Improving Nursing Student Empathy With Experiential Learning

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Objectives

1. Define the problem of the decline in student nurse empathy
2. Describe the effect of an experiential learning toolkit on improving student’s empathic capacity
3. Discuss implications for practice
Empathy is significant to the nurse-patient relationship.

There is a decline of empathy in nursing students.

Experiential learning may be effective in increasing empathy.
Problem

• Lack of empathy in nursing students
• Effect on nurse-patient relationship
• Minimizing patient risk
• Experiential learning may be an effective strategy
empathy?
Context and Relevance

Evidence in the literature

- empathy is inherent to nursing role
- empathy is essential to patient care
- empathic behaviors can be taught
- experiential learning may be effective

Orlando’s Deliberative Nursing Process Theory

based on the knowledge that human beings want to be communicated with and understood
Deliberative Nursing Process Theory

1. Meanings are not apparent to others
2. Unique and individual response
3. Nurse plays active role in patient expression
4. Shared observations essential to identify need

Individualized perspective of the world
Require perceived meaningful relationship
Design

• Evaluation of a current healthcare program toolkit

• One group pre-post test
Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT) Empathy Team

- Home
- About
- Project Team
- Case Studies
  - Case 1 - Teenager with Asperger’s Syndrome
  - Case 2 - Pregnant Stroke
  - Case 3 - Indigenous Fall
- Facilitator’s Empathy Toolkit (pdf)
- Publications
- Contact Us

Can DVD simulations be used to promote empathy and interprofessional collaboration among undergraduate healthcare students?

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Toolkit

- Vocabulary matching cards
- Video case study scenario simulations
- Simulation reflection and debriefing tool
- If I Was the Patient activity
- Learning Gem wrap up activity
Jefferson Empathy Scale

- JSE-HP-S
- 20 items
- 7 point Likert Scale
- 20 - 140
- Higher score = more empathic engagement
Interpretation of Findings

Figure 1: Participant Gender

Figure 2: Experience in Healthcare
Interpretation of Findings cont.

Jefferson Scale Total Item Scores Pre and Post-intervention

Figure 3: Total Jefferson Empathy Score Average Pre and Post-Intervention
Interpretation of Findings cont.

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<th>Post-score Average</th>
<th>Percentile Difference</th>
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Table 1: Jefferson Scale of Empathy Average Scores Pre and Post-Intervention Displaying Percentile Difference
Evaluation of Learning

• Thinking like the patient renders better care
• Providers should attempt to stand in their patient shoes
• Attentiveness to patient’s personal experiences influences outcomes
"I learned how to be empathetic without getting too emotional and putting the patient needs first"

"The patient’s major concern may be beyond something that the nurse can see on a chart"

"I need to clarify what the patient feels their greatest needs are"

"No matter how kind and compassionate I am, it does not matter if the patient’s concerns are not addressed"
The problem revisited

• *Empathy* is significant to the nurse patient relationship

• There is a *decline of empathy* in nursing students

• *Experiential learning* may be effective in increasing empathy
Implications for change

• Increased nursing student empathy
• More prepared nursing workforce
• More engaged patients
• Better patient outcomes
Recommendations for action

• Inclusion of similar activities in nursing curriculum
• Early exposure to experiential learning
• Concept and skill development
• Repeated review, thought and discussion
References


