BACCALAUREATE NURSING STUDENTS' SELF-CARE BELIEFS AND PRACTICES PRIOR TO GRADUATION

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OBJECTIVES

- At the conclusion of this presentation the participant will be able to:
  - describe challenges and obstacles for nursing students to engage in self-care
  - identify strategies for nursing faculty to support nursing students to engage in self-care prior to graduation
BACKGROUND

- High levels of stress and anxiety
  - 62.2% overwhelmingly anxious in 12-month period (National College Health Assessment, 2018)
  - 25% undergraduate nursing students reported high levels of anxiety (Melo et al., 2010)
- Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice (2008)
PROBLEM

- Academic demands/workload

- Lack of self-care skills
  - Poor academic success
  - Improper transition to the workforce

- Little evidence of self-care interventions on anxiety and health-promoting behaviors
PURPOSE

- Examine if the inclusion of SMS messages impacted the state anxiety and health-promoting behaviors of students compared to those students who did not receive SMS messages.

- Describe senior level pre-licensure BSN perceptions of self-care practices prior to graduation.
**METHODOLOGY**

- Mixed-methods
  - Two group, experimental longitudinal
- Six public/private institutions in Pennsylvania
- Convenience sample of senior level, pre-licensure BSN students
- Inclusion criteria
  - Enrolled in a senior level clinical nursing course
  - 18 years
  - English speaking
  - Mobile device able to receive text messages
INSTRUMENTS

- The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory
  - State anxiety subscale
    - 0.92 to 0.94
  - Trait anxiety subscale
    - 0.90

- Health-Promoting Lifestyle-Profile
  - Stress management subscale
    - 0.84 to 0.85
  - Interpersonal relations subscale
    - 0.89 to 0.90
INTERVENTION

- **ANA Self-Care for You: Caring for the Caregiver**
  - Stress management, Interpersonal relations
- 10 text messages (weekly)
  - Wednesday @ 4pm
- Ranged from 120-155 characters (with spaces)
  - Average 141.5 characters
PROCEDURES

- IRB approvals
- Email distributions
- Recruitment

- Qualtrics ®
  - Surveys
  - SMS messages

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<td>Post-Intervention</td>
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DEMOGRAPHICS

- 91.2% female
- 22 years (M)
- 98.2% Caucasian
- 96.4% Non-Hispanic
- 61.4% working
  - 51.4% (6-16hrs)
- 84.2% previous experience in healthcare
- 3.5% previous degree
- 10.5% repeated a nursing course
RESEARCH QUESTION 1

- How does the inclusion of SMS messages impact the state anxiety and health-promoting behaviors (interpersonal relations and stress management) of senior level pre-licensure baccalaureate nursing students compared to those students who did not receive SMS messages?
No significant interaction between the randomized group (intervention, control) and time ($p = 0.07$)

No significant interaction between the randomized group (intervention, control) and time ($p = 0.87$)

No significant interaction between the randomized group (intervention, control) and time ($p = 0.12$)
RESEARCH QUESTION 2

- What are senior level pre-licensure baccalaureate nursing students’ perception of self-care practices prior to graduation?
  - Six open-ended questions
    - Themes
      - Time
      - Balance
      - Faculty support
DEFINITION OF SELF-CARE

• Taking time
  • “Taking the time to do things that are good for your own health such as eating right, exercising, naming off things you are thankful for, etc.”

• Physical and mental health
  • “Being able to take time out of your day to make sure your needs are met and you are healthy mentally, physically, and emotionally.”

• Putting yourself first
  • “Putting yourself first and making sure you are healthy all around before trying to take care others.”
FEELINGS ABOUT SELF-CARE

- Importance
  - “You can’t take care of others if you do not take care of yourself.”

- Neglect
  - “I don’t do it enough.”

- Stress
  - “Don’t always do a good job at caring for myself and often am over stressed with a lot on my plate.”
SELF-CARE PRACTICES & ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

- Achievement
- Balancing act
- Physiological/psychological effects
  - “I was always very stressed throughout my first years of nursing school, but as time went by I realized that I was adding unnecessary stress into my life and that I was actually becoming a hinderance to myself. I started to do yoga daily, talk/hang out with friends and family to keep my mind off things, and I just realized to not get caught up in all of the small things around me. I definitely think self-care practices have increased my ability to perform better on tests and overall just be a happier person.”
NURSING FACULTY

- Lay the foundation
  - “I think we as nursing students need more outlets and time to perform self-care. I honestly would get sick over how stressed and exhausted I was as a student when we had classes M, W, F and then clinicals T, Tr. I think there definitely needs to be something built into the curriculum early on so that kids are more aware of stress and ways to handle it, so that we are more prepared to handle our stress.”
Reinforce

- “Create designated time/places with opportunities to communally participate in it, like a yoga class.”
- “Teach about how easy it is to get burned out sometimes, and ways to handle stress.”
- “I think professors need to implement this somehow into what they teach or by taking a few minutes in the beginning of the semester to truly tell us how important this is.”
Tasks at hand

“Give us meaningful assignments not just time filling 300 question assignments. I’d rather take an hour thinking about an assignment then be able to go to the gym or for groceries than spend all night copying rationales from a textbook for 100+ questions I don’t learn from that and i [sic] lose time to take care of myself. This happens way more often than it should for a major that preaches holistic care and personal wellness.”
OBSTACLES WITH SELF-CARE

- **Time**
  - “Time is always the biggest factor. I honestly skipped out on self-care sometimes just because I always felt like there was something more urgent or important to attend to such as doing hw [homework], studying for an exam, or just even finding time to eat dinner.”

- **Relationships**

- **Workload**
  - “Professors making due dates online on random days so we have something different due almost 7 days a week, professors changing schedules often, and having an irregular schedule.”
SELF-CARE ACTIVITY POST-GRADUATION

- Exercise
- Healthy eating
- Yoga
- Spend time w/ friends & family
- Go on a vacation
- Relaxation
- Sleep
- Hiking
- Gardening
- Reading
LIMITATIONS

- Lack of diversity of sample
- Attrition = Low power
- Survey distribution/ study recruitment
IMPLICATIONS

- Inclusion of SMS messages did not lower state anxiety or increase the health promoting behaviors of stress management or interpersonal relations
- Explore the themes of time, workload, faculty support
- Further research to see if SMS messages can offer a best practice to support BSN nursing students


QUESTIONS?

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