Background

- Currently, there are 13 million cancer survivors in the United States (McCabe et al., 2013).
- This number is expected to rise to up to 20 million by 2026 (Habek & Algerbretch, 2017).
- Cancer survivors are at higher risk for morbidity and premature mortality associated directly with the cancer itself, pre-existing morbidities, and to exposure to therapy (McCabe et al., 2013).
- During the transition from active treatment to post-treatment care, cancer survivors may be left lacking the knowledge, resources, or skills that are necessary to manage the long-term effects of their disease and treatment (Irvan, Klaemp, Glencrom, & Frazier, 2011).
- Nurses play a significant role in educating and preparing patients, as well as assisting in the continuity of care needed to cope with the late and long-term consequences of cancer (Irvan et al., 2011).
- Nurses are identified as principal to the development, education, and implementation of a survivorship care program (Marchab & Griffin, 2011).

Purpose

- The goal of this project is to create and implement an educational plan for both undergraduate and graduate nursing students at San Francisco State University School of Nursing.
- The project is consistent with the Institute of Medicine’s (IOM) recommendations for improving the cancer care delivery system through the adaptation of Survivorship Care Plans (Salz, Oeffinger, McCabe, Layne, & Bach, 2012).

Literature

- To meet IOM’s goal to have cancer centers and organizations require all members of the cancer care team to have necessary core competencies in order to deliver high-quality cancer care through training, certification, and or credentials (Ferrell, McCabe, & Levit, 2013).
- As cancer survivorship care becomes an essential part of quality care, oncology professionals need education in order to prepare themselves to provide quality care (Grant et al., 2012).
- Comprehensive survivorship care remains as the most important factor in the decision to transition. Survivors prefer a clinical team that is knowledgeable about cancer (Badak, K., Dilibio, A., Reaman, G., 2013).
- Nurse-led services are applicable to nearly every cancer population and are considered non-inferior to physical-therapy follow up services in terms of adequate detection and recurrence (De Leasure & Larson, 2013).
- It is important to underscore the flexibility of cancer care to nurses who are at the beginning of their career in order to train motivated, well-educated nurses who have the ability to advance the quality of cancer nursing care (De Leasure & Larson, 2013).
- Nurses report barriers to communication skills necessary to deliver patient-centered care. Nurses can benefit from patient-centered communication training through education (Wittanerg-Lyles, Goldsmith, & Ferrell, 2015).
- Oncology nurses care about knowledge of survivorship care (Foster, Wessells, & June, 2014).

Conceptual Framework

- According to Imoage King’s Theory of Goal Attainment (TGA) (1968), nursing care is the human being-the-patient, and that the goal of nursing is the health care of both individuals and groups (Pelipin, 2016).
- King regards the nursing process as central to goal-setting and goal-attainment in nurse-patient relationships.
- As survivorship care planning involves a comprehensive approach to provide a long-term planning for the cancer patients, nurses can play a vital role to continuously assess and review steps to help patient leading up to the next phase of the goals in their survivorship journey.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the educational plan, students will be able to:

- Develop a general/basic understanding of cancer survivorship.
- Demonstrate the ability to identify ways to enhance survivorship care to patients and families.
- Recognize multiple barriers to the implementation of Survivorship Care Plans as well as to devise strategies to overcome the barriers.
- Recognize the need for the inclusion of cancer survivorship education in nursing curriculums.

Learning Strategies

- Teaching is completed by a Clinical Nurse Specialist student (author)
- 37-38 undergraduate nursing students during Spring 2018 Health Assessment course
- 16-17 graduate nursing students during Fall 2017 Health Management course
- 30-minute PowerPoint lecture presentation on Survivorship Care
- Discuss the case with a case study
- A pre-test consisting of 11 questions about students’ knowledge on Advanced Care Planning will be given prior to the PowerPoint presentation.
- The pre-test will serve as a baseline of knowledge of nursing students regarding survivorship and communication.
- Following the educational segment, a post-test consisting of 7 questions that are distinctive from the pre-test will be given.
- Data from the pre and post-tests are evaluated through content analysis where themes and categories will be generated intuitively.
- The use of reflective journals in nursing help create an understanding of situations as they occur and on past events (Elle, 2017). These reflections serve, in part, as foundation for the development of this educational project.
- The clinical journal will also consist of current challenges survivors endure and the issues that staff nurses are confronted with regarding cancer care.

Evaluation Tools

- Pre/Post Test
- Clinical Journal

Pre/Post Test

- 55 (100%) completed the pre-test, while 53 (96%) completed the post-test.
- At least 50% of the nursing students have had experience with the adult patient population.
- At least 60% of both undergraduate and graduate nursing students also had experience working in a pediatrics and adult oncology settings.
- 97% of the undergraduate students had 0-6 months experience, while 94% of graduate students had more than a year of working with care plans.
- 55% of undergraduate nursing students did express that they are “somewhat comfortable” writing care plans compared to 59% of graduate students suggesting they are “comfortable.”
- 63% of undergraduate students have not used any electronic health care systems of all graduate students have at least one electronic health care system.
- Only 11% of undergraduate students report awareness of what advanced care planning is.
- Only 3% of undergraduate and 12% of graduate nursing students accounted for the accurate range of 61%-99% cancer survival rate.
- At least 66% were knowledgeable about types of treatment for patients with cancer which includes medications, chemotherapy, radiation, surgery, and palliative care.
- There was also an overall consensus (100%) that patients with cancer experience effects from their treatment.
- 100% of the participants report that nurses have influence in patient’s quality of life and that educational materials are necessary in the education of patients and their families regarding their care.
- (100%) of both undergraduate and graduate nursing students believe that survivorship care plans will be helpful for patients and at least 97% concede in the adoption of a multidisciplinary team in the development of these care plans.
- 95% of undergraduate students and 75% of graduate students expect institutional support for the development and implementation of survivorship care plans.
- Both undergraduate and graduate students identified certain roles for nurses in the delivery of holistic care to survivors; namely, to educate and be educated, to advocate, counsel, support, and provide competent and coordinated care for all survivors.
- Some graduate students did not perceive a role for them in cancer care for the reason that he or she is not an oncology nurse.
- 100% of undergraduate nursing students and 67% of graduate nursing students supported the inclusion of survivorship care in their nursing education.
- 100% of student participants report that nurses have influence in their patient’s quality of life and that educational materials are necessary in the education of patients and their families regarding their care.

Conclusion

- Given that this educational project was carried out among Level 1 nursing students who have yet to start their formal training on care plans, it was expected that less than half (45%) did not answer the question relating to comfort in writing care plans.
- There exists a gap in knowledge that survivors need to expand education around cancer and survivorship care.
- Participants noted that a multidisciplinary team is necessary due to the complexity of the cancer itself and because it plays a significant function in “maximizing” patient survival through communication and patient-centered care.
- Nurses identified that the greatest obstacle to implement survivorship care plans is that cancer patients and survivors only receive care from oncology nurses is another driver for this educational plan.
- Nursing students, regardless of the level of education, still hold the least preference to the implementation of survivorship care plans.
- Graduate students are, by now, certain about their particular focus in school. On the contrary, undergraduates are often familiarize themselves with the different specialties surrounding nursing care and thus are more receptive to change.
- Participants specified the timely relevance of the issue and its applicability in all areas of healthcare; patient need for education, and need for a survivorship care plan.
- A comprehensive cancer curriculum is warranted because well-educated nurses can improve the overall quality of cancer care.
- As key members of the healthcare workforce, nurses have a very important role in cancer patient care, which includes understanding the survival needs of patients and families, advocating for federal and state policymakers to ensure all cancer survivors receive full range of services necessary to treat their disease, helping to expand evidence-based research to address issues related to the implementation of survivorship care plans, and finally securing the provision of competent, coordinated care for all cancer survivors.

References