Decreasing Test-taking Anxiety in Nursing Students: Recommendations for Nursing Faculty

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Objectives

• To discuss test taking anxiety and its implications for students
• To identify successful strategies, physical, psychological, and sensory, which can be used by nursing faculty to reduce test-taking anxiety in nursing students
• To discuss existing literature and evidence
• To discuss feasibility of methods and recommendations for nursing faculty
Background

• Test anxiety

• Schools of nursing: high stakes environment

• Fear and worry about testing has adverse effects on students ability to concentrate and recall material.

• Johnson (2014) identified test anxiety as one of the major barriers to student success in nursing education programs.
• **Design and Review Methods:**
  • A systematic review in line with PRISMA guidelines

• **Data Sources:**
  • Literature search
  • Databases used were CINAHL, Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, PubMed (Medline), and Ovid Nursing Journals
  • Key words used included “test anxiety and nursing students”, “test anxiety and students”, “decreasing test anxiety and nursing students”, and “reducing test anxiety and university students”
  • The applied limits were sources published between 2000 and 2016.
Physical

• Auriculotherapy

• Muscle relaxation

• Deep breathing
Psychological or Cognitive Therapy

• Rational emotive behavior therapy
• Guided reflection
• Mental rehearsal strategies
• Counseling
• Biofeedback-assisted relaxation
• Co-meditation
• Emotional freedom therapy
Sensory

- Aromatherapy
- Music therapy
Results

• Gap which highlights opportunities for future research
• Large body of evidence about test taking anxiety
• Extremely limited evidence surrounding test taking anxiety among nursing students
• Many strategies to reduce test anxiety reviewed proved to be beneficial
• Some showed no statistical significance
• Recommendations
Conclusion

• Most feasible for nursing faculty to implement
• Incorporating these techniques in faculty development curriculum
• Techniques were effective in relieving stress, lowering blood pressures and pulses, and substantially increasing academic performance which all correlate with decreased test anxiety.
References


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