



TOOLKITS AND STANDARDIZED PATIENT EXPERIENCES: PREPARING NURSES TO COMMUNICATE AND LEAD



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Objectives

- ❖ To describe the development of toolkits for use with undergraduate nursing students
- ❖ To examine how Standardized Patient Experiences (SPEs), in conjunction with toolkits, maximize student mastery of communication and leadership skills in mental health



Background

- New nurse graduates often struggle with leadership skills.
- Unique challenges in a mental health setting: strategies are needed to help novice nurses apply best practice to care for individuals with complex issues.
- Shorter lengths of stay and restrictions on caring for patients deemed too unstable can lead to fewer opportunities for students to master these vitally important skills.
- Caring for individuals with mental illness requires a core set of skills:
 - knowledge of various disorders
 - therapeutic communication
 - collaboration with the multidisciplinary team
 - proficiency as an advocate whether for individuals, families, groups, or populations
 - conflict management skills.
- Students rarely experience working with families, groups, or populations as part of their nursing education.

Design and Implementation

- Toolkits met a core skill set and provided a consistent teaching approach.
 - Learning objectives, pre-SPE activities, assignments, video vignettes, feedback rubrics, and post-SPE activities.
- Topics included:
 - Therapeutic communication in a mental health setting
 - Managing hallucinations and delusions
 - Interviewing strategies for those with substance abuse disorders
 - Assessing trauma
- Focused on building leadership skills:
 - Collaboration with interprofessional teams
 - Advocacy
 - Conflict Management
- Each student completed the toolkits and participated in SPEs
- Debriefing led by faculty.
- Students - reviewed their own video-recordings and completed self-reflections.

Evaluation and Findings

- Standardized Patient Experiences (SPEs) allowed practice in a consistent and safe environment.
- Using rubrics, faculty provided formative and summative feedback to students about:
 - Therapeutic communication skills
 - Assessment/ management of patients with mental health diagnoses
 - Application of leadership skills.
- Growth was noted in students' communication and leadership skills and ability to care for patients with common mental health issues.



Implications and Recommendations

- Use of SPEs and toolkit activities were highly effective in helping students meet a core skill set in mental health nursing and leadership.
- Implementing these activities with registered nurses is recommended to evaluate their utility in a different setting.

References

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