

University of Dundee

THE COVID ROLLERCOASTER

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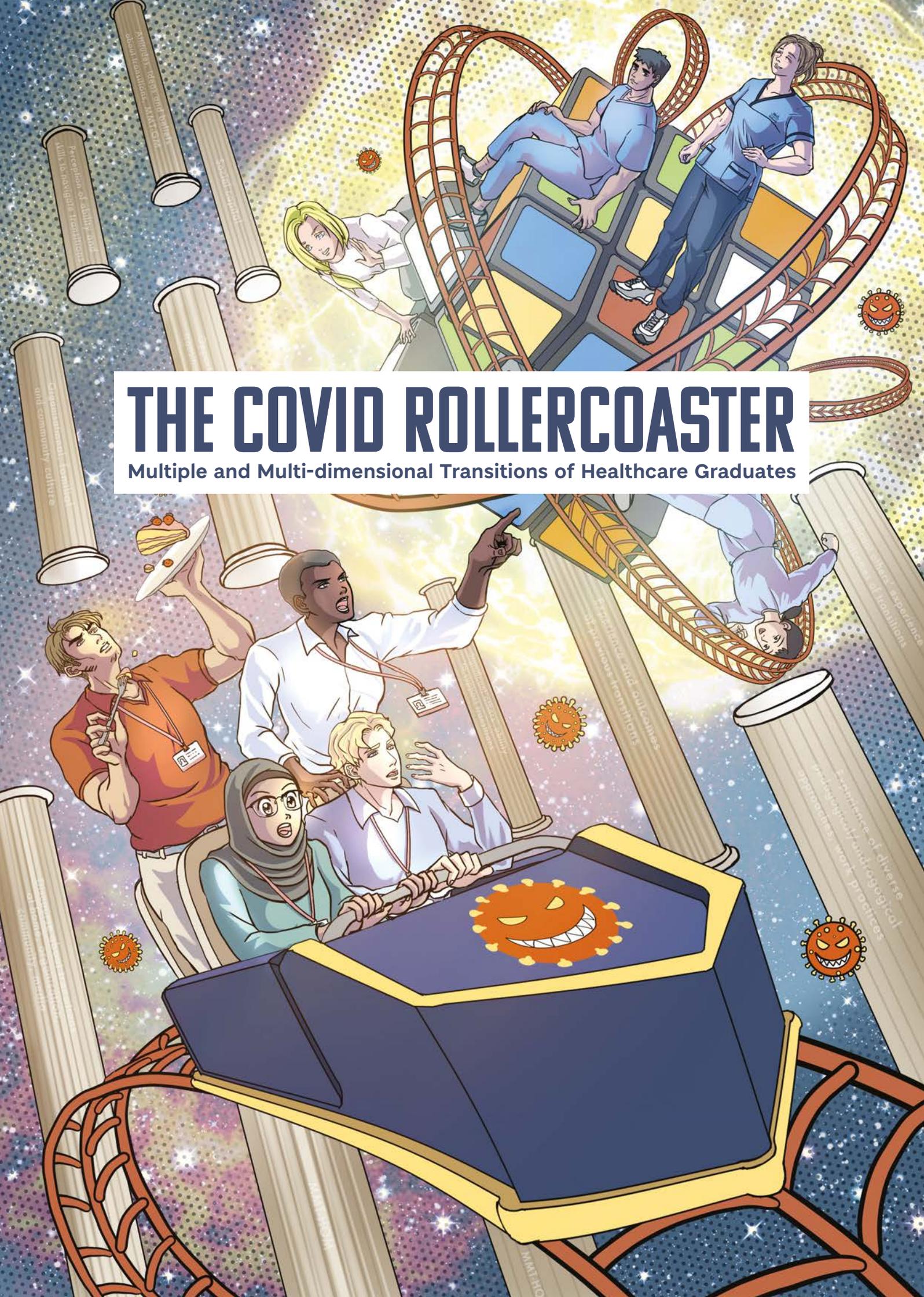
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THE COVID ROLLERCOASTER

Multiple and Multi-dimensional Transitions of Healthcare Graduates



THE COVID ROLLERCOASTER: Multiple and Multi-dimensional Transitions of Healthcare Graduates

In this study, we explored the ongoing multiple and multi-dimensional transitions experienced by medicine, nursing and dentistry students due to graduate in summer 2020. Some graduated early to join the NHS workforce and others had their graduation deferred for a year due to lack of clinical experience. We explored the expectations and realities of their transition experiences; their perceptions of the impact of their transitions on them, their wellbeing, and on their significant others. This longitudinal study helped understand each individual's adaptations to multiple concurrent changes over time. The cross-sectional data revealed trends and patterns for each group of graduates.

This comic anthology presents the interpretations of interview data from doctor, nurse, and dentist graduates. The five comics present both individual and composite narratives of different participants. The visualisation of the data through comics was valuable to portray the wider context of COVID-19, and participants' related transition experiences and emotions.

Acknowledgements

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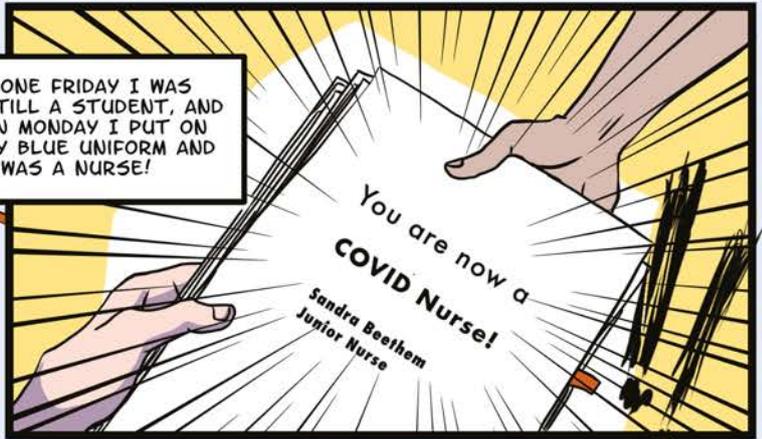
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MY FIRST DAY AS A NURSE WAS AN EXCITING TRANSITION...

THE COVID CAULDRON: Becoming a Nurse

...ONE FRIDAY I WAS STILL A STUDENT, AND ON MONDAY I PUT ON MY BLUE UNIFORM AND I WAS A NURSE!



IT TOOK YEARS OF HARD WORK AND STUDY, BUT THEN...

I WAS STILL THAT SMALL, TINY, NEW PERSON.

I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO LOOK AFTER PATIENTS WITH COVID, BUT NOBODY DID.

YOU DON'T HAVE TIME TO PANIC. I HAD TO STEP UP QUICKLY.

WHAT IS COVID?

GO TO THE STAFF NET TO FIND OUT.

WHEN? I'M RUN OFF MY FEET!



WE'RE ALL CARRYING HUGE LOADS, EVERYONE IS IN THE SAME BOAT, SO I WILL BE FINE.

IS IT NORMAL TO FEEL OVERWHELMED SO SOON?

WHAT IS NORMAL ANYWAY?



THE BURDEN IS THERE BUT I CAN CARRY IT A BIT LONGER.

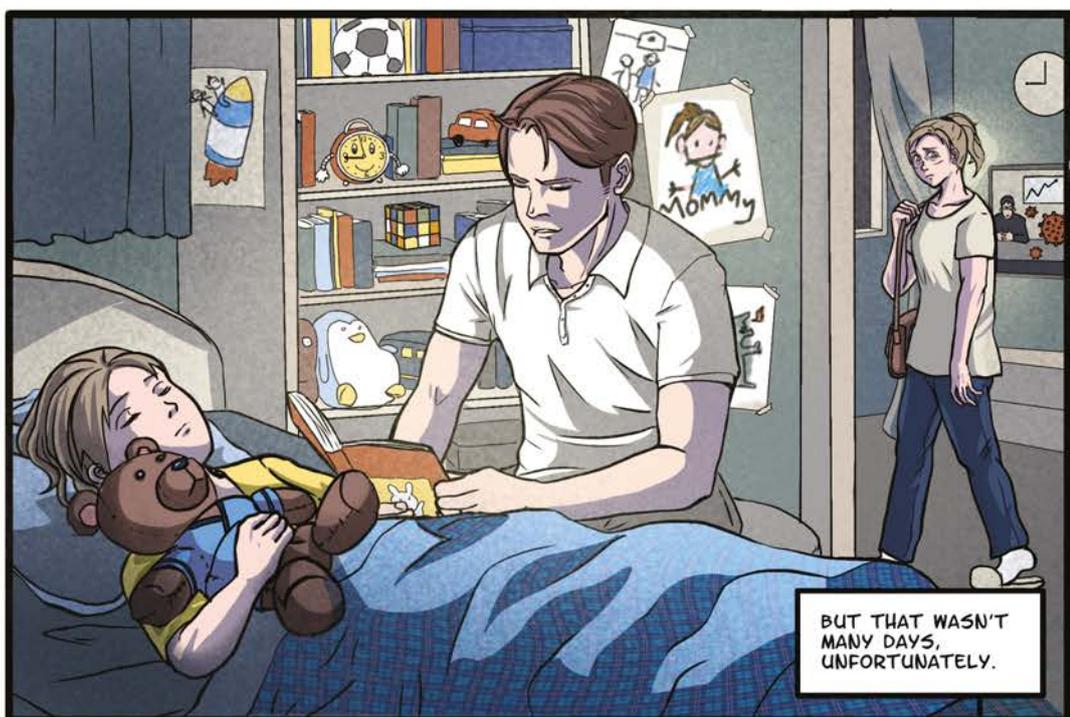
I WOULD GO HOME AND ASK MYSELF, 'WHAT HAPPENED TODAY?' I DON'T EVEN KNOW.

BUT I FELT ABSOLUTELY HORRIBLE AND MENTALLY I HAD NO TIME TO PROCESS IT.

IT WAS JUST TOO MUCH.



I JUST WANTED TO COME HOME AT THE END OF THE DAY AND SAY, 'WELL, NO DEATHS TODAY. I HAVE DONE WELL.'



BUT THAT WASN'T MANY DAYS, UNFORTUNATELY.

HELLO!!! COVID IS REAL.

YOU NEED TO BE CAREFUL AND FOLLOW THE GUIDANCE.

PLEASE GET VACCINATED.

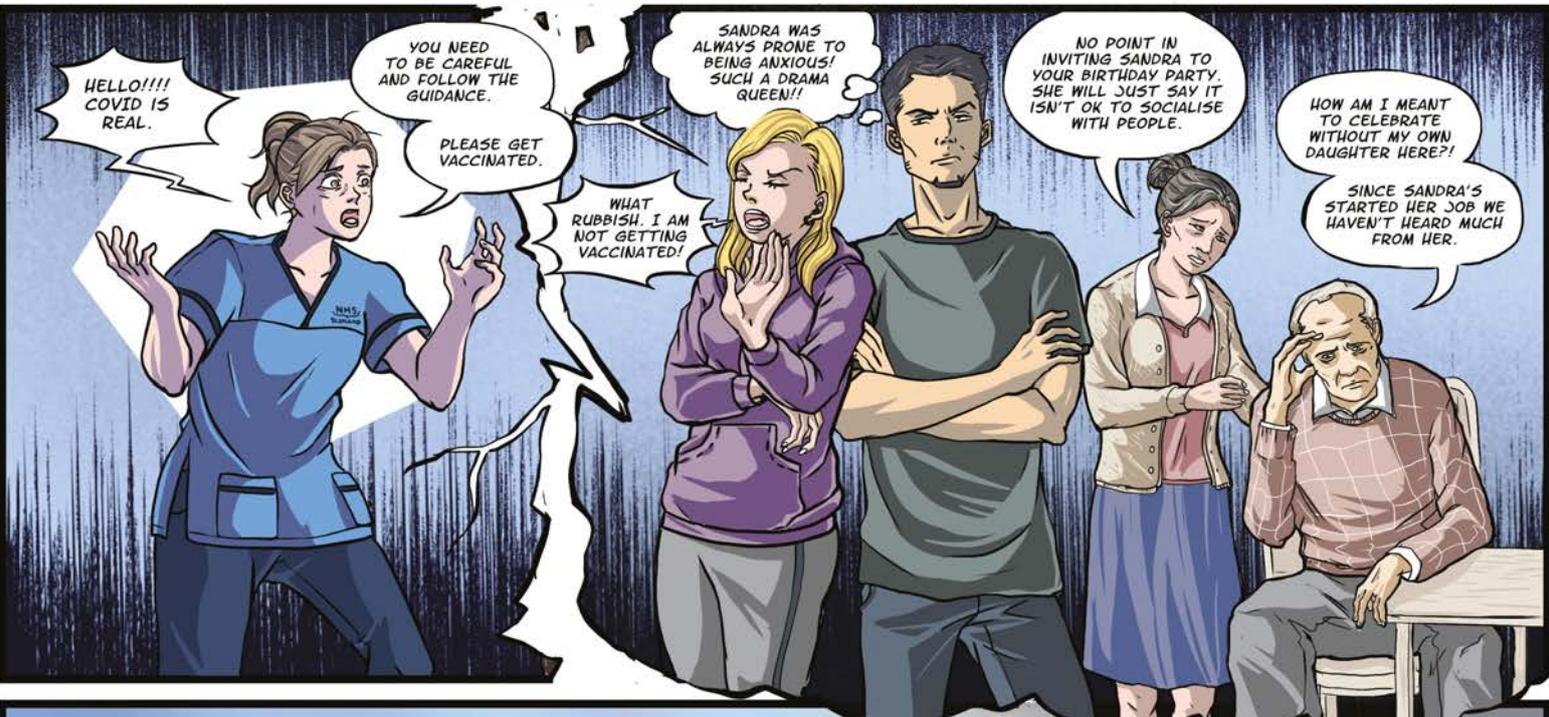
SANDRA WAS ALWAYS PRONE TO BEING ANXIOUS! SUCH A DRAMA QUEEN!!

WHAT RUBBISH. I AM NOT GETTING VACCINATED!

NO POINT IN INVITING SANDRA TO YOUR BIRTHDAY PARTY. SHE WILL JUST SAY IT ISN'T OK TO SOCIALISE WITH PEOPLE.

HOW AM I MEANT TO CELEBRATE WITHOUT MY OWN DAUGHTER HERE?!

SINCE SANDRA'S STARTED HER JOB WE HAVEN'T HEARD MUCH FROM HER.



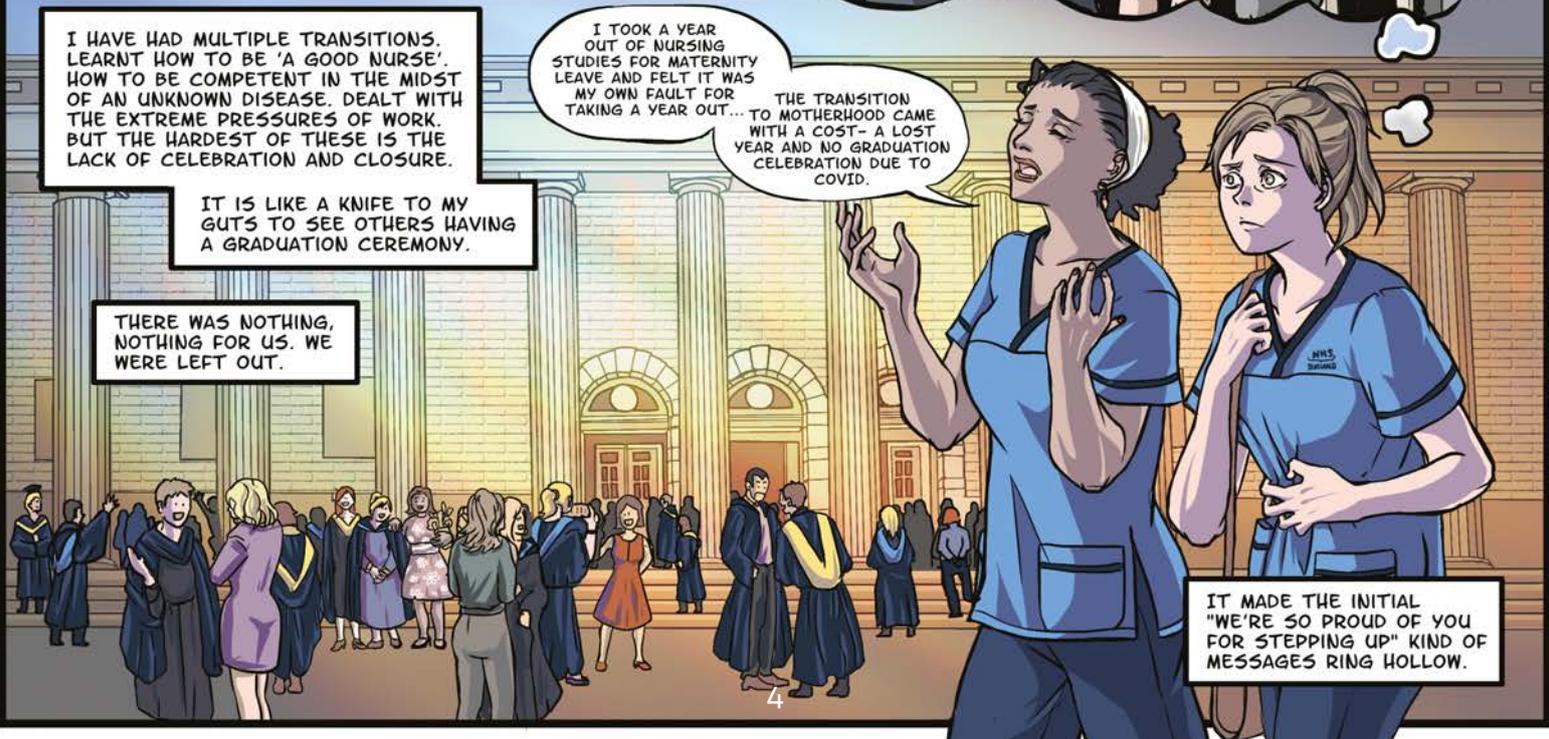
I HAVE HAD MULTIPLE TRANSITIONS. LEARNT HOW TO BE 'A GOOD NURSE'. HOW TO BE COMPETENT IN THE MIDST OF AN UNKNOWN DISEASE. DEALT WITH THE EXTREME PRESSURES OF WORK. BUT THE HARDEST OF THESE IS THE LACK OF CELEBRATION AND CLOSURE.

IT IS LIKE A KNIFE TO MY GUTS TO SEE OTHERS HAVING A GRADUATION CEREMONY.

THERE WAS NOTHING, NOTHING FOR US. WE WERE LEFT OUT.

I TOOK A YEAR OUT OF NURSING STUDIES FOR MATERNITY LEAVE AND FELT IT WAS MY OWN FAULT FOR TAKING A YEAR OUT...

THE TRANSITION TO MOTHERHOOD CAME WITH A COST - A LOST YEAR AND NO GRADUATION CELEBRATION DUE TO COVID.



IT MADE THE INITIAL 'WE'RE SO PROUD OF YOU FOR STEPPING UP' KIND OF MESSAGES RING HOLLOW.

I EXPERIENCED MULTIPLE AND MULTI-DIMENSIONAL PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL TRANSITIONS IN THE LAST TWO YEARS.

I WAS AFFECTED BY OTHER'S TRANSITIONS, SUCH AS SENIOR STAFF LEAVING THE PROFESSION.

SOME OF MY COLLEAGUES FLAMED OUT, BUT IT'S REALLY MADE ME A BETTER NURSE.

I HAD PSYCHOLOGICAL TRANSITIONS TOO. I ALMOST HAD A BREAKDOWN AT THE START. NOW I LOOK BACK AND THINK 'OMG WHAT WAS THAT!'.

I DIDN'T GET TO PLAY WITH MY DAUGHTER AS I WAS SO LATE MOST NIGHTS.

MY FAMILY EXPERIENCED TRANSITIONS BECAUSE OF MY TRANSITIONS TOO.

I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO SPEAK WITH MY PARENTS.

MY HUSBAND WAS WORKING FROM HOME AND HAD TO HOLD THE FORT!

I HAD POSITIVE AND CHALLENGING TRANSITION EXPERIENCES.

XII Pillars of Multiple and Multi-dimensional Transitions

MMT-HOW

MMT-HOH

Attitudes, ideas and beliefs about transitions, MMT-GM

Perception of ability and skills to navigate transitions

Experience and outcomes of previous transitions

Opportunities to discuss transitions in everyday life

Organisational, familial and community culture

Social capital

Significant others' ability to support transitions

Significant others' experience and outcomes of transitions

Discourse about transitions at home, organisation, community, media

Experience of diverse pedagogical/andragogical approaches, work practices

I WASN'T GLAD COVID HAPPENED BUT IT'S MADE ME A DIFFERENT PERSON. I'VE LEARNED SO MUCH. I'VE GROWN.

THE TRANSITION FROM STUDENT TO JUNIOR DOCTOR WAS VERY ABRUPT.



WHEN CONSULTANTS SAY IT'S A STEEP LEARNING CURVE... IT'S A VERY POLITE BRITISH WAY OF SAYING,

'YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A REALLY HARD TIME WHEN YOU TRANSITION FROM A STUDENT TO A DOCTOR.'

IT FEELS LIKE EVERYBODY KNOWS MORE THAN YOU DO. YOU KIND OF FORGET YOU'RE THE DOCTOR.



YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE IN A DANGEROUS SITUATION ALL THE TIME.

I AM ALWAYS WORRIED I WILL GET COVID WHICH WILL PUT MORE PRESSURE ON OTHER DOCTORS.

I'M ALWAYS OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE.

IT IS TERRIFYING AS I FEEL TRAPPED HERE... IT'S NOT GOOD FOR MY MENTAL HEALTH.

THE GREAT
NHS



I WAS TRYING NOT TO SOB BUT IT WAS VERY UPSETTING FOR ME.

NOT BEING ABLE TO SEE PEOPLE'S FACES IS AN OBSTACLE WE FACE EVERY DAY.

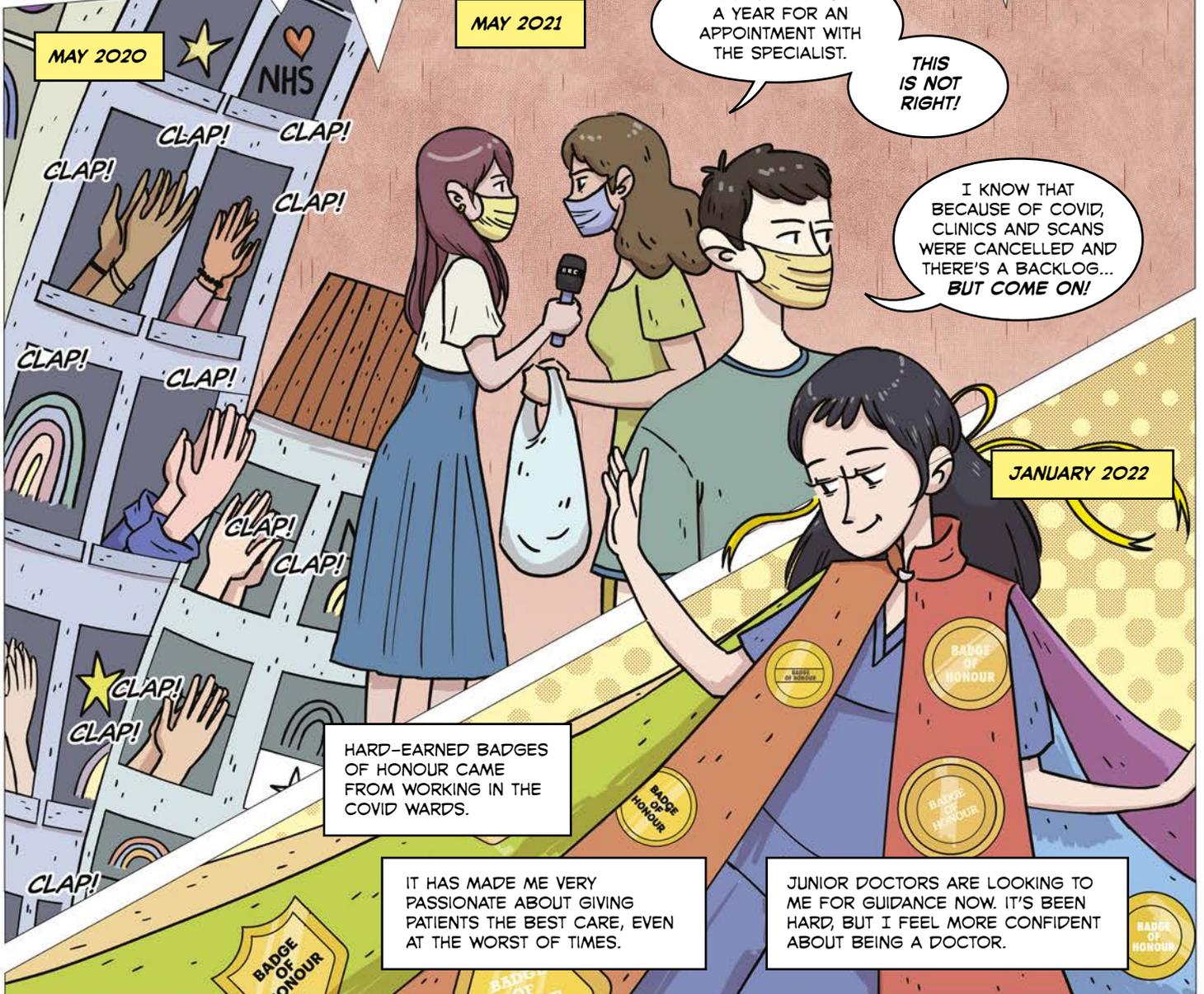
THE SENIOR DOCTORS ARE JUST AS BUSY, IF NOT BUSIER.

THERE WASN'T THE NORMAL LEVEL OF INPUT OR HELP.

SOME WERE OFF SICK.

WE HAD TO DEAL WITH EVERYTHING OURSELVES.

WHY WOULDN'T YOU CRY? IS THAT NOT CONSIDERED NORMAL HERE?



MAY 2020

MAY 2021

I HAVE WAITED A YEAR FOR AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE SPECIALIST.

THIS IS NOT RIGHT!

I KNOW THAT BECAUSE OF COVID, CLINICS AND SCANS WERE CANCELLED AND THERE'S A BACKLOG... BUT COME ON!

JANUARY 2022

HARD-EARNED BADGES OF HONOUR CAME FROM WORKING IN THE COVID WARDS.

IT HAS MADE ME VERY PASSIONATE ABOUT GIVING PATIENTS THE BEST CARE, EVEN AT THE WORST OF TIMES.

JUNIOR DOCTORS ARE LOOKING TO ME FOR GUIDANCE NOW. IT'S BEEN HARD, BUT I FEEL MORE CONFIDENT ABOUT BEING A DOCTOR.

MULTIPLE AND MULTI-DIMENSIONAL TRANSITIONS: From Medical Students to Newly Qualified Doctors

DECEMBER 2019

School of Medicine

I FEEL WELL-
PREPARED TO START
MY FOUNDATION YEAR.
THE MEDICAL SCHOOL
HAS PREPARED US
WELL FOR OUR
TRANSITION.

YOU SAY THAT
NOW BUT BEING IN A
PROTECTED LEARNING
ENVIRONMENT, PRACTISING
SIMULATIONS ON FAKE
PATIENTS IS ONE THING.

AS FOUNDATION
DOCTORS WHEN WE WILL
ACTUALLY FACE A SICK
PATIENT, IT WILL BE
DIFFERENT.

Transitions from
Medical School to
Foundation
Year

A → B → C

MARCH 2020

THE RUMOURS
BECAME A REALITY.
WE WERE ASKED TO
STEP INTO WORK
EARLY.

THERE WAS A GREAT
DEAL OF UNCERTAINTY...

WE KNEW AS
FOUNDATION YEAR
DOCTORS WE WOULD
BE DOING A JOB FOR
FOUR MONTHS, THEN
THE NEXT...

WE HAVE HAD TO
ADAPT TO A LOT OF
DIFFERENT THINGS DUE TO
COVID. NOT THE NORMATIVE
TRANSITIONS WE HAD
EXPECTED.

WE WOULD HAVE TO
ADAPT TO EACH JOB,
BUT BECAUSE OF COVID
WE HAVE TO ADAPT TO
CONSTANT CHANGES.

MULTIPLE
TRANSITIONS
EVERYDAY! SOME
EXCITING, SOME
NOT SO MUCH.

BEFORE COVID HIT,
I WAS EXPECTING TO
GRADUATE IN JUNE, HAVE
6 TO 7 WEEKS OF HOLIDAY,
AND COME BACK READY TO
GET STARTED AS A
FOUNDATION YEAR
DOCTOR!

APRIL 2020

I AM NOW IN THE
FOUNDATION INTERIM
YEAR (FY1). YES, IT'S
A NEW THING!

DO NOT FEAR.
SUPERMAN TO
THE RESCUE!

YEAH, INSTEAD I
STEPPED OUT OF MY
MEDICAL STUDENT
ROLE IN LATE MARCH
AND INTO AN
'INTERIM' ROLE.

JULY 2020

I HATE
WEARING THIS
LANYARD. MARKS US
AS "SHE'S NOT
A DOCTOR!"

I FIND IT QUITE
HELPFUL AS IT
MINIMISES OTHERS'
EXPECTATIONS
OF ME.

LANYARD OR
NO LANYARD,
FY1 HAS BEEN
GOOD.

HAVING REGULAR
DAYTIME HOURS AND NO
OUT OF HOURS SHIFTS
WORKS REALLY WELL
FOR ME.

THIS FY1 GROUP
IS THE BEST I HAVE
EVER WORKED WITH.
DOING FY1 HAS REALLY
BROUGHT THEM ON.

AUGUST 2020

OCTOBER 2020

THERE HAVE BEEN
SO MANY CHANGES IN
THE HOSPITAL WITH COVID
NOW THAT YOU REALLY CAN'T
KEEP UP WITH WHAT'S
HAPPENING WEEK-BY-WEEK,
STAFF GETTING SHIFTED,
THINGS LIKE THAT.

VERY ABRUPT
TRANSITIONS-
BOTH FOR ME
AND MY FAMILY.

I HOPE IN SIX
MONTHS' TIME
IT'S A BIT MORE
STEADY...

AND THERE'S
NOT AS MUCH
REDEPLOYMENT AND
SICKNESS ABSENCE.



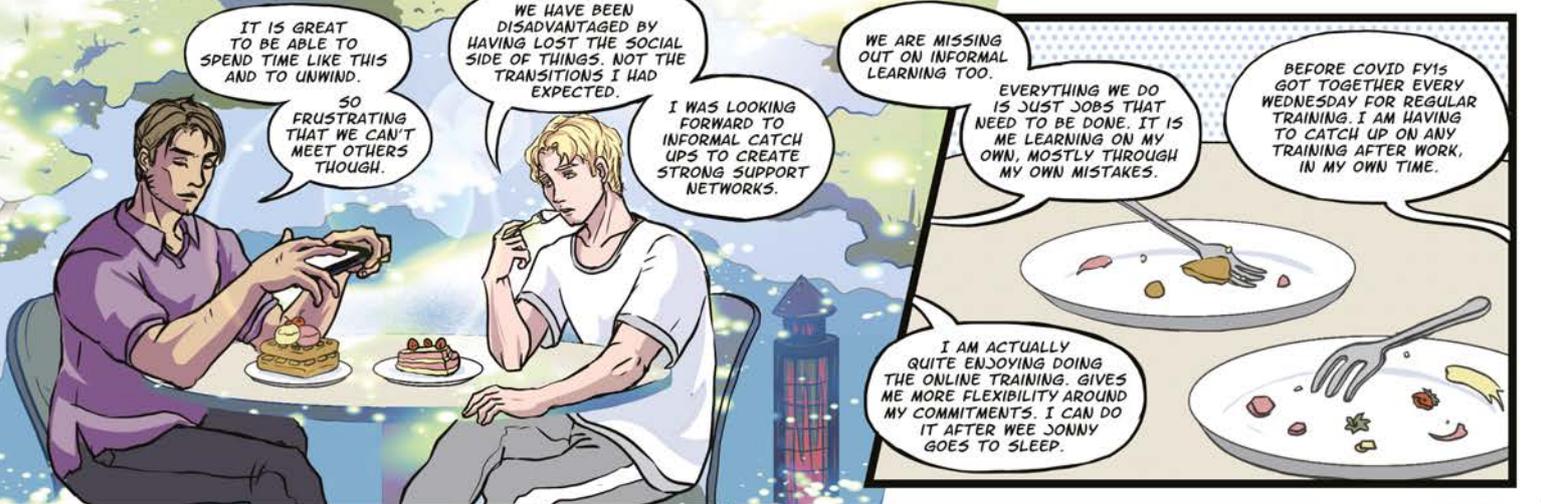
MEDICINE AS A WHOLE HAS RESTRUCTURED AROUND COVID.

I WISH THAT I KNEW WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO WORK BEFORE ALL THIS, BECAUSE I THINK IT WOULD BE A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE.

THE NHS IS STILL MORPHING INTO WHAT WILL BE THE NEW NORMAL. OTHERS DON'T REALISE HOW ABNORMAL IT ALL HAS BEEN.

WE HAVE TO TAKE COVID SAFETY INTO ACCOUNT REGARDLESS OF WHERE WE ARE IN THE HOSPITAL.

A LOT OF STAFF ARE OFF SICK, AS JUNIOR DOCTORS, OUR WORKLOAD HAS RISEN BUT NO ONE SEEMS TO ACKNOWLEDGE IT.



IT IS GREAT TO BE ABLE TO SPEND TIME LIKE THIS AND TO UNWIND.

SO FRUSTRATING THAT WE CAN'T MEET OTHERS THOUGH.

WE HAVE BEEN DISADVANTAGED BY HAVING LOST THE SOCIAL SIDE OF THINGS. NOT THE TRANSITIONS I HAD EXPECTED.

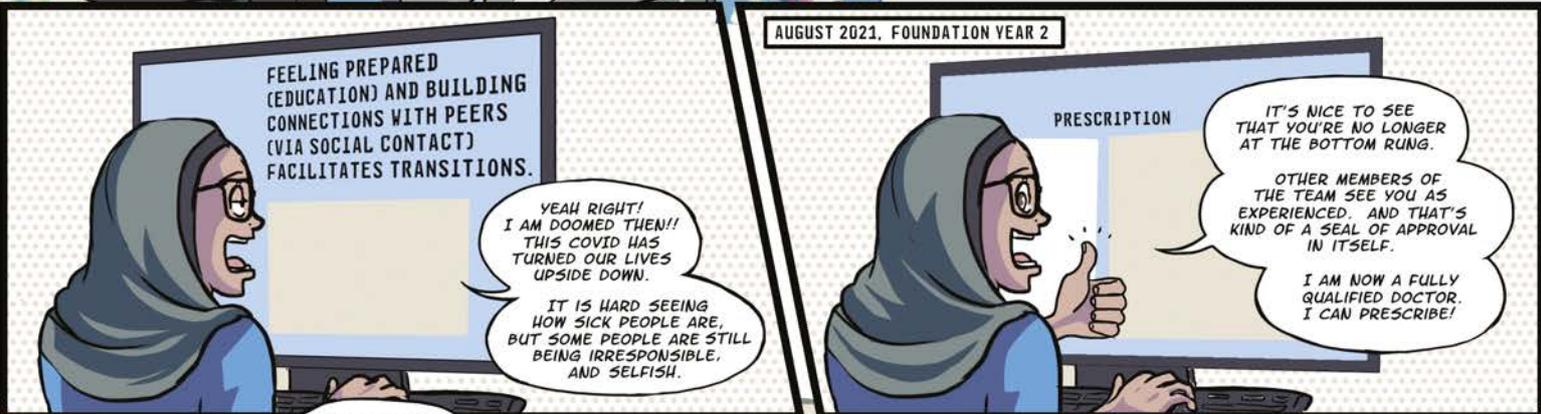
I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO INFORMAL CATCH UPS TO CREATE STRONG SUPPORT NETWORKS.

WE ARE MISSING OUT ON INFORMAL LEARNING TOO.

EVERYTHING WE DO IS JUST JOBS THAT NEED TO BE DONE. IT IS ME LEARNING ON MY OWN, MOSTLY THROUGH MY OWN MISTAKES.

BEFORE COVID FY1S GOT TOGETHER EVERY WEDNESDAY FOR REGULAR TRAINING. I AM HAVING TO CATCH UP ON ANY TRAINING AFTER WORK, IN MY OWN TIME.

I AM ACTUALLY QUITE ENJOYING DOING THE ONLINE TRAINING. GIVES ME MORE FLEXIBILITY AROUND MY COMMITMENTS. I CAN DO IT AFTER WEE JONNY GOES TO SLEEP.



FEELING PREPARED (EDUCATION) AND BUILDING CONNECTIONS WITH PEERS (VIA SOCIAL CONTACT) FACILITATES TRANSITIONS.

YEAH RIGHT! I AM DOOMED THEN!! THIS COVID HAS TURNED OUR LIVES UPSIDE DOWN.

IT IS HARD SEEING HOW SICK PEOPLE ARE, BUT SOME PEOPLE ARE STILL BEING IRRESPONSIBLE, AND SELFISH.

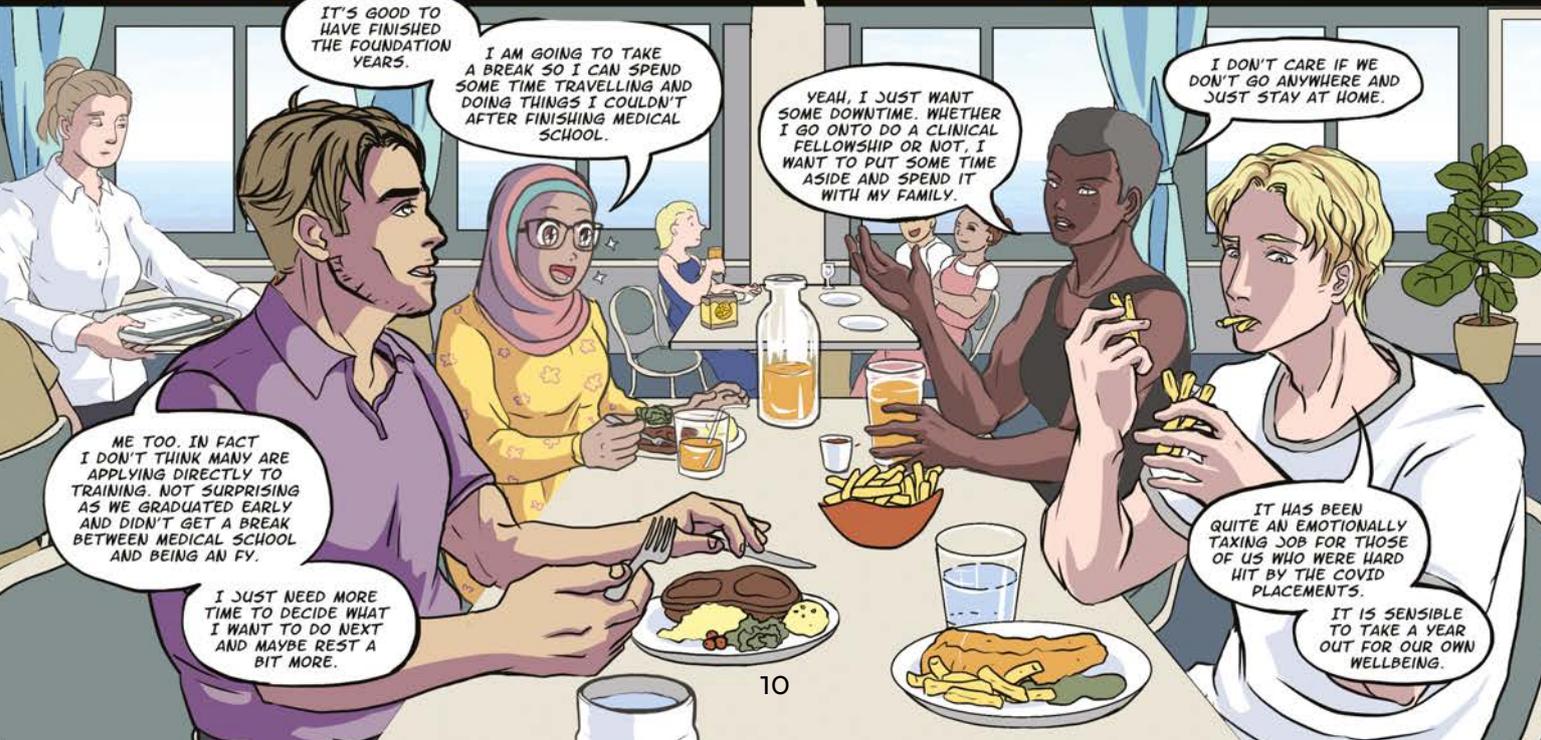
AUGUST 2021, FOUNDATION YEAR 2

PRESCRIPTION

IT'S NICE TO SEE THAT YOU'RE NO LONGER AT THE BOTTOM RUNG.

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE TEAM SEE YOU AS EXPERIENCED, AND THAT'S KIND OF A SEAL OF APPROVAL IN ITSELF.

I AM NOW A FULLY QUALIFIED DOCTOR. I CAN PRESCRIBE!



IT'S GOOD TO HAVE FINISHED THE FOUNDATION YEARS.

I AM GOING TO TAKE A BREAK SO I CAN SPEND SOME TIME TRAVELLING AND DOING THINGS I COULDN'T AFTER FINISHING MEDICAL SCHOOL.

YEAH, I JUST WANT SOME DOWNTIME. WHETHER I GO ONTO DO A CLINICAL FELLOWSHIP OR NOT, I WANT TO PUT SOME TIME ASIDE AND SPEND IT WITH MY FAMILY.

I DON'T CARE IF WE DON'T GO ANYWHERE AND JUST STAY AT HOME.

ME TOO. IN FACT I DON'T THINK MANY ARE APPLYING DIRECTLY TO TRAINING. NOT SURPRISING AS WE GRADUATED EARLY AND DIDN'T GET A BREAK BETWEEN MEDICAL SCHOOL AND BEING AN FY.

I JUST NEED MORE TIME TO DECIDE WHAT I WANT TO DO NEXT AND MAYBE REST A BIT MORE.

IT HAS BEEN QUITE AN EMOTIONALLY TAXING JOB FOR THOSE OF US WHO WERE HARD HIT BY THE COVID PLACEMENTS.

IT IS SENSIBLE TO TAKE A YEAR OUT FOR OUR OWN WELLBEING.

RIDING THE TRANSITIONS ROLLERCOASTER: A Dental Graduate's Pandemic Experience

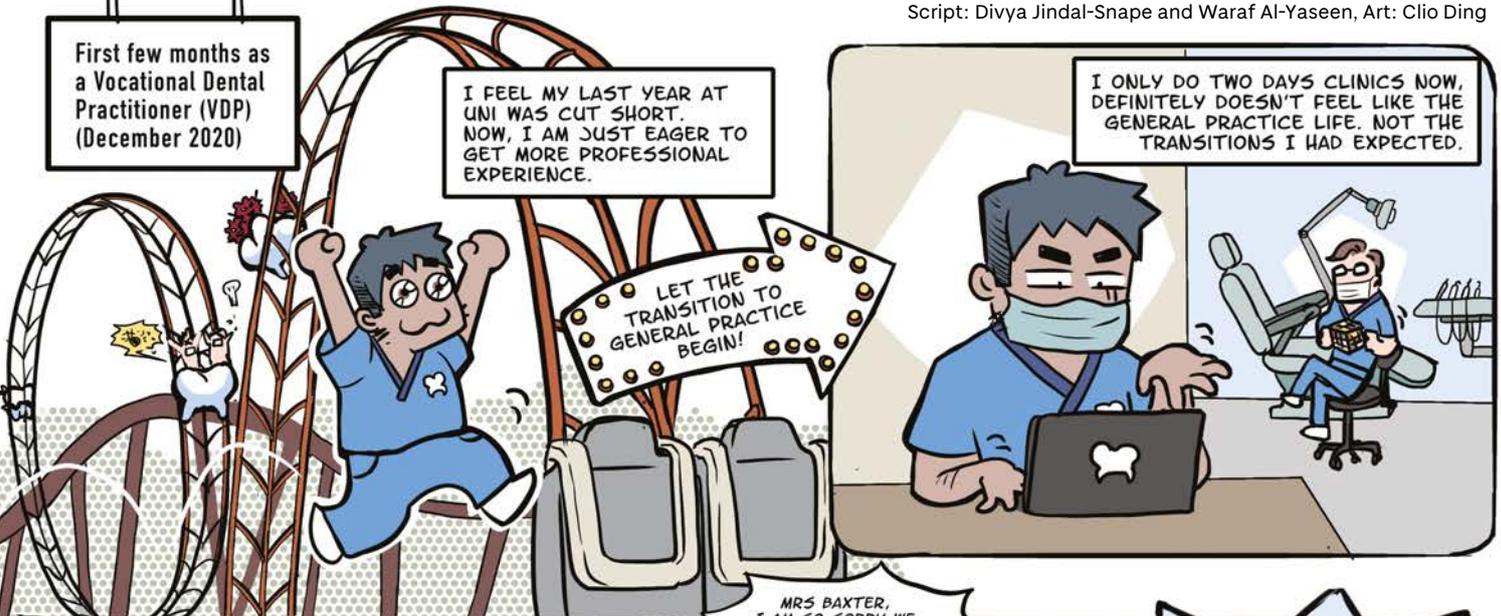
Script: Divya Jindal-Snape and Waraf Al-Yaseen, Art: Clio Ding

First few months as a Vocational Dental Practitioner (VDP) (December 2020)

I FEEL MY LAST YEAR AT UNI WAS CUT SHORT. NOW, I AM JUST EAGER TO GET MORE PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE.

LET THE TRANSITION TO GENERAL PRACTICE BEGIN!

I ONLY DO TWO DAYS CLINICS NOW, DEFINITELY DOESN'T FEEL LIKE THE GENERAL PRACTICE LIFE. NOT THE TRANSITIONS I HAD EXPECTED.

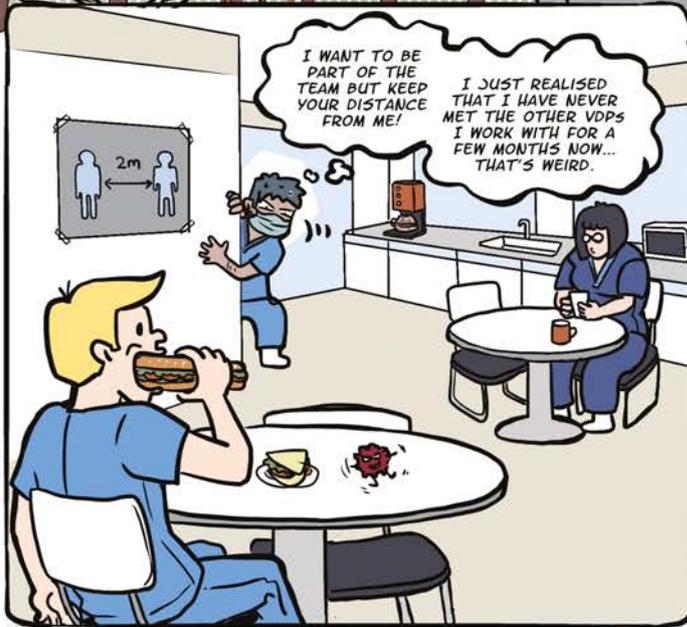


MRS BAXTER, I AM SO SORRY WE CAN'T SQUEEZE ANYONE IN JUST NOW.

DUE TO COVID WE HAVE TO LEAVE THE CLINIC ROOM EMPTY FOR HALF AN HOUR BETWEEN APPOINTMENTS TO PERMIT THE CLEARANCE OF AEROSOL.

THIS IS UNFORTUNATELY LIMITING THE NUMBER OF PATIENTS WE CAN SEE EVERY DAY.

THIS IS NOT WHAT I HAD SIGNED UP FOR! I WISH WE COULD RESPOND TO EVERYONE'S NEEDS MORE QUICKLY.



I WANT TO BE PART OF THE TEAM BUT KEEP YOUR DISTANCE FROM ME!

I JUST REALISED THAT I HAVE NEVER MET THE OTHER VDPs I WORK WITH FOR A FEW MONTHS NOW... THAT'S WEIRD.

IT'S TIME TO GO FOR THE WEEKLY FIGHT TO BOOK A TREATMENT SLOT FOR MY PATIENT.

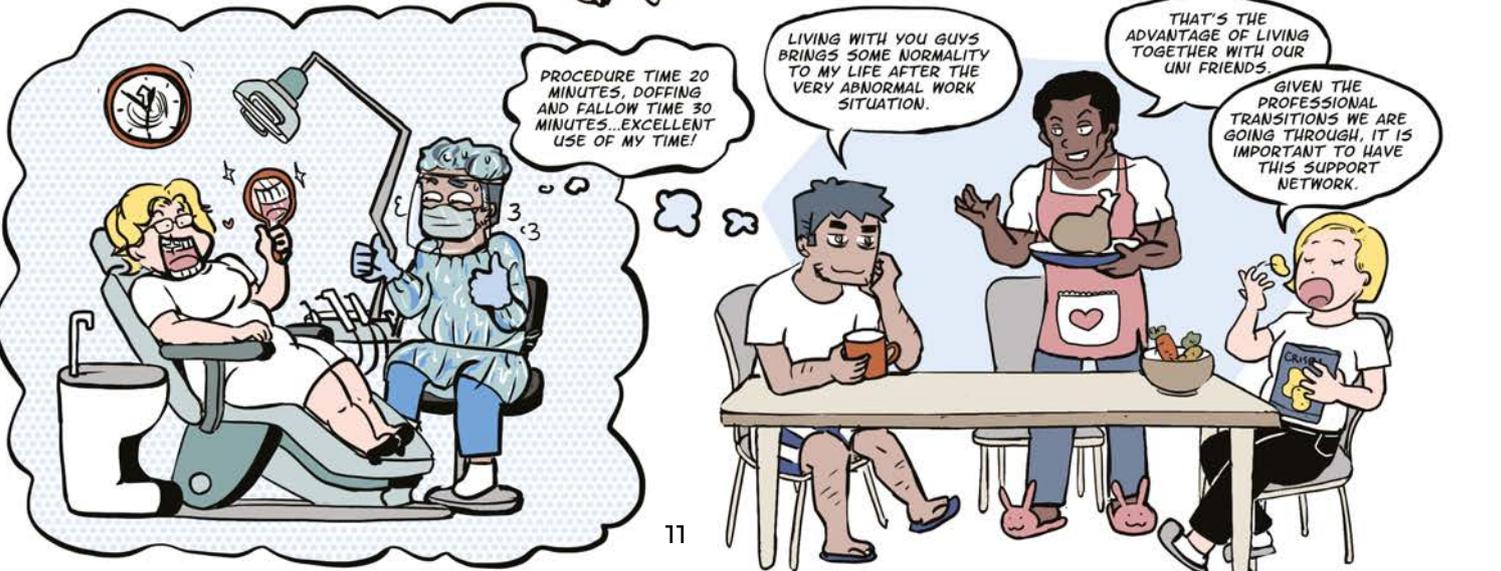


PROCEDURE TIME 20 MINUTES, DOFFING AND FALLOW TIME 30 MINUTES...EXCELLENT USE OF MY TIME!

LIVING WITH YOU GUYS BRINGS SOME NORMALCY TO MY LIFE AFTER THE VERY ABNORMAL WORK SITUATION.

THAT'S THE ADVANTAGE OF LIVING TOGETHER WITH OUR UNI FRIENDS.

GIVEN THE PROFESSIONAL TRANSITIONS WE ARE GOING THROUGH, IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE THIS SUPPORT NETWORK.



End of January 2021. The Deanery has decided to extend the VDP period for a whole year in Scotland.

COVID HAS LED TO MALFUNCTION OF THE ROLLERCOASTER. PLEASE BEAR WITH US.

WHAT THE HELL! I WILL BE JUST STOOD STILL FOR A WHOLE YEAR NOW.



IT IS BECOMING QUITE STRESSFUL TO HEAR OTHER DENTISTS TALKING ABOUT TARGETS AND ALL THE FINANCIAL PRESSURE THEY ARE GOING THROUGH.

I KNOW HE IS AN ADULT, A QUALIFIED DENTIST.

BUT MAYBE I SHOULD PUT MY RETIREMENT ON HOLD TILL HIS FINANCIAL SITUATION IMPROVES.

I HAVE DECIDED THE FINANCIAL OUTLOOK IN GENERAL PRACTICE IS TOO UNCERTAIN. SO I'M GOING TO APPLY FOR A CORE TRAINEE POSITION. ALTHOUGH IT IS SALARIED AND STABLE, IT IS LESS THAN I MIGHT EARN IN GENERAL PRACTICE BUT I WILL BE ABLE TO LEARN MORE.

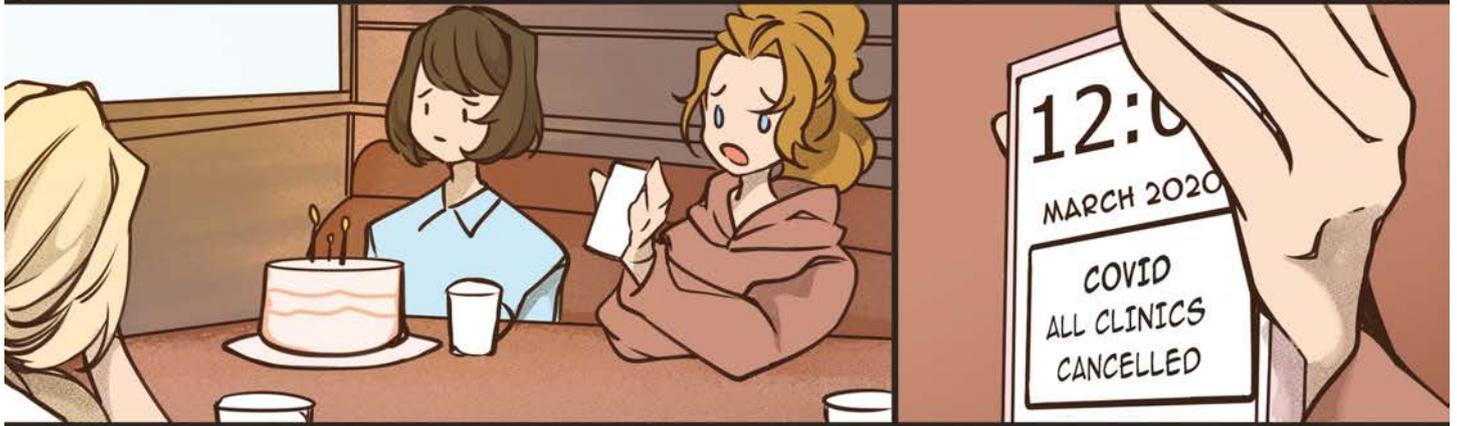


THE IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORT NETWORKS

During Transitions from Dental Students to Dentists

Script: Divya Jindal-Snape and Waraf Al-Yaseen
Art: Jaina Teo Lewen, Lettering: Damon Herd

FOUR WEEKS



AT THE START OF THE PANDEMIC I MOVED HOME, FROM SCOTLAND TO ENGLAND. MY RELATIONSHIP THEN FELL APART DUE TO THE DISTANCE. BEING WITH MY FAMILY HELPED A LOT DURING ALL THE UNCERTAINTIES OF THE DENTISTRY PROGRAMME - AND LIFE IN GENERAL.

IF I HAD BEEN STUCK IN A STUDENT FLAT WITH NO GARDEN, DOING ONLINE LEARNING ALL DAY, IT WOULD HAVE AFFECTED MY WELLBEING.

EVERYTHING CAME TO SUCH AN UNCEREMONIOUS END, WITH GRADUATION ONLY BEING PUT ON AS AN ONLINE EVENT - IT JUST DIDN'T FEEL RIGHT!

JUNE 2020

I HAD A LOT OF TALKS WITH MY MUM. I JUST NEEDED REMINDING THAT I'D STILL ACHIEVED WHAT I'D ALWAYS WANTED TO. WE HAD A HOME GRADUATION CEREMONY AND THAT HELPED A LOT.



AUGUST 2020

IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK IN SCOTLAND BUT I AM NOT LOOKING FORWARD TO WORKING IN A NEW CITY.

WHAT IF I DON'T GET ALONG WELL WITH MY NEW FLATMATE? IT'S VERY STRESSFUL!

WELL DEAR, IT'S NOT SURPRISING. YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED MORE TRANSITIONS IN SIX MONTHS THAN MOST PEOPLE DO IN SIX YEARS!

DON'T GET ME WRONG. I AM STILL EXCITED TO START WORK.

RECENTLY I HAVE FOUND IT HARD TO MOTIVATE MYSELF.

I THINK IT WILL BE GREAT TO DO SOMETHING MEANINGFUL.

DECEMBER 2021

Wellgate Dental Surgery

I AM GLAD THE VDP* WAS EXTENDED FOR A YEAR.

COVID HAS SLIGHTLY HELPED THE TRANSITION AS IT SLOWED THE PACE OF WORKING.

IT GAVE ME MORE TIME TO BECOME CONFIDENT IN MY OWN SKILLS AND TREATMENT DECISIONS.

I FEEL THE SAME. IT HAS GIVEN ME MORE TIME TO WORK WITH A GREAT TEAM.

*Vocational Dental Practitioner

JANUARY 2022

WE'VE HEARD THAT THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT STOP THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT THEY WERE PROVIDING. I FEEL PRIVILEGED TO BE FINANCIALLY SECURE AS A VDP BUT I AM WORRIED FOR OTHERS.

MARCH 2022

MUM, DO YOU REMEMBER HOW WORRIED I WAS ABOUT MOVING AWAY FROM DUNDEE?

I NOW FEEL THAT I WOULD PROBABLY HAVE MOVED ANYWAY.

IT WAS LIKE CLOSING THE CHAPTER OF MY LIFE AS A STUDENT AND OPENING ANOTHER AS A PROFESSIONAL.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNT DUE TO COVID IS TO MAKE SURE I AM NOT ISOLATED IN FUTURE.

I AM GLAD YOU ARE APPLYING TO WORK FOR RAF AS A DENTAL OFFICER. IT HAS AN IN-BUILT COMMUNITY WHICH WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH A GOOD SUPPORT NETWORK.

I HAVE HAD SO MANY PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL TRANSITIONS.

THANKS SO MUCH FOR SUPPORTING ME THROUGH ALL OF THEM EVEN THOUGH YOU HAD YOUR OWN TRANSITIONS TO MANAGE TOO.

AND IF THAT DOESN'T WORK, YOU CAN MOVE TO GENERAL PRACTICE. YOU HAVE SO MANY OPTIONS.

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UniVerse



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Transformative Change: Educational and
Life Transitions (TCELT) Research Centre

