



## 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









# Overview

*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**

**Individualized perspective of the world**

**3. Nurse plays active role in patient expression**

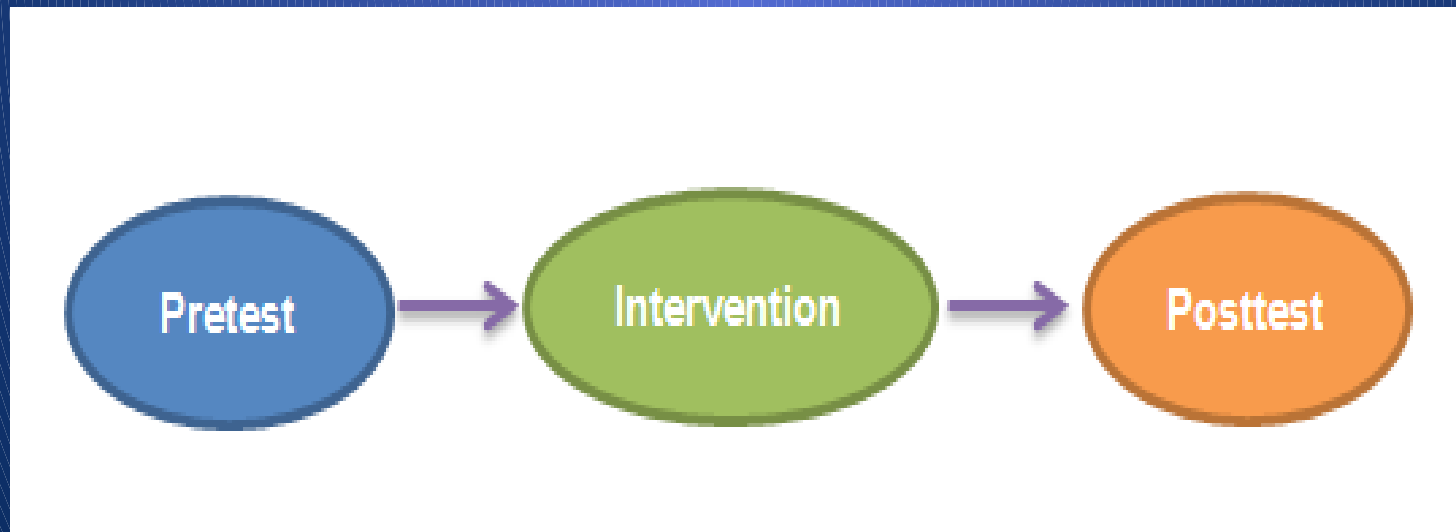
**4. Shared observations essential to identify need**

**Require perceived meaningful relationship**



# Design

- Evaluation of a current healthcare program toolkit
- One group pre-post test



# Monash University

Monash University > Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences > Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences > Cehpp > Alt-c-empathy >

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### 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

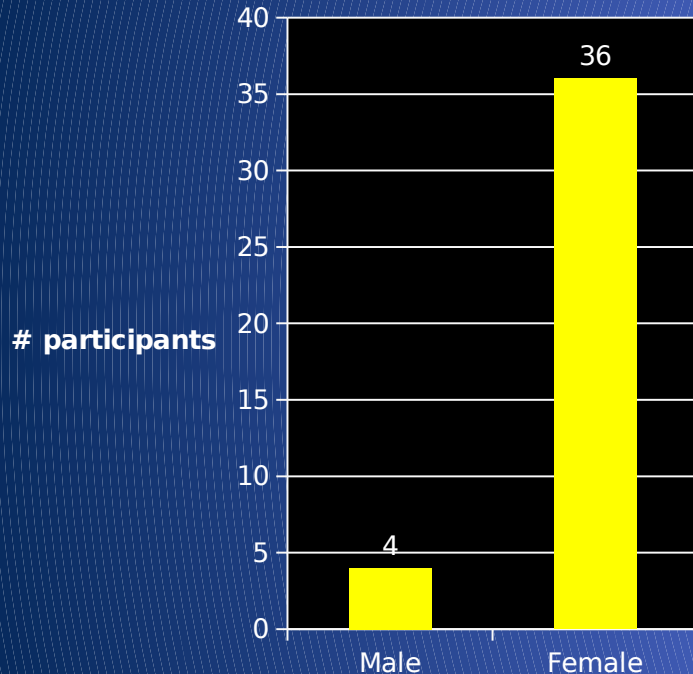
- JSE-HP-S
- 20 items
- 7 point Likert Scale
- 20 - 140
- Higher score = more empathic engagement





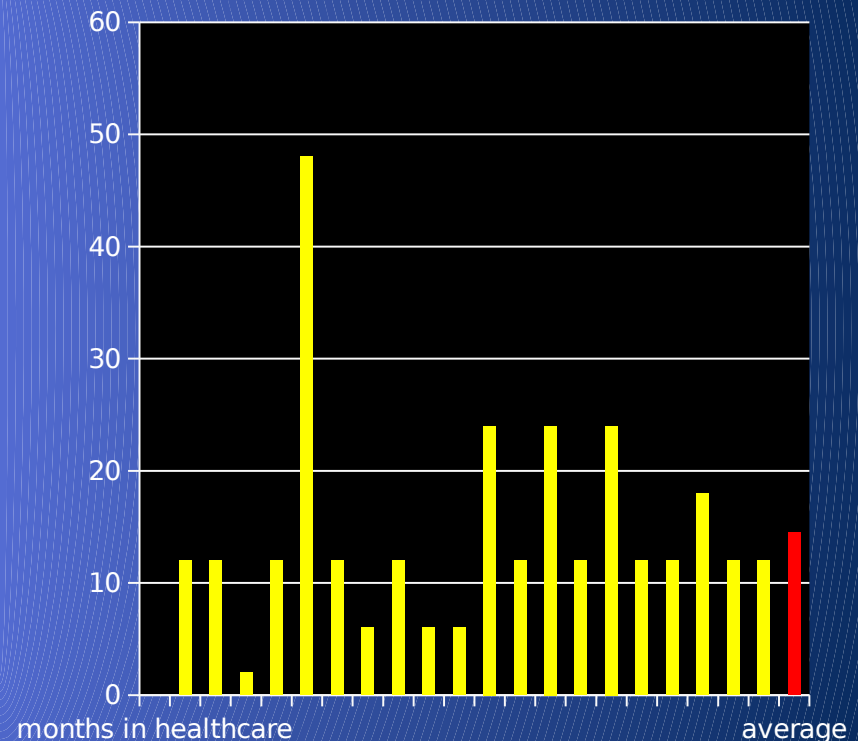
# Interpretation of Findings

**Participant Gender**



**Figure 1: Participant Gender**

**Experience in Healthcare (months)**



**Figure 2: Experience in Healthcare**

# Interpretation of Findings cont.

## Jefferson Scale Total Item Scores Pre and Post-intervention

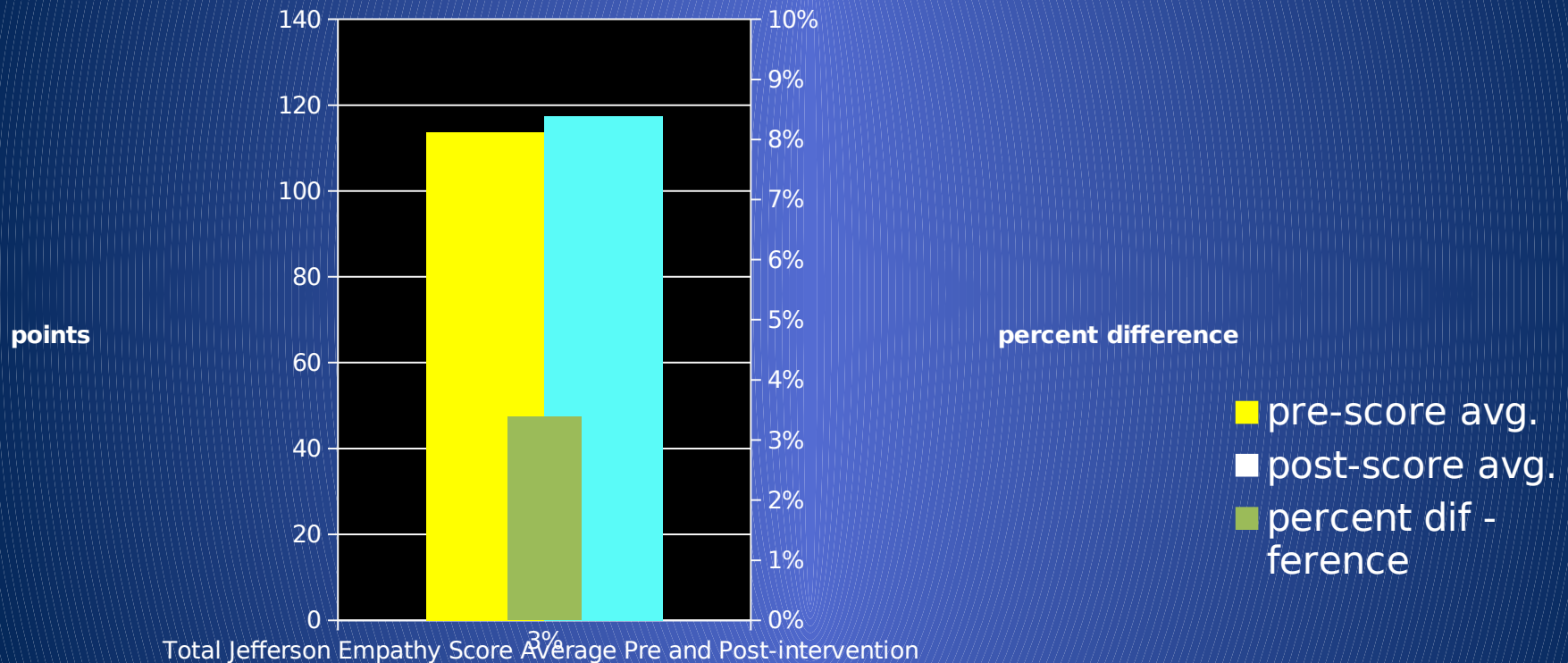


Figure 3: Total Jefferson Empathy Score Average Pre and Post-Intervention



# Interpretation of Findings cont.

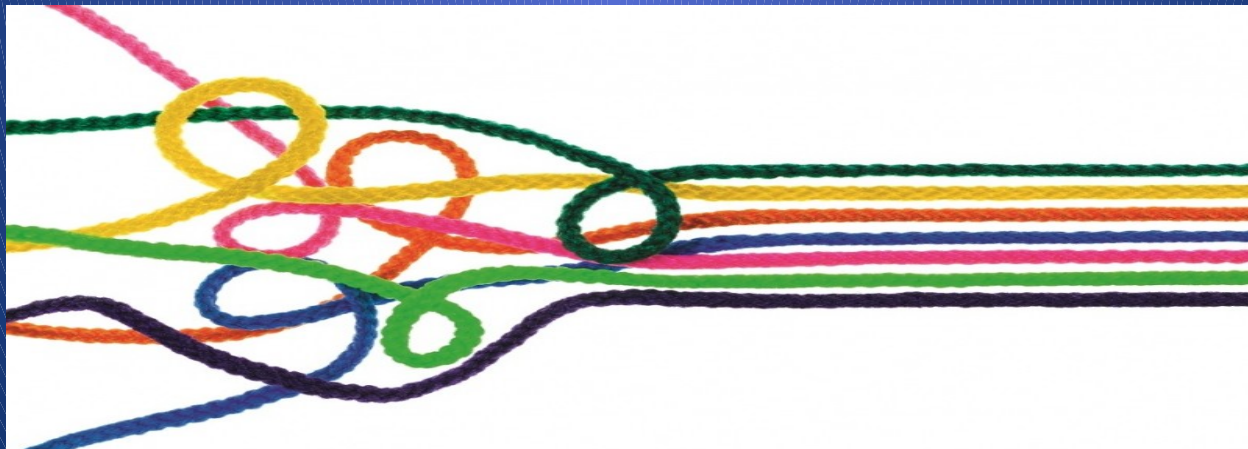
item	pre-score average	post-score average	percentile difference
1	6.05	6.1	1%
2	6.4	6.475	1%
3	4.25	4.179	-2%
4	6.45	6.55	2%
5	4.9	5.225	7%
6	3.875	3.973	3%
7	6.475	6.55	1%
8	5.725	6.48	13%
9	5.615	6.35	13%
10	6.35	6.5	2%
11	5.725	6	5%

item	pre-score average	post-score average	percentile difference
12	5.85	5.9	1%
13	6.25	6.475	4%
14	6.775	6.55	-3%
15	5.425	5.425	0%
16	6.325	6.459	2%
17	4.975	5.925	19%
18	4.307	4.45	3%
19	5.3	5.3	0%
20	6.6	6.6	0%
total score	113.62 2	117.46 6	3%

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





# Learning Gems

“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

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