Nursing students and dyslexia

• What are the experiences of student nurses, who have dyslexia, while on placement?

• How much awareness do nurse mentors have around students with dyslexia and their learning support needs?
What is dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a spectrum disorder, with symptoms ranging from mild to severe. People with dyslexia have particular difficulty with:

• Phonological awareness
• Verbal memory
• Rapid serial naming
• Verbal processing speed (NHS Choices website)
Reasonable Adjustment

• There is no legal definition and it is up to the individual/professional body to decide upon what adjustments to make.

• Adjustments within a clinical setting are reasonable and practical.

• The main adjustment appears to be awareness.
The Placement Setting

• New – spatial disorientation
• Busy – moving from one care episode to another quickly
• Multi-tasking duties - fast information processing
• Unfamiliar work practices – different wards, different rules
• Hand over – verbal or taped – terminology – acronyms
• Documentation – admitting a patient - time allocation
• Exhaustion – keep you brain on full cylinders all the time
Focus group feedback

• Students disclosed experiences of bullying and being made to feel incompetent as a result of having dyslexia leading to emotional trauma.
• Students spoke of their experiences gradually improving throughout their training.
• Positive mentoring is reported to have a huge impact on a students self esteem and confidence to succeed while on placement.
Qualitative Study – Phase 1

- Diary and interview approach to data collection
- 14 Student nurses currently taking part in study
- Completing a paper/online diary for 4 weeks throughout their placements
- Followed up with a face to face semi-structured interview
- Thematic analysis will be used to refine and describe the collected data
Qualitative Study – Phase 2

• A paper survey was distributed widely throughout Tayside to Nurse Mentors
• Followed up with a sample of ten face to face interviews to further explore the findings
• Estimated 250 nurse mentors invited to take part.
• Mixed methods analysis
Summary

Coping strategies
Emotional support
Slow burner
Self esteem
Excitement and commitment