Translating the Lived Experience of Transgender Persons to Nursing Curricula

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Learner Objectives

• Gain awareness of the importance of nurse educator roles in educating students on health disparities in transgender patients

• Describe the experience and common health issues of transgender individuals

• Identify gaps in knowledge in caring for transgender patients

• Translate current transgender research findings into the classroom and into practice
Importance of Transgender Research

• When nurses do not understand system barriers to transgender health, knowledge gaps may inadvertently impede patient care (Mayo Clinic, 2017; Wanta & Unger, 2017; Winter et al., 2016)

• It is critical for nurse educators to understand the health concerns that most affect this vulnerable population to prepare students to provide care
Topics for Discussion in the Classroom

• Topics to address as educational interventions to improve knowledge and attitudes of baccalaureate nursing students regarding LGBT patient care (Strong & Folse, 2015):
  • Key terminology related to LGBT
  • Health disparities
  • Medical needs of transgender patients
  • Culturally sensitive communication skills for competent LGBT patient care
Transgender Population

• Healthy People 2020 identified the LGBT population as a vulnerable and underserved patient population (Flores, Herman, Gates, & Brown, 2016; United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2014)
  • Unique health care concerns
  • Marginalization compounds those concerns
• 1.4 million adults in the United States identify as transgender (Flores et al., 2016)
Health Care Needs of the Transgender Population

The transgender population is at high risk for:

- Depression
- Suicide attempts and self-injury
- Violence
Depression Health Concerns

• Research study results

  • Three-year prospective study reported 27.8% of the 230 participants experienced major depression; 15.9% reported depression at a yearly follow-up (Nuttbrock et al., 2014)

  • Cross-sectional study of 1093 transgender participants reported 49.1% depression in MtF and 37.3% in FtM (Bockting, Miner, Swinburne, Hamilton, & Coleman, 2013)

  • 51.4% depression symptoms reported in MtF, and 48.3% in FtM in a cross-sectional study of 125 transgender participants (Budge, Adelson, & Howard, 2013)
Suicide Attempts and Self-Injury Concerns

• Research study results
  • In a study including 380 transgender participants, 35.1% reported they had seriously considered suicide and 11.2% reported they had attempted suicide (Bauer, Scheim, Pyne, Travers, & Hammond, 2015)
  • A study of 532 FtM and 697 MtF participants, resulted in 32.4% of participants reporting suicide attempts (Perez-Brumer, Hatzenbuehler, Oldenburg, & Bockting, 2015)
  • In a study on non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI), 41.9 % of the 773 participants had a history of NSSI (Dickey, Reisner, & Juntenen , 2015)
Violence Concerns

• Research study results
  • In a cross-sectional study with 770 transgender participants, 33.9% of participants had experienced violent events (McCarty, Fisher, Irwin, Coleman, & Pelster, 2014)
  • Nuttbrock et al. (2014) reported that 53% of the study participants experienced psychological abuse and 10% experienced physical abuse
Gaps in Knowledge in Caring for Transgender Patients

- Barriers to the integration of LGBT-related curriculum (Chinn, 2013)
- Transgender health disparity content in nursing curriculum is suboptimal (Lim, Brown, & Jones, 2013)
- Healthcare providers should understand the transgender experience (Halloran, 2015)
Understanding Relevant Terminology

• Transgender: Umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity or expression (masculine, feminine, or other) is different from their sex as designated at birth (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016)

• Gender expression: Outward presentation of one’s gender (CDC, 2016)

• Gender identity: Internal understanding of one’s own gender or the gender in which one identifies (CDC, 2016)
Understanding Relevant Terminology

• Male-to-female transgender: A person assigned male at birth who identifies as female, a transgender woman (National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), 2014)

• Female-to-male transgender: A person assigned female at birth who identifies as a male, a transgender man (NCTE, 2014)
Transgender Health in the Classroom

• Nursing regulatory organizations recognize population health as an essential component of the core competencies learned as part of associate’s, bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees (American Nurses Association (ANA), 2017; ANA, 2014)

• Although nursing has made progress in meeting the needs of population health, transgender-focused care remains suboptimal (Kirkpatrick, Esterhuizen, Jesse, & Brown, 2015; Winter et al., 2016)

• 33% of transgender people reported a negative experience with a health care provider in the last year, and 23% did not seek care due to fear of mistreatment (James et al., 2016)
Common Barriers Experienced by Faculty

• Lack of formal education on the evolving needs of transgender patients (Halloran, 2015)

• The nursing profession is affected by sociopolitical shifts that may compound gaps in practicing nurses’ knowledge (Carabez et al., 2015; Chinn, 2013; Sirota, 2013)
Common Barriers Experienced by Faculty

- Common barriers experienced related to the integration of LGBT curriculum content into the nursing curricula \(^{(Chinn, 2013)}\)
- Sexual identity- disclosure of sexual identity
- Lack of sufficient time- bringing content into the curriculum
- Issues regarding religious beliefs- providing care to all patients
- Fear of negative student evaluations- discuss concerns with both faculty and students
Transgender Research Findings in the Classroom

• Little is known about the transition experience of transgender people

• Understanding the transgender experience as these individuals transition to an appropriate gender expression will have a positive impact on nursing knowledge and professional practice

• Documented lived experiences of transgender individuals can improve provider knowledge and understanding
Phenomenology Study Findings

• A phenomenology study was conducted to explore the transition experience of 11 transgender individuals

• Four major themes from participant interviews:
  • It’s gravity
  • Shedding your skin
  • Navigating the way
  • A turning point
Transgender Research Findings in the Classroom

• Emerging themes from the phenomenology research study

1) Participants shared their unrelenting recognition of their biological gender not matching their emotional gender

2) Many participants admitted to thoughts of suicide and recurring depression before their gender transition

3) Most participants reported difficulty locating high quality healthcare resources

4) Participants shared their desire to make meaning from their experience to help and advocate for others
Conclusion

• Understanding the commonalities of the lived experience of transgender people is fundamental for nurse educators to improve patient outcomes in the transgender population

• This knowledge is vital to nurses, no matter their scope of practice

• Nurse educators must prepare nurses in all scopes of practice to be advocates for transgender patients when providing care
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