

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a smiling woman with curly hair, wearing a blue top, assisting an elderly man with white hair and a grey t-shirt. They are both holding a yellow resistance band, stretching it across the frame. The man is looking up and smiling broadly. The scene is set in a bright, airy environment, possibly a gym or a studio. Several large, semi-transparent orange circles of various sizes are overlaid on the image, creating a modern, graphic design.

a physio's perspective

Deanna White shares
her perspective
on multidisciplinary
team work

What I particularly love about physiotherapy is that it is my job to lay hands on people with the purpose of bringing healing. It is a privilege that patients trust us to be involved in their health, and what we do and say can significantly impact their daily lives. How we interact with them can speak vividly of God's love.

I want to be confident that God is working through me to bless, comfort and restore my patients. This confidence can only come if I am praying to that end. Thankfully, being part of a group of like-minded people meeting regularly helps to give a specific time for this.

being an allied health professional

Having attended many CMF events in Southampton for doctors and nurses, I wanted there to be a similarly encouraging platform for the many other Christians I was meeting in allied health. Who doesn't like coming together for food, fellowship and faith-building? When it's in the context of helping us serve well in our professions, it's even better!

Our group, CiAH (Christians in Allied Health), started in Southampton last February and we've been meeting regularly since then to support

one another, to discuss specific encouragements and challenges from our own experiences and to share practical advice. I've found CiAH stops me thinking of my career as a ladder to climb but rather an opportunity to serve God by loving others well with the skills I have. Our professions allow us many precious contacts whereby we can demonstrate God's love in practical ways, in addition to witnessing to colleagues and gently sharing the gospel with them.

being part of an MDT

Working within a team provides a significant opportunity to be a witness for Jesus. Christians know the inherent worth of every human being, so we can value each member of the multidisciplinary team (MDT), seeking to work together and to build each other up in their profession, rather than competing. We can glorify God with our speech – not slandering or excusing but encouraging and equipping. I've found this most difficult – yet most powerful – at times when things just don't seem to be going right; everyone is feeling stressed; patients are complaining and there doesn't seem to be enough time to do everything – or worse yet, two support workers are off sick and there are new locum staff doing things 'differently'. How tempting it is, and how numerous the invitations to dishonour our colleagues in our speech, by directing blame or accepting uncredited praise.

Alternatively, we can slip into slandering patients and/or their families when care has not been up to standard and it's been exposed unfavourably on us – will we take responsibility and admit our failings as a team or will we excuse it and direct blame elsewhere? The temptations can be subtle, but we can triumph (in small ways) every time we choose Christ, even if it means suffering for doing good.¹

MDT and the church

This September, I started my first job as a qualified physiotherapist in a musculoskeletal outpatient department. I have been humbled by a team of colleagues who are consistently willing to share their time, knowledge and experience to help one another. I am so thankful for the great encouragement it has been to start off in a team with such an attitude. I hope I can learn and adopt the same going forward. I also can't help but notice two key similarities between the MDT and the church.

First, in the church, the old and the young are united and can mutually benefit from one another. In the same way, the experience of senior members of the team is of great benefit to those of us who are new to the role. Our ability to learn from them and their

In 2018, approximately
60,000
 PHYSIOTHERAPISTS
 were employed in the UK
18,000 more than
 in 2012

19% of the
 UK POPULATION
 visited a
 PHYSIOTHERAPIST
 in 2018

Courtesy of Statista,
bit.ly/2DgmMxA

There are **14** recognised
 ALLIED HEALTH
 PROFESSIONS
 They are the **3rd** biggest
 workforce
 within the NHS after
**NURSES &
 DOCTORS**
 According to NHS England,
england.nhs.uk/ahp/role

willingness to engage with us is hugely helpful. Newer team members with their fresh enthusiasm can also help sharpen and encourage seniors to continue to seek high standards and work with a good attitude, as years of practice can dull even the most zealous among us.

Second, the MDT reflects the church in that we rely on one other. It is humbling to admit that to work to our best requires us to work together. This means acknowledging what gifts God has given us, as well as our areas of weakness, to see how our piece of the jigsaw fits into the bigger picture.²

I find that this picture of body parts working together for a common good, can be a great help in working well within an MDT in a way that reflects Jesus.³ Here are a few ways to influence team dynamics:

- Show appreciation for the work others do
- Be interested in one another
- Be ready to contribute gifts and skills
- Be honest about limitations and weaknesses

Of course, this isn't going to be perfectly harmonious in many cases, but I think this outlook can encourage us to at least seek

to establish this in our workplaces, and to persevere prayerfully and patiently.

MDT meetings have also highlighted to me the helpfulness of establishing order and direction within teams. For example, well-chaired meetings, where someone has authority to bring issues to a conclusion. Where this has been adopted, I've found MDTs have worked much more effectively, with greater harmony among colleagues.

As a final encouragement, upon graduating, I received the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists (CSP) crest badge and on it read *Digna Sequi* which means 'follow worthy things'. Where I've often doubted my ability to serve God at work, I found this a wonderful little encouragement that I could indeed do just that, follow Jesus while working as a physio.

'And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.'
(Colossians 3:17) 🌸

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1. 1 Peter 3:8-17; 4:12-19
2. 1 Peter 4:10
3. 1 Corinthians 12:7