New Curriculum to Advance Nurse Education in Addictions
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Background

US:
• 20 million people with substance use disorders (SUDs) ¹
• Morbidity and mortality among consequences
• Opioid epidemic worsened during pandemic
• Worst year ever drug overdose deaths:
  81,000 as of May, 2020 ²
Maryland:
• Top 4 in the nation for overdose deaths, 2019 ³
  • Increasing unintentional opioid deaths, steady alcohol-related deaths ⁴
  • Rate of opioid ED visits in MD outpacing the US average for a decade ⁵

Gaps in education:
• Lack of knowledge is a major barrier to providing quality care to persons with SUDs ⁶, ⁷
• Few schools educate nurses to identify, prevent, and treat SUDs ⁸, ⁹

Objectives

Describe...
• Urgent need for innovative approaches to address the opioid epidemic, other substance use and disorders
• Process of advancing addictions nursing curriculum
• New addictions nursing curriculum for different educational levels that address unmet care needs

Methods

Gathered experienced addictions faculty
Needs assessment: student addictions learning needs
Formed advisory board of content experts/clinicians
Proposed undergraduate and graduate curricular options
Implementation: course and program development

Conclusions
This addictions nursing curriculum...
• Prepares nurses to provide care across settings for individuals, families, and communities affected by substance use and addictions
• Prepares addictions nursing specialists
• Strengthens the nursing workforce

Future directions:
• Complete course development and rollout
• Evaluate courses and programs
• Continuous quality improvement

Results

Student addictions learning needs survey:
• Important to be educated about addictions (96%)
• Want an addictions nurse specialist in practice setting (96%)
• Interested in an addictions course (80%), focus area (71% BSNs, 94% RN-BSNs), certificate program (61%)
• Student-identified learning needs:
  • Addictions Resources
  • Dealing with intoxication and withdrawal
  • Effects of “street” drugs
  • Prevention, identifying risk factors
  • Communication about addictions
  • Encouraging patients
  • Supporting treatment and recovery

Undergraduate RN-BSN Focus Area:
• Assembled and adapted existing courses:
  1) Addictions foundations
  2) Motivational interviewing
  3) Public/community health nursing
• Earns transcript badge: "addictions nursing focus area"
• 15 students interested

Post-Baccalaureate Certificate: 4 new courses:
1) Addictions Nursing I: Foundations
• Fall 2020 first time offered; 5 students enrolled
• Course evaluations 4.9/5.0: objectives, content, teaching strategies
• Student feedback: fantastic course

2) Motivational Interviewing
• Spring 2021, 10 students enrolled
• Student feedback:
  • Confident encouraging clients and connecting with patients practice sessions helped develop MI skills
  • Benefits all nurses, not just specializing in addictions

3) Addictions Nursing II: Special Topics, Fall 2021
4) Addictions Nursing III: Clinical Aspects (didactic + 90 hours clinical), Spring 2022

Bibliography


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