Nursing Advocacy: Perceptions of /and Recollections of Acquisition of the Role by Practicing Nurses
Marianne Curia PhD, MSN, RN

Abstract
This study utilized the case study methodology to investigate the concept of advocacy as it relates to the role of the bedside nurse. Participants were sought for journal submissions, focus group meetings and subsequent one on one interview to investigate their definition of nursing advocacy as well as their educational preparation for the role. Results of this study will assist nursing educators to assess and reexamine the components of advocacy education in their curriculum in order to assure that future nurses have the knowledge base to fully enact the role.

Methods
Ads placed to solicit participants
Six participants chosen based on area of practice, years of practice and educational level
Participants requested to journal advocacy examples
Focus groups held with all participants
Data from journals and transcript of focus group analyzed for themes
One on one interviews held with three participants
Data further analyzed and findings reported

Participants
6 participants in total:
Ages: 24-64 yr
Yrs of experience: 1-35+
Gender: all female
Areas of practice:
ICU
Telemetry
ED
Home Health
Medical floor
Rehab. floor

Findings Utilization
Publication in nursing journal
Analysis of curricular components related to advocacy
Presentation to faculty with discussion related to the inclusion of curricular components related to advocacy

Research Findings
Question 1-How do practicing nurses understand and/or describe advocacy?
Data indicated that all felt advocacy was an integral part of their role in relation to their patients
Definition of advocacy=process of assisting a patient/family to make the best decisions for care

Question 2-How do practicing nurses describe their role as patient advocates?
Helping patient make best decisions
Use of critical thinking skills
“thinking outside of the box”
Interceding between physicians and patients as a two way street

Question 3-What do practicing nurses believe was their educational preparation for the role of patient advocate?
Mentioned in all educational preparation programs
Advocacy stressed in baccalaureate and masters programs more often than in diploma/associate programs
No remembrance of specific curricular components

Question 4-What do practicing nurses believe were the most influential or meaningful experiences/influences in their acquisition of their role as a patient advocate?
Role modeling in first job was most frequent response
Life experiences played a role
One example in curriculum

Review of Literature
Common theme in literature is that advocacy is a learned role and not innate
Of note is that there is not one framework that has emerged as the predominant definition of nursing advocacy

Future Research
Evaluation of advocacy components in curriculums
Increased participants in similar study specifically targeting new graduates subsequent to curriculum changes

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