Public Health, the Environment, and Nursing Practice: Health Promotion in a Toxic World

Hacah Boros, RN MSN
Environmental Health Coordinator, CT Nurses Association
hacahrn@gmail.com

Nursing-A Call To Action: A Timeline for Research, Education, Advocacy and Practice

- “A nurse is to maintain the air within the room as fresh as the air without”, (Florence Nightingale, 1859)
- Resolution: Environmental Health Principles in Nursing Practice, ANA, House of Delegates, 2004
- Call for inclusion of Environmental Health into nursing practice, IOM, 1995
- Core competencies for nursing practice, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, 1994
- Scope and Standards of Practice: Environmental Health (Standard 16), Principles of Environmental Health for Nursing Practice, ANA, 2010
- Scope and Standards of Practice: Environmental Health (Standard 16), Principles of Environmental Health for Nursing Practice, ANA2016

Literature Review

- Knowledge gap exists between national recommendations and practice, (Hall, Butterfield, Kuntz, 2010)
- Knowledge gap exists in curriculum, (Murphy, 2016)
- Dissemination of information is beginning in practice settings, (ANHE, Envirn.org, 2016)
- “A nurse is to maintain the air within the room as fresh as the air without”, (Florence Nightingale, 1859)

Objectives

- Application of environmental health principles in the practice setting
- Measure effectiveness of program in the application of environmental health

Problem: A Toxic World

- WHO (2017)–unhealthy environments cause an estimated:
  - 12.6 million deaths each year
  - Nearly 1 in 4 deaths
  - Over 100 diseases and injuries (http://www.who.int/phe/en/)
- U.S. President’s Cancer Panel Report (2010)
  - link between chemicals and cancer has been underestimated
  - >80,000 chemicals in commerce, mostly unregulated and untested in U.S.
  - Umbilical cord blood shows exposure to toxic chemicals begins prior to birth (EWG, 2006)

Why Nurses?

- Most trusted profession, Press Ganey
- 1 in 100 Americans is a nurse
- Often the only contact in the healthcare arena
- Live in every community

Theoretical Framework

- UNFREEZE Create right environment
- CHANGE Support change to desired state
- REFREEZE Reinforce to anchor change

Environmental Health

- Air Quality
- Water Quality
- Soil Pollution
- Chemical Exposure
- Climate Change
- Vector Control

Socio-ecological Model

- Public Policy framework
- Legal action
- Community
- Non-governmental organizations
- Interpersonal events
- Inner social networks
- Individual behavior, outcomes, skills