



Talk About Teaching 2023

Supporting Students on Placement

Antony Stones

Senior Lecturer - MSc Paramedic Science

a.stones@yorks.ac.uk

Prefrontal cortex

- Controls executive function including, but not limited to -
 - Planning
 - Decision making
 - Social behaviour
 - Working memory
 - Impulse inhibition



Prefrontal cortex

- Shrinks at the onset of puberty
- Not fully mature until approximately 25 years of age [LINK](#)
- Influenced by genetics, environment, neurological makeup, hormones
- Implicated in ADHD



GABA

- Inhibitory (calming) neurotransmitter
- Limits impulsive behaviours
- Also lower in adolescents than in adults
- Also implicated in ADHD



What does this mean?

- Pushing boundaries
- Seeking new experiences
- Responding emotionally to stimuli
- Substance misuse
- Passionate
- Risk-taking





The student experience

- Approximately 63% of students move away from home [LINK](#)
- Loss of support network
- Loss of guidance and external behaviour modifying influence of parent/carer
- 37% of first year students demonstrate moderate to severe depression (compared to 22% of 16-29 year olds)
- 39% of first year students demonstrate some form of anxiety disorder (compared to 28% of 16-29 year olds) [LINK](#)



The placement

- ▶ Many undergraduates, and some postgraduates, will not have experienced a full-time workplace setting before
- ▶ Further change, new places, new people
- ▶ Self-confidence challenged
- ▶ Travel and accommodation costs
- ▶ Placements often in challenging professions – [Ambulance](#), [Police](#), [Teaching](#)
- ▶ It could be suggested that we are sending ill-equipped individuals into stressful situations with limited support
- ▶ Harrison de George – student teacher, died by suicide in 2020, university unaware that he had not attended his placement



To do list

- Manage student expectations
- Ensure students are aware of available support
- Identify key academic contact
- Encourage and create peer support networks
- Normalise conversations relating to wellbeing
- Up to date contact details, including address, for students on placement
- Emergency/preferred contacts
- Ensure placement mentors are aware of university student support provision
- Need to have suitable non-attendance processes in place
- Course specific check-in and wellbeing check processes
- Review student satisfaction with placements and take appropriate action



Resources

- [Positive Changes in Placement](#) (Twitter)
- [Papyrus](#)
- [Suicide Safer Universities](#)