



Strengths-Based Nursing and Healthcare: An approach to caring for nursing students and nurses

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Background

In 2016, the McGill University Ingram School of Nursing's (ISoN) in Montreal (Canada) adopted Dr. Laurie Gottlieb's Strengths-Based Nursing and Healthcare (SBNH) as its philosophical approach to guide curriculum development and revision, classroom pedagogy, clinical teaching, training of clinical instructors and preceptors and nurse leadership development. SBNH is an alternative to the deficit model of healthcare. SBNH views people as assets to develop and empower, rather than as merely liabilities to fix, manage, and control. It is a philosophy of care that is based on a comprehensive set of eight values: health and healing; uniqueness; holism and embodiment; subjective reality and created meaning; person and environment are integral; self-determination; learning, timing, and readiness; and collaborative partnership. Three SBNH-related initiatives were undertaken by faculty at the ISoN: 1) Preceptors' Experiences of the SBNH in a Clinical Teaching Online Course, 2) Undergraduate Students' Experience of the Integration of the SBNH Approach in the Nursing Curriculum at McGill University, and 3) the SBNH Leadership Program for Nurse Managers. At the time of submission, we have the results of the first initiative involving preceptors. The ISoN offers online preceptor training modules encompassing the school's philosophy of SBNH to help develop preceptors' abilities to create a positive and supportive learning environment and to help students develop their strengths and succeed in their clinical studies.

Research Question / Aim

A qualitative research study was conducted with the aim of capturing preceptors' experiences of the online course "Strengths-Based Nursing in Clinical Teaching."

Method / Procedure

Six preceptors were interviewed in March 2020. Content analysis was done.

Results

Preceptors highlighted key learnings such as knowing the student as a person, improving feedback and evaluation, and speaking the same language as teachers. These learnings changed their interactions with students. Preceptors reported giving more positive feedback to their students and using a SBNH approach with students, as well as fostering a sense of belonging for the students. Preceptors acknowledged that the online training made them better nurses.

Discussion

The online course allowed preceptors to acquire new knowledge that they were able to apply in their interactions with students. As mentioned by Wu (2000), web-based learning using a digital platform to deliver educational content has been recognized as an effective approach to learning in nursing continuing education and professional development (Wu, 2020). What was unique in this online program was the use of the SBNH approach to guide preceptors to practice strengths-based teaching, a student-centered process whereby preceptors help students discover and develop their strengths and create a positive learning environment.

Conclusion

Since preceptors are at the center of the educational process for new nurses, it is critical to understand their perception of online training programs. The results of this study highlighted that preceptors' learnings related to the SBNH approach affected how they perceived their interactions with students.