

A Collaborative Performance

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Background

In 2018, Frostburg State University accepted the first cohort of Nurse Practitioner Students. Innovative Family Nurse Practitioner and Psychiatric and Mental Health Nurse Practitioner concentrations were established to help fill the gap of the healthcare shortage. Both programs are blended learning options. As the program was developed the importance of simulated patients in this experiential learning experience was embraced. Frostburg State University is in rural western Maryland. The resources of obtaining and or hiring trained simulated patients to perform in this education activity was limited. Research has demonstrated that simulation improves knowledge, skill performance, critical thinking, and satisfaction (Warren et al., 2016). A collaboration was established between the departments of nursing and theater to train theater students to serve the role of simulated patients for the nurse practitioner students along with giving the theater student simulation skills that can be taken with them to serve their own community nursing programs.

Objectives

At the end of this presentation, the learner will:

- relate the importance of simulation to nursing in an advanced practice program.;
- identify strategies of collaboration between the departments of nursing and theater;
- Explain the facilitators and barriers of the nursing and theater collaboration; and
- recognize the benefits to the nurse learner and theater student.

Development

The collaboration was initiated by the department of nursing reaching out the theater faculty with the concept of the collaboration of nursing and theater. The theater faculty showed an immediate interest. The theater faculty and nursing faculty and staff completed site visits to several simulation environments where this collaboration was established. The theater department took the lead on the development of a new course to be offered to the theater students.

Methods

The collaborative faculty and staff of the nurse practitioner program and the theater program reviewed, modeled, and modified the program based on the Simulation Guidelines and Best Practices for Nurse Practitioner programs. A program needs assessment was completed. Objective-based curriculum that supports advanced practice competencies via patient cases, developing theater student training methodologies, and creating assessment tools for debriefing were established using best practice guidelines. The first cohort of students participated in their first experiential learning experience with the theater students in fall 2020 with simulation build within Advanced Health Assessment course. The nurse practitioner completed a history and physical with the theater student as their patient. The simulated patient provides a personal history, simulating physical signs such as pain or symptoms of an illness and complete a physical exam with the nurse learner.

Facilitators and Barriers

Facilitators

- Strong Nurse Practitioner Lead having completed the Maryland Clinical Simulation Resource Consortium III and have over 300 hours of continuing education and training.
- Committed theater faculty to design a course with syllabus for the theater students.
- Debriefing is completed in a collaborative environment to help the nurse and theater learner.
- Positive feedback on student evaluations.

Barriers

- Workload
- Sustainability
- As we expand the lack of a dedicated simulation coordinator
- Scheduling

Results

A theater course titled THEA 335 Acting in Simulation has been developed and has had enrollment of 19 students that have served as simulated patients for the nurse learner. 57 nurse practitioner students have engaged in at least one simulation experience. Simulation has been built into the curriculum in the core of health assessment, mental health in primary care across the lifespan, adult and geriatric primary care management, neurobiology of the psychiatric disorders across the lifespan, adult/geriatric focused brief Individual and group therapy for the psychiatric nurse practitioner courses. With the introduction of COVID is being used to train the nurse practitioner students in telehealth best practice. Debriefing collaboratively allows open discussion about empathy, caring, listening, cultural competency, and communication.

Conclusions

Simulation evaluates cognitive and clinical proficiency. Combining simulation with a quality debriefing after the direct patient care provides structured experiential learning opportunities that can lead to changes in behavior (NONPF, 2020). The experiences have generated positive student feedback from the nurse and theater learner. There have been nine graduates from FSU nurse practitioner program with a 100% pass rate on first attempt. There is one student that has not sat for certification at this date.

The theater department is actively working to incorporate this course into the progression plan, as it is an elective at this time. The nursing department will continue to lead and advocate for this collaboration as it has so many research proven benefits to the nurse practitioner student.

References

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