Incorporating Military and Veteran Culture in Nursing Curricula: Where is Nursing Education?

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Faculty Disclosure

- Barbara Patterson, RN, PhD, ANEF
  - No conflict of interest
  - Employer: Widener University, Chester, PA, USA
  - No sponsorship or commercial support

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  - No conflict of interest
  - Employer: Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA, USA
  - No sponsorship or commercial support
Session Goal & Objectives

To discuss what schools of nursing have implemented to address the cultural and healthcare aspects of the military, Veterans, and their families

• Discuss the importance of Veteran culture and how it influences a person’s health

• Design culturally relevant learning activities in undergraduate courses that incorporate Veteran healthcare issues
Acknowledgements

- Funding: Eta Beta chapter Sigma Theta Tau
- Katelyn DeVecchis, SN, research assistant
- Schools/Colleges of Nursing who pledged to Joining Forces
- Active duty military women and men

Our Veterans
JOINING FORCES
TAKING ACTION TO SERVE AMERICA'S MILITARY FAMILIES
JOININGFORCES.GOV

http://www.aacn.nche.edu/joining-forces
Joining Forces Pledges

• Educating America’s future nurses to care for our nation's veterans, service members, and their families facing post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, depression, and other clinical issues

• Enriching nursing education to ensure that current and future nurses are trained in the unique clinical challenges and best practices associated with caring for military service members, veterans, and their families

• Integrating content that addresses the unique health and wellness challenges of our nation’s service members, veterans, and their families into nursing curricula
Joining Forces Pledges

• Sharing teaching resources and applying best practices in the care of service members, veterans, and their families

• Growing the body of knowledge leading to improvements in health care and wellness for our service members, veterans, and their families

• Joining with others to further strengthen the supportive community of nurses, institutions, and healthcare providers dedicated to improving the health of service members, veterans, and their families.
Veteran Culture and Healthcare

Veterans from 6 Wars: WW II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Iraq, and Afghanistan

- Deployments
- Short and long term physical and mental health injuries
- Separations from family and supports
- Other stressors such as frequent moves
- Shift to civilian healthcare settings
Veteran Healthcare Issues/Influences

- Post-traumatic stress
- Traumatic brain injury
- Depression
- Chronic pain
- Suicide
- Hearing loss
- Poly-trauma
- Female specific issues

- Improved medical care
- Reintegration
- Environmental exposure
- Era served
- Occupation
- Service length or branch
Theoretical Framework

Purnell’s Model of Cultural Competence (2014)

- defines culture as “the totality of socially transmitted behavioral patterns, beliefs, values, customs, lifeways, arts, and all other products of human work and thought characteristics of a population of people that guide their worldview and decision making” (pp. 1-2).

- based on the model, veterans would be considered a sub-culture within the dominant culture, whose experiences differ from this dominant culture and could have potentially significant influence on health and illness.
Research Questions

1. How have schools/colleges of nursing incorporated military and Veteran healthcare into nursing curricula?

2. What facilitators and barriers have nursing schools faced incorporating military and Veteran healthcare content into current curricula?
Instrumentation

- 28 item investigator developed questionnaire
- School/college demographics
- Past, present, and future curricular elements related to military or Veteran population
- Faculty knowledge, comfort, and preparation teaching content
- Facilitators and barriers to meeting initiatives
Procedure

- IRB approval
- 660 schools on pledge list
- Survey Monkey™
- Initial response 84 Administrators
- Second email 39 additional responses
- 123 total respondents (21% response rate)
Prior to the *Joining Forces* Initiative

- 18 schools - military or Veteran related content
- 8 schools - elective courses related to military or Veteran issues
- 80 schools - located within 50 miles of VA hospital; 58 had students clinically placed
- 96 schools - Veterans in the classroom
- 31 schools - ROTC program
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Joining Forces Pledge</strong></th>
<th>% Yes Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educating America’s future nurses</strong> to care for our nation's veterans, service members, and their families facing post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, depression, and other clinical issues</td>
<td>74.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enriching nursing education</strong> to ensure that current and future nurses are trained in the unique clinical challenges and best practices associated with caring for military service members, veterans, and their families</td>
<td>54.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integrating content</strong> that addresses the unique health and wellness challenges of our nation’s service members, veterans, and their families into nursing curricula</td>
<td>56.12%</td>
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<td><strong>Joining Forces Pledge</strong></td>
<td>% Yes Responses</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sharing teaching resources</strong> and applying best practices in the care of service members, veterans, and their families</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
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<td><strong>Growing the body of knowledge</strong> leading to improvements in health care and wellness for our service members, veterans, and their families</td>
<td>51.04%</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Joining with others</strong> to further strengthen the supportive community of nurses, institutions, and healthcare providers dedicated to improving the health of service members, veterans, and their families.</td>
<td>54.17%</td>
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After the *Joining Forces* Initiative

- 13% of schools stated “nothing” had been done
- Remainder reported varying levels of curricular change
- Most common course placement
  - # 1 Mental Health nursing
  - # 2 Special Issues (or Topics)
  - # 3 Public Health nursing
- Most common addressed healthcare issues
  - post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, depression, poly-trauma, women’s health, social support, homelessness
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Ratings</th>
<th>Likert 0-5 Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty’s comfort level in teaching military, Veterans and their family’s healthcare needs (&lt;span style='color:#222222; font-size:14px; font-weight: bold;'&gt;n = 94&lt;/span&gt;)</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty’s knowledge related to military, Veterans and their family’s healthcare needs (&lt;span style='color:#222222; font-size:14px; font-weight: bold;'&gt;n = 97&lt;/span&gt;)</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of including Veteran-centered care into the nursing curricula (&lt;span style='color:#222222; font-size:14px; font-weight: bold;'&gt;n = 96&lt;/span&gt;)</td>
<td>4.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Facilitators

- Individual & organizational support
- Faculty or spouses who were Veterans
- Nursing students who are Veterans
- ROTC program or other Veteran organization on campus
- Partnerships with Federal healthcare systems
- Grants

Barriers

- Time to evaluate and update current courses
- Curricula “too full” & difficulty prioritizing
- Difficulty accessing VA
- Lack of faculty commitment
- Faculty learning needs & knowledge deficit
- Limited resources
Recommendations

- Increase self awareness
- Grow resources
  - U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, AACN, NLN and scholarly articles
- Integrate content
  - Utilize faculty with military experience OR recruit faculty with experience
  - Engage with campus and community organizations
- Be creative
  - Enhance case studies, simulations, or experiential opportunities to add a Veteran cultural component
Demographics speak for themselves

Based on the 2014 census data....
6.7% of the U.S. population was a Veteran

.......in the same year

6.3% of the U.S. population was under the age of 5.

The time has come to include Veterans as a vulnerable population within nursing curricula.
It starts with asking a simple question...

Have you ever served in the military?
QUESTIONS?