

THE WISE ROOM: MEETING CRITICAL NEEDS WITH ESSENTIAL RESOURCES

Tor Alexander Bruce, Interdisciplinary Researcher, Health and Life Sciences and Human Computer Interaction, Northumbria University (tor2.bruce@northumbria.ac.uk)

In the often tumultuous and intricate terrain of health care, nurses navigate an environment fraught with complexity, unpredictability, and intense pressure. This tension is fuelled by a myriad of factors, including: professional regulatory requirements, rapidly changing healthcare environments, the organisational structure of institutions, government influence, inadequate business models and the reality that the NHS is predominately a publicly funded service.

As they navigate and take all this onboard, experiencing multipronged strain in such high-pressured professional lives, nurses must still respond promptly and empathetically to patient needs – even while their own vital requirements often remain unmet.

Innovative digital-experiential learning to meet needs

The term ‘needs’, in this context, is intriguing in the depth of its implications. Renowned psychologist Maslow posited that the satisfaction of basic human needs is a necessary precursor for self-actualisation –the achievement of stability or, in the best-case scenario, the state of flourishing in one’s life (Maslow, 1943). In today’s world, however, it is abundantly clear that we are a far cry from universally attaining this idyllic state.

Recognising this crucial gap, a pioneering research project at Northumbria University has birthed an innovative digital support system. Designed specifically for the training and development of nurses, the system, named ‘The WISE Room’ (Bruce, 2023) is a dynamic technological tool. It comprises a walk-in, immersive suite equipped with advanced sensors that allow users to navigate a wide range of experiential learning and training options.

This empowering setting not only introduces an element of advanced technological immersion in nursing training, but also creates a consolidated environment for course preparation, education, and holistic therapeutic intervention. By housing these critical aspects of nursing training within a single, versatile space, The WISE Room serves as a critical hub for personalised, professional development.

Supporting pivotal caregivers

A key concern that this innovative tool seeks to address is summarised in the following observations I made when undertaking research for the project. I think this country must be critically clear that NMC-registered nurses who are responsive to people living with acute and complex conditions are under extreme pressures. To continuously provide safe, high-quality care, an instilled acknowledgement of their own basic needs must be met. A human being who lacks support at a primary level, cannot then intuitively sense they are being looked after.

And if this provision is not in place, it can result in an individual in a constantly compromised and anxious state, callously placing even more burden on the already oversubscribed healthcare system they represent. This statement encapsulates the complex and multi-faceted reality nurses face. But it seems that those currently in positions of power are failing to fully appreciate this critical dynamic.

Wisely considered transformative tools

The inception of The WISE Room began as an initiative to integrate cutting-edge technology into education. As the project unfolded, however, it evolved into something far greater. The WISE Room itself has metamorphosed into a potent metaphor for informed, rational decision-making on behalf of professionals who need support from the grassroots level and throughout their career pathways. By providing a conduit for meeting the most fundamental needs of neophyte nurses, The WISE Room underscores the immense potential of technology in both enabling and revolutionising healthcare education and support. Its development aligns with an ever-evolving landscape of modern healthcare, acting as a beacon of stability for those entering and becoming entrenched in such a demanding profession; an indispensable platform to equip this vanguard with room to learn, reflect and flourish, thus feeling better equipped to serve.

References

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- Maslow AH. A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*. 1943;50(4):370. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346>