

## **Report from Clinical Placement Abroad**

In addition to study requirements students on clinical placement abroad are to submit a report which is to contain the following items:

### **1. Introduction**

**Student:** Sande Helga Dinda

**Clinical placement:** Vårdo hälso-och sjukvård.

**Study period:** 3rd February – 2<sup>nd</sup> march

### **2. Description of clinical placement**

I had four weeks practice period in one of the small islands in the archipelago which had a total population of less than one thousand inhabitants. A suitable place, I would say, for a home nursing practice as most of the inhabitants were of age and they make up a bigger percentage of people in need of home nursing services.

### **3. Description of and reflection on learning situations**

Vårdo hälso-och sjukvård had one nurse working Monday through Friday and one extra one who came only on Mondays to help out as Mondays were quite busy days and more than one nurse was needed to keep things moving. I had the regular nurse as my mentor and so our day began from 8am till 4 pm. We offered home nursing services as well as taking care of the residents within the centre. We made home visits almost every day of the week together with my mentor. There were so many nursing interventions involved in this and unlike other specialities, the one thing that stood out was independence in decision making when it comes to home nursing and a higher sense of responsibility. Competence goes without mention. Family involvement played a major role thus good communication and people skills top the list. I had to rely entirely on my mentor as I could not understand a word in Swedish. Once my mentor explained in a familiar language about what we were doing I can confidently say all of them were willing to let me practice my skills on them which was a plus for me as it gave me an opportunity to do more than I had expected. For cases that needed referral we sent them to the nearest health centre and where a doctor's input was needed, we made a call to the responsible doctor. My whole perspective of home nursing changed when I went for my practice and I got to realise how demanding of time, competence, independence home nursing is.

#### **4. Evaluation of clinical placement period**

##### **• Information prior to departure**

I got accurate and relevant information regarding my placement abroad prior to my departure from the responsible persons as well as from the Network coordinator Marjo palovaara who was kind enough to go out of her way and ensured that there was communication flow between me and the host school. This was a new thing for me and for sure I needed all the help I could get. All my paper work were delivered and signed in good time. The host university's coordinator (Ålands University of applied sciences) and the parties involved were also kind enough to send me information about the place and information regarding my clinical placement in good time. I got a list of people to contact and had information on what to do and where to go at what time and how. In other words it was more of a hustle for teachers and the coordinators than it was for me, this kind of organisation in itself was a motivation for me as a student.

##### **• Reception**

I had a state of the art reception both from my host family and host university. Much appreciation to the international coordinator Åland University of applied sciences, ma'am Lena Nyman-Wiklund. I also had an awesome student tutor, Greta Antman who paid attention and offered guidance whenever it was necessary. I had a chance to tour the host university and got introduced to just about everyone from different departments and briefed a little on the school's culture and principles.

##### **• Study environment**

The study environment was quite good for home nursing practice but it would have been better for someone with some knowledge of the Swedish language as communication is the key to everything. I had the chance to practice so many nursing skills and I got first hand practice of a real home nursing we had a available ride at our disposal whenever we needed to make home visits and that made it easier to access different homes within a good time. I had access to evidence based information for example internet and books which I referred to whenever I needed clarification on certain issues. I also had a quite competent and knowledgeable mentor who helped me a lot. Thank you Aamu Laino.

##### **• Self evaluation**

Overall, I managed very well and my knowledge and understanding of home nursing have widened and gotten better as a result of the practice.

##### **• Housing conditions**

I had prior arrangements concerning my accommodation. I spent my four weeks with this awesome couple who offered me a room in their home as well as company, support and guidance. Felt like family which to me was way better than living in a student apartment alone in a foreign place, lonely and homesick.

- **Economy**

The fact that students get grants for exchange programme is an awesome idea as it was with the grant money that I was able to survive and afford a decent living for a student in a period of four weeks. Nothing luxurious but it caters for the basic needs of a student which I believe, is the main aim and idea behind the grant money. In addition to this my host university in Åland gave me lunch coupons which unfortunately I never got to use as they were only valid in various food joints within Åland and not at my placement area. Nevertheless, the lunch coupon idea was and still is a brilliant idea

- **Culture**

They have an accommodating culture in my opinion and the fact that I was from a totally different culture made it more fun. We compared cultures. Being that I was from a different race some of the natives were quite excited to have me visit their homes and to have a visitor of my race for the very first time in their homes. It was quite funny and humbling at the same time. As for food and other cultural stuff, I would say they were quite different from what I am used to but that's their identity and the best thing was just to get along and get used to them. Appreciate and celebrate different culture.

- **Communication/transport**

Åland is an area inhabited by Swedish speaking Finns hence Swedish was the language of communication among the natives. My clinical mentor was quite gifted in languages and could speak in Finnish, Swedish as well as English which made it easier for me. She used English to instruct and guide me and also translated and aided communication between me and my clients through interpretation and translation. There were a few natives who could speak Finnish and since I could speak a little Finnish, I got to have small conversations and got to know some of our clients.

Transport wasn't a problem for me even though my practice place was about an hour's drive from my place or residence. There were buses to and from my place which were quite affordable considering the distance but I was lucky enough to have a mentor who gave me a ride every single day to and from work to my place. (Huge favour) every morning we had to take a ferry to cross over to my practice place which to me was part of an adventure and made the one hour drive feel more like a leisure drive.

- **Teacher/tutor nurse feedback**

My tutor filled a feedback form in which she pointed out my weak areas and even went ahead to suggest ways of improving on them and also encouraged me to do even better in my strong areas. We had a very good student-tutor relationship.

- **Language**

Language of communication was Swedish in which I understood not a single word. In some situations I had to resort to gestures and smiles which I came to realise sent quite strong information even more than verbal communication. Language should have been a barrier for me but apparently it wasn't. For some reason I managed so well. It helps to have the basics though.

### **5. Good advice/suggestions for improvement**

For logistic purposes I think students should have their clinical placements within Mariehamn as they get access to the library as well as other services.

As for the students who would opt to practice in Vårdo, I suggest that they have their priorities right before they go for practice abroad. Choose what you want to focus on and know your purpose and goals for that particular practice. Be your own person and have an independent mind. You are a student and you are still learning so be open to challenges. Not everyone gets to have a good mentor or a good practice, people are different and they treat people differently we all have bad days and moments in life as well as good ones. Just remember that no one is out there to mother anybody so how you present yourself and especially how you treat others is key to a good stay and survival. Above all, just SMILE it covers a lot of insecurities and warms up the room.

**Scope of report: Typed max. 2500 words**

**Date of submission: One week after arrival back home**

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