I'm Pregnant, Now What?: Acceptability and Efficacy of an Expressive Writing Intervention to Promote Coping and Adaptation

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Methodology – Project Plan

Framework

- Roy Adaptation Model
- Guides nursing practice with the observation of moving patients from survival to transformation
- Four Adaptive Modes
- Physiologic
- Self-Concept
- Role Function
- Interdependence
- Holistic adaptation must occur in all four modes

Intervention

- Participants asked to write for 10 minutes during weekly pregnancy education class
- Write about deepest thoughts and feelings regarding the pregnancy
- Set goals, worry about spelling or grammar
- Participants provided a journal to continue writing at home

Data Collection and Analysis

- Review of participant writing for common themes
- Instruments:
  - Post-Intervention Survey
  - Likert scale format
- Coping and Adaptation Processing Scale (CAPS)

Results

The Roy Adaptation Model: Emergence of Themes in Participant Writing

1. I am worried about health issues I never knew I had.
2. I feel sick and tired every day.
3. I am physically exhausted.
4. It’s hard not to eat because I am always hungry, but I gotta deal with my blood sugar.
5. I am scared that things will be painful and my body won’t know what to do.

Coping and Adaptation Processing Scale

- Project Evaluation Structure:
  - 1. CAPS completed after first in-class writing session
  - 2. Journal provided for self-directed writing
  - 3. CAPS completed after second in-class writing session

Results continued

Post-Intervention Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will continue expressive writing (keeping a journal) at home.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This expressive writing intervention INCREASED my stress and worry.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This expressive writing intervention DECREASED my stress and worry.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This expressive writing intervention helped me think through my needs and feelings.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This expressive writing intervention helped me identify opportunities for coping and adaptation.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, I feel expressive writing was beneficial.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend expressive writing to other pregnant clients.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

- Expressive writing was demonstrated to be a feasible, efficacious, and low-cost intervention among pregnant women
- In all four adaptive modes, participants identified opportunities for coping and adaptation
- Stress and worry were reduced
- Enhanced ability to develop a plan to deal with a difficult experience was exhibited by participants
- Participants indicated an improved aptitude to seek educational offerings
- 80% of participants will continue expressive writing at home
- 95% of participants would recommend expressive writing to other pregnant clients

Future Implications

- Introduce expressive writing to clients at the time of a positive pregnancy test and incorporate into all educational offerings
- Expressive writing could help the client process thoughts and feelings about the information provided fostering:
  - Prevention of early adaptation to pregnancy
  - Early engagement in appropriate prenatal care
  - Election of healthy pregnancy decisions such as:
    - Nutrition/Exercise
    - Prenatal vitamins
    - Reduction of risky behaviors
- Based on participant feedback, provide topics for writing at each education class
  - Utilize identified common themes and topic selection
  - Focus on a different mode of adaptation at each class

Participant Feedback

- “I feel that sometimes people do not deal with what it’s causing them stress but writing it down you can see it right in front of you and process it.”
- “It was beneficial to be able to talk to talk to lately. I am super happy to have this time today to go through with this.”
- “I have been feeling like I have no one to talk to lately. I am super happy to have this time today to go through with this.”

Methodology - Participants

Population Description

- 46% of pregnancies in 2012 were unintended
- Prevalence highest among: minorities, low-income women
- Between January and June 2018, 50.6% of all pregnancies from 2012-2013 were unintended
- Average of 261 per month, 95% were unintentioned
- Unmarried
- Blacks
- Less educated
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Stress
- Higher medical costs
- Expressive writing found to be feasible, beneficial, and well received across diverse patient populations and settings

Background

- Women facing unintended pregnancies may utilize identified common themes
- Participant Feedback
- Prenatal vitamins
- Participants were in 2nd and 3rd trimesters
- CAPS completed after first in class writing session
- Prevalence
- Instruments
- Role Function
- Self
- Holistic adaptation must occur in all four modes
- 358 positive responses
- Participants provided a journal to continue writing at home
- Between January and June 2018, 50.6% of all pregnancies from 2012-2013 were unintended
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Results

- 1. I am worried about finding time to spend with my other children.
- 2. I don't know what things will be like for my partner and I when our baby gets here.
- 3. I had to plan my own baby shower and that’s when I really noticed who was really there for me in the long run.
- 4. I want to go back to school, I have to make sure I’m not in over my head.
- 5. I feel discouraged because I went on a job interview and found out they didn’t want me. I believe it is because I am pregnant.
- 6. Financial support is a big stressor for me.

Coping and Adaptation Processing Scale

- Try to get more resources to deal with the situation
- Develop a plan with a series of actions to deal with the event

Purpose

To implement an expressive writing intervention at a faith-based crisis pregnancy test center to enhance emotional processing and promote holistic adaptation for women facing an unintended pregnancy utilizing the Roy Adaptation Model to guide the practice change.

Methodology - Participants

- Convenience sample
- 15 participants
- Pregnant women attending pregnancy education classes
- 67% report their pregnancy was unintended
- 100% participation rate
- Participants were in their second and third trimesters
- 18-20 Non-Hispanic white
- 21-29 African American
- 30-39 Other
- 40-49 Non-Hispanic white
- 21-29 African American
- 30-39 Other
- 40-49 Non-Hispanic white
- 21-29 African American
- 30-39 Other
- 40-49 Non-Hispanic white
- 21-29 African American
- 30-39 Other
- 40-49

Review of the Literature

- Women facing unintended pregnancies may experience:
  - Higher rates of depression and stress
  - Lower self-efficacy
  - Feelings of dissatisfaction, anxiety, hatred and shock
  - Unintended pregnancies linked with inadequate prenatal care
  - Premature birth
  - Infant mortality
  - Higher medical costs
  - Expressive writing found to be feasible, beneficial, and well received across diverse patient populations and settings

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