



# DEVELOPING TOGETHER

## SOCIAL WORK TEACHING PARTNERSHIP

### The Mandela Cycle

The Mandela Cycle is a tool created by Dr Prospera Tedam (2011). It was created following research she undertook, which looked at the experiences of black African students studying social work in the UK. The model was developed to support practice educators to engage more effectively with black African students, however it is a model that can be used to explore similarities and differences between any practice educator and student.

M - Make Time

AN - Acknowledge Need

D - Differences

E - Educational Experiences

L - Life Experiences

A - Age

Dr Tedam writes that the acronym 'MANDELA' sends a positive message to students, as MANDELA is more than a name "it symbolises values that may be important to African students of social work" (Tedam 2011, p. 70). She goes on to note that "MANDELA conjures up words such as 'determination' and 'success'".

It is useful to read the article referenced at the bottom, but there are some pointers underneath for each area. This model is a cycle, so it lends itself to practice educators revisiting each domain as the placement progresses.

#### Make Time

This domain is to remind practice educators to ensure there is a good amount of time for supervision, and that this time is prioritised. It is also to remind practice educators that students who are not from the UK, need sufficient time to understand the context of the work they will be doing and their role within the organisation or agency.

#### Acknowledge Need

This section of the cycle is to ensure that practice educators take time to establish the student's needs. Not just their practice learning needs, but also wider needs that may impact on their daily lives, which in turn will impact on their learning.

### Differences

Once needs have been identified, it is necessary to discuss differences. This is something that can be explored in increasing depth throughout the placement. This model is a cyclical model, and as such is one that can be used at different stages throughout the time the student is with the practice educator.

### Educational Experiences

It is important for practice educators to understand a student's educational experiences as this will provide some insight into their attitudes to learning, and their understanding of the role of education. It is important to also explore a student's learning style.

### Life Experiences

A student's life experiences will be significant in terms of their own approach to service users with similar experiences. However it is important to be aware that students may not want to share information until they feel safe with their practice educator. Practice educators also need to be aware that discussion of life experiences could bring up emotions for students. As with other discussions of personal experiences, it is useful for practice educators to enable the student to make links where appropriate with service users' experiences.

Tedam also writes that "for many black African social work students, issues of faith and spirituality will be an important part of their lives and they may openly question the relevance or otherwise of faith during their interventions with service users. The response to this is important and the practice educator must ensure that their response is clear to the student." (Tedam 2011, p. 67)

### Age

Having Age as a specific domain in the model gives permission for age to be discussed. Tedam notes that this area was included, as "within most African contexts age is an important variable used to understand relationships and social interactions among and between people" (p. 67). It is a useful domain to explore with any student, as age often is seen as advantageous (or not) by different people and in different ways. For young practice educators who have mature students, it can be particularly useful to discuss this at the beginning of a placement.

### Reference

Tedam, P. (2011). The MANDELA model of practice learning: An old present in new wrapping? *Journal of Practice Teaching & Learning* 11 (2)

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