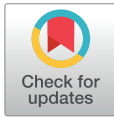




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Featured Article

Empowering Nursing Students to Address Incivility

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KEYWORDS

incivility;
nursing student;
communication;
anxiety;
self-efficacy;
simulation

Abstract

Background: Nurses frequently face incivility. Nursing students are ill-prepared to cope with incivility in the workplace.

Method: This study evaluated nursing students' responses to a simulation activity focused on incivility. Students' anxiety and self-efficacy were measured before and after simulation.

Results: Prelicensure nursing students ($n = 44$) had a mean age of 22.73 years ($SD = 5.32$). Mean anxiety levels decreased from presimulation ($M = 44.9$) to postsimulation ($M = 41.5$) ($t [36] = 1.69$; $p = .098$). Similarly, the self-efficacy decreased from presimulation ($M = 30.13$) to postsimulation ($M = 29.67$) period ($t [36] = 0.4$, $p = .69$). In postsimulation reflections, 89% ($n = 39$) of students found the simulation beneficial.

Conclusions: Simulation provides students a safe environment to practice communication, resulting in increased student comfort and agency.

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Strong communication skills are essential for nurses, both therapeutic communication skills to relate with patients and interprofessional communication skills to interact with the health care team. Communication between health care

providers is critical as breakdowns in communication have been associated with lapses in patient safety and is a significant factor in the majority of sentinel events (The Joint Commission, 2015). Nursing students need to develop strong communication skills. Therapeutic communication is specifically taught in nursing foundation and mental health courses. However, interprofessional communication is often "picked up" in the clinical setting and may not be based on the best practice.

This project's goal was to teach students effective team communication strategies and provide them the opportunity to apply communication skills in a simulation activity. Our hypothesis was that students' self-efficacy would improve and anxiety would decrease after participating in a simulation scenario to practice communication skills.

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Background

Incivility is a persistent problem in the nursing profession. Kerber and colleagues found that all new nurses in their study had experienced incivility within their first year of

Key Points

- Students need more exposure to common nursing issues such as incivility.
- Practicing communication strategies may increase students' self-efficacy.
- Student anxiety should be considered when planning nursing education activities.

practice (Kerber, Woith, Jenkins, & Astroth, 2015). Students are exposed to incivility in school as well as in the clinical setting (Sauer, Hannon, & Beyer, 2017). Nurses who experience incivility have higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression (Sauer & McCoy, 2016). Incivility and lateral violence may hinder nurses and students from providing safe and effective patient care. Practicing communication skills

in simulation provides the students the opportunity to respond to incivility and lateral violence in a safe environment (Sanner-Stiehr & Ward-Smith, 2016).

TeamSTEPPS[®] was developed to promote teamwork and improve communication between health care members to improve patient outcomes (AHRQ, 2017). In a study that used TeamSTEPPS, neonatal team members showed significant improvements in teamwork, communication, situational awareness, and support for each other after training (Brodsky et al., 2013).

Studies of health care profession students found that TeamSTEPPS training with simulation improves interprofessional collaboration (Baker & Durham, 2013; Jernigan et al., 2016), teamwork (Brock et al., 2013), and communication (Sweigart et al., 2016). Further studies have shown improvements in student attitudes toward leadership, situational monitoring, and mutual support (Baker et al., 2015). Researchers have also reported increases in student motivation, utility of training, and self-efficacy with the use of TeamSTEPPS (Brock et al., 2013; Oh, Jeon, & Koh, 2015).

Simulation using TeamSTEPPS is an important approach for students to learn, practice, and improve communication skills and teamwork. This training prepares nursing students to care for patients and to advocate for patient safety. TeamSTEPPS training using simulation may be a viable method to train nursing students how to communicate when facing incivility in the practice environment.

Nursing students experience high levels of stress and anxiety (Turner & McCarthy, 2017). There are several reasons for nursing students to have increased stress and anxiety, including pressure for acceptance into nursing school, competition among peers, rigorous nursing curriculum,

heavy course loads, and the need to maintain a high grade point average (Crary, 2013; Chernomas & Shapiro, 2013). High anxiety levels lead to decreased attention span, and increased stress impairs decision-making abilities (Ajilchi & Nejati, 2017).

Baccalaureate nursing students experience both anxiety and stress in the clinical setting (Wallace, Bourke, Tormoehlen, & Poe-Greskamp, 2015). Sources of stress and anxiety in a clinical setting include the following: (a) fear of making a mistake or fear of failure, (b) not knowing how to do something, (c) uncomfortable patient or family experiences, (d) behaviors of health care staff which may be in opposition to students and instructors, and (e) behaviors of nursing instructors (Cowen, Hubbard, & Hancock, 2016; Wallace et al., 2015). Cowen et al. (2016) suggest in-depth orientation and structured learning activities such as simulation to decrease student anxiety and increase student confidence before initial clinical experiences.

It is important that students believe they are able to succeed. For nursing students, self-efficacy reflects their belief that they can perform tasks and function as a student nurse. Rowbotham and Owen (2015) found that faculty behaviors positively influence students' self-efficacy and include suggestions to improve: (a) identification of strengths and weaknesses, (b) frequent observation, (c) communicating expectations, and (d) positive reinforcement. Simulation using standardized patients may have a positive impact on self-efficacy and motivation for learning, leading to increased knowledge and better skill performance in nursing students (Oh et al., 2015).

Incivility and lateral violence may inhibit nursing students from providing safe patient care. Practicing communication in the face of incivility and lateral violence through simulation gives students the opportunity to respond to these situations in a safe environment (Sanner-Stiehr & Ward-Smith, 2016). Simulation focused on communication may have a positive impact on self-efficacy and anxiety in nursing students.

Theoretical Framework

This study used concepts from both Kolb's *Experiential Learning Theory* (1984) and Knowles *Adult Learning Principles* (Knowles, 1984). However, neither framework sufficiently fit our conceptual model for this study, so a new model was developed, The Adult Experiential Learning Model (Figure).

The basic premise of Kolb's *Theory of Experiential Learning* is that people learn from their experiences through exploration and reflection (Kolb, 1984). Knowles *Adult Learning Principles* are frequently used in nursing education. The salient concepts include the understanding that adult learners are self-motivated and build new knowledge on previous experiences (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2015).

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