How Does Negotiating a Partnership Agreement Influence Relationships in a BSN Clinical Experience?

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Background and Significance

Partnership agreements are negotiated among partners to air out wishes, fears and concerns and to spell out expectations prior to jumping into collaborations. They have been used among partners in writing collaborations with success. To date, no one has explored their use with clinical students in baccalaureate nursing education. This project examined the influence of breaking down principles of domination inherent in nursing education and pedagogy an instead creates a partnership-based relationship.

Methods and Results

Methods
In the fall of 2015 and the fall of 2016, senior nursing students completing their adult medical-surgical clinical were asked on their last day to anonymously handwrite their answers to the two research questions. The results were transcribed and analyzed for content. Thirty-eight responses were analyzed.

Results

Relationship with each other
• Found it helpful to share their wishes, fears, and concerns about the course so they knew what each other’s strengths and weaknesses were.
• Helpful to know that they shared similar fears and concerns and similar wishes.
• Helped hold each other accountable.
• Knowing each other’s weaknesses helped them know how to help their colleagues throughout the semester.

“Hearing that there were similar hopes/fears/expectations was comforting knowing that were not alone in this.” --Anonymous student

Relationship with me
• Helped them know what my expectations for them were up front
• They appreciated knowing what my weaknesses were
• Created mutual respect
• Maintained a professional relationship
• Created a level of comfort especially when sharing doubts and worries.
• It helped them get to know me better and make me more approachable
• It created an unspoken sense of understanding and it build a great rapport.

“It allowed us to see that mutual respect was given. It gave me trust in you as an instructor.” --Anonymous student

Discussion and implications

Overall, partnership agreements appear to positively influence the relationships between students and between the students and their teacher. After sharing wishes, fears, and concerns and creating a covenant and a contract that addresses them, certain expectations are understood and there is a sense of accountability to one another.

It works well in small clinical groups of 10 students or less. In general, clinical groups usually form a strong bond and perhaps negotiating a partnership agreement helps cement that bond.

Future research should explore using partnership agreements with other clinical groups throughout the undergraduate nursing curriculum and in virtual relationships such as those in online education.

Research Questions

The two research questions were also the questions posed to the students to respond to in writing.
1. How did negotiating a partnership agreement this semester affect your relationships with each other as a clinical group?
2. How did negotiating a partnership agreement this semester affect our relationship with me?

References


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