SHATTERED ASSUMPTIONS: EXAMINING DISCREPANT PERCEPTIONS OF ‘REASONABLE’ ACCOMMODATIONS AMONG FACULTY AND STUDENT NURSES WITH DISABILITIES
Rose Rossi Schwartz, PhD, RN

Associate Dean of Academic Affairs
Associate Professor, School of Nursing

Geraldine Bloemker, Psy.D.

Associate Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs
Associate Professor, Education; Licensed Psychologist
OBJECTIVES

- Recognize assumptions of nursing faculty and of student nurses with disabilities, as those assumptions relate to the implementation of formally-established academic accommodations.

- Describe the relevance of the Theory of Shattered Assumptions to analysis of the expectations that constrain patterns of interaction among nursing faculty and student nurses with disabilities.
There are no conflicts of interest to report

No sponsorship or commercial support was given to the authors
ASSUMPTIONS

- “A thing that is accepted as true or as certain to happen, without proof.” (Oxford dictionary)

- “At the core of our internal world, we hold basic views of ourselves and our external world that represent our orientation toward the total push and pull of the cosmos” (Janoff-Bulman, 1992)
THEORY OF SHATTERED ASSUMPTION
(JANOFF-BULMAN, 1992)

- Developed to understand the aftermath of victims of trauma
- Basic world assumptions
  - Benevolence of the world
  - Meaningfulness of the world
  - Worthiness of self
THEORY OF SHATTERED ASSUMPTION
(JANOFF-BULMAN, 1992)

- Characteristic of traumatic event
- Disillusionment with the world
  - Processing new data
  - Rebuilding assumptions
Nursing faculty and student nurses with disabilities (SNWDs) sometimes find that their respective assumptions about ‘reasonable’ accommodations are significantly discrepant.

“Reasonable accommodations” are determined by a university disabilities office after a student substantiates a disability.

The discrepancy above can also be felt by the disabilities office who grants the ADA accommodations from both the faculty and the SNWD.
ASSUMPTIONS

On the one hand, faculty may presume that nursing students, and therefore, by extension, nurses, should look like them and practice like them, often perceiving students’ interpretations and expectations of ‘approved accommodations’ as unreasonable. (Levey, 2014).
ASSUMPTIONS

• **SNWDs may assume that they work harder than other students for similar academic results** (Ashcroft & Lutfiyya, 2013) and that faculty members view them negatively (Shpigelman, Zlotnick & Brand, 2016).

• **SNWDs sometimes express unrealistic expectations of just what faculty behaviors constitute ‘reasonable’ accommodations.**
STUDY PURPOSE
The purpose of this study was to examine and begin to highlight features characterizing the interface between the faculty members’ and SNWDs’ assumptions regarding implementation of academic accommodations.
METHOD
CASE STUDY AND SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

- Identification of assumptions of both faculty and SNWD
- Character of “traumatic events” precipitating clashes of assumptions
- The process of disillusionment and change often seen to demarcate the experiences of both faculty and SNWDs
- The ways both faculty and SNWDs might process newly recognized data about the accommodation process
- The routes to rebuilding relatively more congruency between and among faculty and SNWD assumptions.
FINDINGS
FINDINGS

· The preconceived world assumptions that nursing faculty and SNWDs bring to the classroom are often shattered when implementing approved academic accommodations under the ADA.

· Challenges to the “status quo” in the nursing classroom.

· Lack of knowledge of ‘reasonable accommodations’ granted under the ADA, coupled with challenges to the “status quo” in the nursing classroom and shattered assumptions of how the world ought to be create palpable tension and often discord between Nursing Faulty, SNWDs and sometimes the staff of the disabilities office as well.
FINDINGS

- Staff in disabilities services sought to support both faculty and students, they found themselves in the tenuous position of identifying and understanding the sometimes disparate needs of each group, while adhering to the law.
FINDINGS

- Rebuilding assumptions (the last step in the theory) becomes possible as Nursing faculty, the disabilities office and SNWs have open channels of communication and address concerns implementing reasonable accommodations under the ADA.
DISCUSSION
An expectation that every individual wants to preserve personally-established, experience-based beliefs, even in the face of disconfirming evidence.

When an event or series of events jumpstarts a process inconsistent with long-held personal beliefs, it leads to a shattering of longstanding assumptions.

Individuals confronting shattered assumptions are faced with the prospect of slowly integrating and necessarily coming to terms with a new world view.

Theory of Shattered Assumptions has broad applicability in characterizing the struggle engaging nursing faculty and SNWDs as they try to engage with recommended academic accommodations.

Historical, hard-wired beliefs can be rebuilt through education, communication, interpretation, and resource support.


