



Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists

RCSLT National Student Study Day

Thursday 12 December 2019

Mercure Sheffield St Paul's Hotel and Spa, 119 Norfolk Street, Sheffield, S1 2JE

Top tips from presenters and poster presenters: Building resilience and managing self-care

- Take time out and set aside time each day to do something just for you! Try something new or pick up an old hobby, practice relaxation techniques or simply just chill.
- Make sure that you organise your time well. As a final year student, you will feel as if you are drowning in work. Make sure you set aside time to do your work and time for yourself! Giving yourself regular breaks when studying is key.
- Foster your interests and hobbies outside of study/work. Consider what support you made need in place during your first job. Always be honest with your employers so that they can help you appropriately.
- Don't underestimate how different it will be in the real world. The transition from student to clinician takes time and is very tiring. Be kind to yourself, and don't expect to be perfect all the time. See if you can book a short break soon within the first 3 months after you start, so you have time to reflect and consolidate your new working experiences.
- Go at your own pace and don't get distracted if your peers appear to be 'ahead' (whether it's on completing coursework, getting jobs, signing NQF competencies and so on). Acknowledge and appreciate that everyone has their own priorities and lifestyles and it's okay for yours to be different.
- Find something that helps you relax: ie mindfulness, yoga, running, walking, singing. Pick what works for you and brings you joy! Remember to ask for help when you need it. No-one wants you to fail; it is not a sign of weakness it is a sign of self-awareness.
- Do things that take you out of your comfort zone, don't be afraid to fail. Make sure you have a life outside work and have a way to relax.
- Check out the wealth of online resources to support you including this from MIND:
<https://tinyurl.com/wm64srw>
- Do a perspective check. Ask yourself: how will I feel about this situation in a year? Will it be water under the bridge?
- Don't get hung up on expecting to know everything when starting a new post. You learn so much in your first job. Also, be confident in asking for help/guidance from more experienced/senior colleagues.

- Be passionate, but keep things in perspective. Build positive connections both in and out of work. Work really hard but remember it is important to play hard too – avoid regular 45+ hour weeks on work related activities!
- Have friends who you do something active with such as swimming, walking or running. Have fixed break times when you read a chapter of a book, play a favourite track or meet a friend for a coffee. Don't be afraid to admit that you're finding something challenging or difficult to cope with emotionally. Asking for help is a strength and shows that you have insight and good reflective skills. Reflect on your emotions as well as your learning. Discuss how a client or activity made you feel and then actively select a leisure activity to counterbalance a stressful day.
- Self-care: If you are experiencing problems (whether at work or at home) which you feel are affecting you – talk to your manager early. Don't leave it until things get unmanageable!
- Make sure you have regular clinical supervision and don't avoid raising issues. If something doesn't feel comfortable, say!
- Know your warning signs – mine is 'If I can just get to next Wednesday...' and when you recognise it, STOP! Take a step back and rethink. Be honest with your supervisors/practice educators/tutors if you're finding things a bit too much – it 100% won't be the first time they've handled those conversations and you might be surprised by what can be put in place to ensure you look after yourself.
- Share concerns with managers and colleagues. Look after yourself by practicing good work/life balance. Don't overwork yourself.
- Don't be afraid to ask your manager for flexible working arrangements to allow you to maintain a work-life balance. I occasionally work from 8-4 instead of 9-5 which allows me to get to leisure activities and travel to see friends and family after work.