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A Trajectory of Faculty Perceptions of Students With Disabilities

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Background: In 2016, approximately 12.8 percent of non-institutionalized people of all ages living in the United States reported having a disability. In that year, approximately 19% of people with a high school diploma or its equivalent reported a disability (Erickson, Lee, & Von Schrader, 2017). Considering that only 66.7% of recent high school graduates went to college (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2018), the approximate number of undergraduate students having a disability tracks closely to the latest years for which we have such data. Namely, that 11% of undergraduates in postsecondary schools in 2011-2012 reported having a disability (United States Department of Education, 2016). As the prevalence of students with disabilities increases, including among nursing students, it is to be hoped that faculty are developing varying strategies and approaches to encourage the full inclusion of these students and prospective students with disabilities.

Purpose:

To explore whether perceptions of faculty regarding nursing students with disabilities has changed over time.

Methods:

An integrative review of peer-reviewed literature written in English was conducted. The Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), PubMed, and Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) were searched. The date range spanned from 2008 to 2018. The type of peer reviewed literature was not specified. The integrative review method (Russell, 2005) was used to frame the review.

Results:

A total of 170 articles met the inclusion criteria and were reviewed. Two authors reviewed the content of the literature and separately developed their own interpretations. It was discovered that while faculty expressed positive attitudes toward nursing students with disabilities, prospective students who could not hide their disabilities were being discriminated against and denied admission (Aaberg, 2012). Dahl (2010) found that faculty were using a medical model to assess the capabilities of nursing students with disabilities and were unaware of their own discriminatory practices. Moreover, misinformation and misunderstanding regarding the legal requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) as amended by the Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act (2008) has led to inadvertent and unintended discrimination. Interestingly, nurse educators and preceptors expressed positive attitudes about supporting students while expressing a lack of confidence in their ability to provide appropriate accommodations (L'Ecuyer, 2014; May, 2014).

Conclusion:

Nursing faculty continue to have misperceptions about their responsibilities to students with disabilities based on the law. The literature indicates that discriminatory practices with prospective and current students continue. Increased awareness of these

discriminatory practices is important to protect student rights and prevent legal consequences for faculty and schools of nursing.

Title:

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Keywords:

disability, discrimination and integrative literature review

Abstract Summary:

An integrative literature review revealed that while some faculty perceptions of students with disabilities have evolved, there is still wide spread discrimination. Faculty continue to have misperceptions about the law and how to protect student rights.

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