



# Resilience and Connectedness in Graduate Psychiatric Nursing Students: Influence of a Virtual Community of Practice (VCoP)

Lori I. Kidd, PhD, RN, CNS

Kathleen Tusaie, PhD, PMHCNS/NP-BC

## PURPOSE

To analyze influence of a Virtual Community of Practice (VCoP) on resilience and connectedness in graduate psychiatric nursing students

## PROBLEM

Approximately 33% of Nurse Practitioners (NPs) change place of employment within the first year after graduation.

Reasons include:

- Role conflict
- Changes and losses in relationships
- Feelings of isolation
- Uncertainty due to lack of knowledge
- Inability to function in a holistic manner

*Would structured participation in a VCoP increase sense of connectedness, level of resilience, and retention rates?*

## METHODS

Mixed methods pilot study

- ❑ Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (2003)
- ❑ Sense of Community Index II (Shavis, Lee, & Acosta, 2008)
- ❑ Focus Groups

Sample

- ❑ Convenience sample (n=6)
- ❑ Psych NP students in final year

## ANALYSIS

- Paired sample t-tests pre-participation in VCoP and post-participation in VCoP (1 year after graduation)
- Thematic analysis: peer debriefing and verification to ensure credibility of findings



## FINDINGS

- ❖ Total mean scores for resilience post participation trended towards significance
- ❖ Sense of community scores post participation demonstrated less variability
- ❖ Students demonstrated more frequent use of VCoP after graduation than when assigned in class
- ❖ Only 1 graduate changed employment in the first year after graduation (16%)

## THEORY OF CONNECTIVISM (Siemens, 2005)

Autonomy  
Diversity

Connectedness  
Openness

## Limitations

- ✓ Small sample size
- ✓ Convenience sample
- ✓ Lacks generalizability
- ✓ No control group
- ✓ Possible confounding variables

## IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING

- Use of VCoP may increase workplace resilience
- Use of VCoP may increase retention in initial employment of new graduates
- Use of VCoP helps move education into the digital age
- Recommendations for future research:
  - Larger sample
  - Longer time line
  - More variables

