Building Self-care Competencies for Stress Management in Nursing Students

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LOCAL PROBLEM

- In 2018 the American College Health Association found 59% of college students reported feeling high levels of stress in the past 12 months.
- The Health Minds Survey (HMS) of 2018 found 42.37% of Tulsa Community College (TCC) reported they experienced emotional or mental difficulty more than three days in a four-week period.
- Nursing students report above moderate levels of stress during their nursing education.

PROJECT AIM/PURPOSE

- Aim: Improve the self-care competencies of nursing students to help them manage the stress of nursing school and prepare them for a demanding professional career
- Purpose: To create a self-care program to enable students to better manage their stress and ultimately help others build their self-care competencies

EVALUATION TOOLS

- 10-item Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Cohen, et al., 1983)
  - Measures stress over the past month
- 10-item Self-care Competency Survey
  - Measure understanding of Self-care
- Top 5 Stressor Inventory
  - Session Check-In Inventory (CII)

DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Self-care – practice of activities individuals initiates and performs on their own behalf in maintaining life, health, and well-being (Orem, 2001).
- Stress – a mental or physical reaction to feeling overwhelmed with life or a sense of heightened worry surrounding an upcoming task or what the future holds (Kerrigan, et al., 2017).
- Stress management – an assortment of strategies to help deal with stress and adversity in life which can lead to a more balanced, healthier life (National Institute of Mental Health, 2016).
- Physical activity – any bodily movement in daily living, voluntary or involuntary, that is produced by skeletal muscles and results in energy expenditure (Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2017).

EVALUATION METHODS

- Formative evaluation
  - Do students understand the meaning of self-care
  - Stress management techniques
- Summative evaluation
  - Comparing pre and post program
  - PSS inventories
  - Self-care competencies surveys
- Completion of the program evaluation

SURVEY RESULTS

Self-care Competency Question Results

| I Integrate Self-care Strategies Into My Daily Life | 3.125 |
| I Recognize the Importance of Daily Self-care on My Own Health | 4.285714 |
| Likert Scale 1: Strongly Disagree - 5: Strongly Agree |

Preprogram PSS Results

- Pre-Program PSS Average - 19.78125
- Post - Program PSS Average - 18.95625

TOP 5 STRESSOR INVENTORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Quotes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work/Life Balance</td>
<td>“I have a hard time balancing work and School”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Working 3 days a week, school 3 days a week, always exhausted”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>“Having enough money to feed and cloth my family”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Having to move back home and worrying about bills”</td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>“It carries the weight of my future”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Other classes interfere with study time for Nursing classes”</td>
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<td>“There is so much to do, and it becomes really overwhelming”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>“I want to eat better and exercise more but feel like I don’t have enough time”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“My health (Stress=cookies=gain weight)”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Chronic diagnosis”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>“Family obligations affect my attention needed for studying”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Parents are getting older”</td>
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<td>“I am not able to spend as much time as normal with family.”</td>
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PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS/DISCUSSION

- The initial PSS ratings were lower than the data found in the research
- Nursing Students at TCC reported moderate levels of stress at the beginning of this program
- The last session was held virtually and affected attendance and survey completion
- The cohort group was highly engaged during the in-person sessions which supports the need to repeat this program
- Future studies may demonstrate the need to incorporate stress management and self-care into the nursing curriculum

STUDENT SUCCESS STATEMENTS

- “I was able to calm down enough to focus on my head-to-toe check-off and I performed very well.”
- “The breathing really helped me calm down from a stress/anxiety episode”
- “I continued to use breathing exercises thru my head-to-toe check-off and pharmacology exam.”

FRAMEWORK

- Doretha Orem’s Self-care Nursing Theory
  - Project focus
  - To maintain a balance between activities and rest
  - The promotion of human function

METHODOLOGY

- Six-week program
  - Session one
    - Survey data
    - Introduction of concepts
    - Physical activity
  - Session two (Complete CII)
    - Mindfulness
    - Breathing techniques
  - Session three (Complete CII)
    - Mindfulness
    - Journaling
  - Session four (Complete CII)
    - Debriefing
    - Reinforce techniques taught
  - Session five (moved virtual)
    - Survey data
    - Program evaluation
    - Success stories

CONTACT INFORMATION

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