

We can faithfully represent the voice of others by intertwining their thoughts and comments into our reflective accounts. It is important that we do not allow our own point of view to dominate.

Practice-related feedback should not be seen as a tick-box exercise that affords little opportunity for individuals to elaborate on the responses they have given. Unless we ask the right questions and have the opportunity to explore and clarify the answers, the feedback may prove ineffective in helping to improve practice and the quality of care provided.

The practice of cherry-picking or seeking responses from individuals who registrants know are likely to respond favourably should be discouraged as this may hinder professional development, effective practice or a change in behaviour.

Practice-related feedback is an important requirement for revalidation and, as a profession, we should seek to integrate and firmly embed it in our daily practice. The NMC needs a comprehensive picture of nurses and midwives practising today to ensure that tomorrow’s nurses and midwives are in every sense the best they can possibly be. Through revalidation we can achieve the richness and complexity of practice-related feedback that ensures we have listened, reflected and acted upon the opinions of others. In striving for professional excellence we will always have the courage to ask ourselves, “What could I have done better?”

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