

Nursing Advocacy: Perceptions of /and Recollections of Acquisition of the Role by Practicing Nurses

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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.

Review of Literature

- Variety of theories: Curtin (1979), Gadow (1980), Kohnke (1982), Benner (2001)
- Baldwin (2003) describes advocacy with three components: valuing, apprising and interceding.
- 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

Disclaimer

This project received no funding from any source except the private funds of the researcher.

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

Future Research

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

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