Empowering female immigrant nurses to care for their own mental health

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Aimed to promote mental health and wellbeing, improve morale and develop coping skills of vulnerable female immigrant workers

Introduction

Overcoming the workforce shortages in aged care in Australia
Use of immigrant workers in aged care
Employment experiences
Concerns about their vulnerable position (low pay, low status)
Serious implications
Background

Need to improve employment experiences of immigrant group

Need to empower immigrant workers to care for their own mental health by expanding their coping abilities and assisting them to develop job resilience
The intervention

Develop an educational material and conduct workshops in order to:
increase female immigrant nurses’ knowledge and skills in maintaining and promoting mental, psychosocial and emotional health and well-being; equip them to care for their own mental, psychosocial and emotional health and well-being by teaching self-management skills and effective coping strategies; develop their self-confidence and belief in their capacity in order to reach personal and professional goals; and assist them in becoming successful nurses in rural and regional aged care services.
Aim

Describe the learning environment aimed at assisting female immigrant nurses in maintaining and promoting mental health and well-being

Discuss the outcomes of the educational workshops conducted in five rural and regional areas of South Australia
Methods

Pre- and post-intervention mixed method research design

The questionnaires sought information on: the nature of employment pressures; current coping strategies; managing stressful situations; understanding of job resilience; maintenance and promotion of happiness; and impact of the workshop.
Procedure

Preparation of the educational resource manual and accompanying workshops

Formation/maintenance of a reference group (purpose and function, members, meetings, outcomes)
Educational resource manual and workshops

Topics covered:

• What it is like to work in aged care
• Definitions and importance of mental, psychosocial and emotional health
• What is stress
• Mental health assessment
• Building from your own resources
Topics covered (continued)

• Resources and strategies for coping
• Intra-, inter- and transpersonal approaches in caring for your mental health
• Organisational and community support available
• What is resilience
• Developing workplace resilience
• Case scenarios
• Summary of the program
• Additional resources, and
• Future directions
Participants

Various regional aged care services in South Australia

Information sheets distributed by Directors of Nursing

Arrangements of workshops

Issues about ethics, consent, anonymity and participation

Findings

- Twenty-five (25) female immigrant nurses (6 nurses did not complete the program)
- Eleven (11) services were involved
- Findings showed: clearer and better understanding of ways of maintaining and promoting mental health and well-being; opportunity to reflect on one’s own practice; ability to assess one’s own mental health; enhanced ability to cope with the pressures of work; opportunities for peer support; and increased work readiness and morale.
Learning that transpired

I have learned a lot of strategies to care for my own MH.

Different ways of stress management and thinking positively about own mental status

With this educational session, I can understand the importance of our mental health while working.
Learning that transpired

Very good workshop. Helps us to understand more on how to cope up with stress.

The most important outcome was learning new stress reduction techniques and coping skills.

Encouraged me to care for my own mental health …

How to decrease our anxiety levels with mental exercises like meditation, massage therapy and other therapies.

… that mental health is essential for a happy life.

The most important outcome – I learned so many things about coping up and how to care for my MH.
The best things

Having intimate group sessions, the books provided are very helpful, the two session course instead of the one is good, no information overload. The resource mats, PPT presentation, interactive session, and encourage participation of audience.

The best about the workshops is the way how you cope and how to care your MH. I am very pleased that there is interest demonstrated for immigrant nurses. I enjoyed the sessions and learned a lot! It helped me a lot, thank you!
### Statistical analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>Q5</th>
<th>Q6</th>
<th>Q7</th>
<th>Q8</th>
<th>Q9</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Estimate of mean difference</strong></td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.96</td>
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<td><strong>p – value</strong></td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>&lt;0.000</td>
<td>&lt;0.000</td>
<td>&lt;0.000</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>&lt;0.000</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.009</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mean response pre</strong></td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>3.20</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mean response post</strong></td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.64</td>
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</table>

Twenty-five (25) nurses answered the nine (9) questions of a survey conducted before and following an intervention (workshops). The responses were on a 5 point Likert scale with an approximately equal interval between points. The parametric test, the paired T test, was used to identify differences in the mean response to individual questions. The test assesses the probability of observing such a change in the mean score by chance. A non-parametric test (Wilcoxon signed rank) supported the conclusions.
Interesting results

The test results were highly statistically significant for every question; there was a marked difference in responses before and after the intervention. The largest changes were seen on questions 7, 3, 4 and 2, with an increase in mean score of at least 0.76.

With a score of 2 as ‘neutral’, 4 as ‘strongly agree’, all means were on the positive side before the activity, and most were around midway between ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ after the intervention.

Values for question 9 “Mental health is a priority for me” were fairly high to start with and show the smallest mean increase.
Question 4 (good understanding of how mental health may be maintained and promoted) was a good summary of response to the intervention, mostly positive increases in answers.
Question 7 (I have a healthy lifestyle observing healthy diet, regular exercise and rest and relaxation) had the highest change in response. So perhaps after the intervention these nurses seem to better understand what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. There seemed to be an improved understanding of healthy lifestyle.
Discussion

Value of the reference group
Meeting objectives
Issues or constraints in delivering the project related to:
- number and selection of participants
- location of participants
- logistics
- availability of participants

Implications of results
Recommendation:
- expansion of the workshops for future collaborations in education, research and clinical practice
Future plans

• Expand the initiative to metropolitan aged care services
• Survey the same participants six to twelve months after workshop completion
• Facilitate mental health specific forum/s with a focus on mental health research and the aged care workforce
Conclusion

A state of the art learning environment was successfully created.
CONCLUSION

All objectives were achieved. The project plan was carried out as originally intended. This initiative is one way of improving the employment experiences of immigrant group. Qualitative findings shed light on the statistical results demonstrating that this intervention can empower these immigrant workers to care for their own mental health, expand their coping abilities and assist them to develop job resilience. For generalisability however, more research is needed.
References


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