

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to deep navy blue. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, creating a dynamic, layered effect. The central text is positioned in the white space between these blue elements.

Understanding the Orthodox Jewish Family During Childbirth: An Educational Intervention

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STTI Research Conference
July 2019

Seton Hall University & College of Nursing Mission

- ▶ SHU defines itself & its academics, student life, & community programs on a Christian understanding of the nature of the world & the human person.
- ▶ It welcomes students of all faiths & is concerned with ethical & spiritual development of students.
- ▶ The College of Nursing's mission is to educate generalists & specialists in nursing at the undergraduate & graduate levels, with learning as a lifelong endeavor.
- ▶ The faculty guide, direct, facilitate, & evaluate learning while encouraging self-direction and development of intellectual curiosity, creativity, & independent thinking.
- ▶ The development of cognitive skills that include critical thinking, analysis & synthesis is a vital process necessary for professional nursing practice.

Generalized Empirical Method (GEM)

- ▶ Bernard Lonergan was a 20th century Jesuit priest and philosopher.
- ▶ The GEM emphasizes a reflective approach to human understanding.
- ▶ This approach rests on questions that stem from an inquiry: a creative process of understanding .
- ▶ The fundamental process of inquiry is common to all types of knowledge by which the learner:
 - ▶ Asks sufficient questions
 - ▶ Leads to a judgment, know as the process of Self-Appropriation
 - ▶ Self-Appropriation leads to a critical reflection of pertinent questions
 - ▶ From these questions a judgment of understanding is discovered & Self-Transcendence of knowledge is experienced by the student

Method for the Educational Intervention

- ▶ Sample: 32 junior UG nursing students in a BSN program, enrolled in a Maternal Newborn Nursing course with 12 weeks in the clinical setting with a large population of Orthodox Jewish mothers: Labor / Delivery, Newborn Nursery, NICU, & Post Partum.
- ▶ Assigned readings on the Orthodox Jewish traditions in addition to required course content on maternal newborn nursing theories and care prepared students for this experience.
- ▶ Following each clinical experience students participated in reflective journaling, as it related to Orthodox Jewish traditions: Laws of Modesty, Laws of Niddah, Laws of Sabbath & Holidays, Laws of Kosher, Laws of naming the child & circumcision.

Generalized Empirical Method (GEM)

Cognitive Operation

Experiencing

Understanding

Judging

Deciding

Transcendental Precept

Be attentive

Be knowledgeable/intelligent

Be reasonable

Be responsible

THEME 1:

Students were unfamiliar with the appearance & feelings of the Orthodox Jewish woman when admitted to the clinical setting

- ▶ Theme 1: *How I dress reflects who I am: Laws of Modesty*
 - ▶ *“when I first was introduced to Mrs. S., she was quiet & avoided eye contact; she looked much older than 18; she wore a wig, scarf, had a long black skirt & tights; her husband accompanied her and was silent as they entered the L&D room; they did not acknowledge the nurse & were not talking”*
 - ▶ *“as I entered Mrs. D’s room the blinds were closed, the room was dark, & the curtains were drawn around her bed; her head was covered & wore a long nightgown; she wrapped a robe tightly around herself as we entered the room she did not look directly at us but was polite, she refused assistance with breast feeding; as I left the room she asked if I could close the curtains around her bed”*
 - ▶ *“as a male nurse, I would not be assigned or permitted to care for the Orthodox Jewish mother; as a man, I find it hard to be in the husband’s place since they are not able to comfort or express openly by touching their wife how they feel”*

Theme 2:

Referred to as a state of impurity

- ▶ Theme 2: *Becoming a mother, the miracle of birth: Laws of Niddah*
 - ▶ *“ I find it difficult to understand how this can be a time of impurity for a woman; I believe the birth of a child is one of the greatest gifts & is a miracle from God; to me touch is the way a man & woman show how much they love each other especially in L&D with the birth of their child”*
 - ▶ *“I can somehow understand that a husband does not touch his wife during menstrual cycle or immediately after birth but I would like to be close to my husband & feel his love & joy at the birth of our baby”*
 - ▶ *“I would respect their beliefs but do not understand them; I would want my husband to support me physically by looking at me, touching or stroking, & by talking to me...”*

Theme 3:

During the Sabbath & Holidays the family participates in prayer, a Kosher meal, & is surrounded by family

- ▶ Theme 3: *Time for reflection: Laws of Sabbath & Holidays*
 - ▶ *“I find it hard to believe that family cannot drive to the hospital to visit on a religious holiday or during the Sabbath; a couple had to get permission from their Rabbi for a car service when their baby was discharged from the NICU; I feel a baby’s homecoming & holidays should be a celebration, not a restriction in any culture or religion”*
 - ▶ *“I find it difficult that the family is not able to ask for help or sign any documents during this time; the nurse had to open the shades to let in the sunlight & open the lights since the mother could not do this, as we entered the room the mother was sitting in darkness; she was polite but asked us to do this in a silent voice”*

Theme 4:

The Torah provides dietary guidelines

- ▶ Theme 4: *A meal of thanks: Laws of Kosher*
 - ▶ *“It must be difficult to follow these laws with so many ‘fast food restaurants’; what if a mother has a hard day and does not want to cook?; can she ‘order out?’; this involves a lot of discipline & I respect them for that; in the hospital I was glad that a Kosher kitchen & meal was provided for these mothers”*
 - ▶ *“as a Catholic, I remember our family saying grace before meals and not eating meat on Fridays during Lent; even though these restrictions were different, I now appreciate the customs of this religion”*
 - ▶ *“I am Jewish, but we were not Orthodox; we went to temple, observed holidays with some food restrictions; I respect the Orthodox family to follow what they believe”*

Theme 5:

Circumcision and receiving a Hebrew name

- ▶ Theme 5: *Celebrating a new life: Laws of naming the Child & Circumcision*
 - ▶ *“I observed an Orthodox mother making plans with her sister for her son’s ‘bris’; she was very involved with the details; it was nice & it made me happy to see them planning a celebration when naming a child with the Hebrew name”*
 - ▶ *“it seemed like a female newborn was not as important in the Orthodox Jewish culture as a male is; I observed a family planning a ‘bris’; this couple had twins a boy & girl; the girl’s name was to be announced in the synagogue when the Torah was read, with the family, but it did not seem as elaborate as the planning of a bris”*

Discussion

- ▶ This educational intervention provided an insightful experience using the GEM in understanding the laws followed by the Orthodox Jewish family during the childbirth experience.
- ▶ Students expressed positive comments about examining their feelings as they reflected in the journals.
- ▶ Students engaged in conscious intellectual processes of inquiry, insight, reflection, & judgment based on the GEM.
- ▶ Nursing views each person as a unified whole & understands how different cultural / religious practices can influence & create a meaningful experience.

Discussion

- ▶ The GEM provides nurses with understanding experiences & insights of diverse cultures.
- ▶ By following the guidelines of the GEM, the transition to self-transcendence was observed as students reflected in their journals, by asking further questions concerning the religious & cultural behaviors, as they gained knowledge by understanding.
- ▶ The GEM provided an approach for critical self-reflection, and this transition allows students to reflect on their own conscious activities and can help them achieve a greater sense of self-knowledge.
- ▶ Self-reflection is important to enriching our cognitive abilities, in this educational intervention, human cognition involves experiencing the health care setting according to the Orthodox Jewish religion & culture.

Summary & Implications for Future Nursing Research & Practice

- ▶ Nurses need to provide culturally competent skilled, responsive care for all mothers and their families during childbirth which includes a cultural assessment.
- ▶ According to maternal newborn theories, the integration of the childbirth experience into the framework of a woman's life has the potential to promote self-actualization, strengthen her relationships with those who are most significant to her, & facilitate successful adaptation to the role of motherhood.
- ▶ The GEM facilitated this knowledge & understanding for nursing students.
- ▶ Future research should include high risk families with health care needs.
- ▶ For nursing students, this is a time of transition, as they continue to develop their philosophy of nursing, which is the foundation of the professional nurse they aspire to become.

References

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