Building Bridges of Hope over Roaring Waters: Educating During a Crisis

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Objectives

• Describe the stages and types of grief from the nurse educator perspective during a time of pandemic crisis
• Identify strategies for responding to loss amidst the COVID-19 pandemic
• Develop mechanisms to prioritize competing challenges and uncertainties
• Describe methods for fostering resilience for students and one another during a time of pandemic crisis
Out of the Mouths of Educators...

“I think of them [former students] on the front lines, doing exactly what we know they left our programs prepared to do... And then I think of them doing this without the appropriate resources, equipment, and tools... working in conditions that are devastating them emotionally and physically.

... And harder still is an overwhelming sense of guilt I feel because I am not standing next to them on the front lines, having not been involved in direct patient care for several years... I want to be there with our kids, fighting this fight, comforting them when they are exhausted, making sure they are drinking and eating like they need to, brainstorming with them on how to make the best use of the limited resources available.”

~Larry S., March 25
“To former students who are now our current nursing work force. Words fail when it comes to telling you how proud we are of you. It’s unfortunate it took a pandemic for society to acknowledge your greatness. You are facing something unprecedented with grace and fortitude. There is no amount of compensation that can equal your worth.”

~Rebecca O., March 26
Out of the Mouths of Educators...

“I am afraid I failed you. I do not doubt your knowledge and ability to be amazing nurses. I know that your supply support systems are failing you. I know that those not self-isolating and ignoring pleas to stay home are failing you. I pray that your friends and family are supporting you as best they can. I never once thought you would be in a situation where your safety would be so compromised. I wish I spent more time with you preparing you for this.”

~Sarah R., March 30
That Discomfort You’re Feeling is Grief
Loss and Grief

Loss
- of normalcy and routine, economic stability, connection, predictability

Grief
- How are you responding to these losses?
  - Reaching out?
  - Turning inward?
  - Shutting down?
  - It depends on the day and time…

(Corless & Meisenhelder, 2019)
Types of Grief

- Normal
- Anticipatory
- Acute
- Delayed
- Complicated
- Disenfranchised

*The Broken Bridge and the Dream*, Salvador Dalí, 1945

(Berinato, 2020; Corless et al., 2014; Doka, 2002; Hamilton, 2016; Shear, Frank, Houch, & Reynolds, 2005)
The Process of Grief and Coping

**GRIEF**
- Grief is unique for every person
- Various influences and responses
- Oscillates between concentration on the loss versus planning the road ahead

**COPING**
- Proactive or reactive?
- Personal growth and posttraumatic growth
- Social Support can mediate coping

(Corless et al., 2014; Rogalla, 2020; Stroebe & Schut, 2010)
Stages of Grief

**Denial**
“Like it or not, this is really happening.”

**Anger**
“I can get mad, or I can get busy.”

**Bargaining**
“This is not my fault, but it is my problem to solve.”

**Depression**
“I’m sad and stressed, but not beaten.”

**Acceptance**
“What are my options? Let’s get busy.”

**Meaning**
“What can I take away from this?”

(Kessler, 2019)
Leadership in Times of Fear/Change

• Ground yourself
• Be thoughtful and calm
• Stay connected
• Offer credibility
• Model courage

Chapman, 2020
Strategies for Responding to Loss

- Find balance
- Be mindful of the present
- Let go of what cannot be controlled
- Stock up on compassion
- Keep trying

Berinato, 2020
Fostering Resilience

“The ability to bounce back, adapt to stress and adversity, and thrive after being involved in particularly stressful situations...”

- Inherent, protective factors
- Coping strategies/mechanisms

(Turner & Kaylor, 2015)
Peer and Self Resilience During a Time of Crisis

• Release yourself from high expectations
• Technology can be a friend… and a foe
• Compassion with competing roles/demands

(Barrett-Fox, 2020)
Student Resilience During a Time of Crisis

- Generational characteristics
  - Millennials
  - Generation Z
- Be mindful of social isolation
- Consider a little handholding
- Listen for what they need

(Kaylor & Thompson, 2018; Barrett-Fox, 2020)
Questions or Discussion?

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