Transforming Nursing Practice for Today’s World: Teaching Information Literacy Skills to Nurses as Preparation for Evidence-Based Nursing Practice

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GOALS:
• Plan, develop, and disseminate instructional programs promoting information literacy skills among professional nurses working in a variety of settings as a precursor for research utilization and the promotion of evidence-based nursing practices (EBNP)
• Measure information use, attitudes and skills required for evidence-based practice among a selected subgroup of practicing nurses

SPONSORSHIP:
This project was sponsored and funded by:
• The National Network of Libraries of Medicine - Southeastern/Atlantic Region (NN/LM-SE/A)
• Himmelfarb Health Sciences Library of The George Washington University
• Partners for Health Information Coalition – Greater Washington, D.C. metroplex
• The George Washington School of Nursing Education graduate students
• The George Washington University Hospital
• Education and Professional Development department registered nurses, Maryland Association of School Health Nurses (2005 Annual Meeting)
• Health Services employees – Prince George’s County Public Schools, Prince George’s County, Maryland
• Prince George's County, Maryland Health Services employees – Prince George’s County Public Schools, Prince George’s County, Maryland
• Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses (2005 Annual Meeting)
• Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses (2005 Annual Meeting)
• National Association of School Nurses (2005 Annual Meeting Pre-session Conference)
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BACKGROUND:
• The library identified the importance of information literacy, informatics and evidence-based nursing practice as key skills in today’s healthcare environment. Because nurses are the largest group of healthcare professionals, these professionals were identified for this project.
• Over two years ago, the library began a series of outreach programs to identify nurses working in a variety of clinical settings for skill set development. These cohorts were invited to participate in single or multiple instructional sessions promoting and developing information literacy, literature retrieval, and evaluation skills.
• An introduction to evidence-based nursing practice (EBNP) was included to highlight the importance of these skill sets and resources in current practice.

METHODS:
This project uses a multi-faceted approach to develop information literacy skills and promote evidence-based practice among practicing nurses. The majority of participants attended instructional sessions lasting from 2 -6 hours. The topics covered in the sessions were:
• Definition of evidence-based nursing practice
• Role of information literacy in nursing practice in the 21st Century
• How EBNP differs from traditional nursing practice
• Types of resources available to inform nursing practice
• Quality resources for use in EBNP
A subgroup of nurses was also identified to participate in the measurement of attitudes and skills relating to information use in practice. During the past 6 months, the Principle Investigator:
• Obtained IRB approval
• Developed and facilitated instructional sessions
• Created and collected demographic and attitudinal questionnaires
• Distributed and collected pre-interventional surveys measuring information usage and skills

OUTCOMES:
During the past 15 months:
• All participants were invited to attend instructional sessions
• 12 sessions were conducted
• 600+ nurses attended instructional sessions
• Selected subgroup of 20 participants:
  – Agreed to participate and gave informed consent
  – Completed a pre-interventional demographic and attitudinal survey

Survey data shows:
• 100% female
• 65% Caucasian, 20% African-American, 5% Asian, 10% Other
• 5% Associate degree, 75% BSN degree, 20% MSN degree
• 90% have been working in nursing for over 22 years
• 75% working for current organization for 5+ years
• 95% felt knowledgeable using computers and technology in practice
• 100% acknowledged the need to access information to perform job successfully
• 100% described their use of information as above average or better
• 95% desired more training in information usage and skill building

FUTURE PLANS:
• Will continue to provide additional instructional sessions
• Will collect series of post-interventional survey data measuring information usage and skills

EVALUATION:
• For the majority of the participants, this was the initial introduction to the concept and principles of information literacy and evidence-based nursing practice
• This project has received exceptionally high ratings via session evaluations among participants
• Instructional programs continue to be requested for additional groups of nurses
• The data gathered from the selected subgroup has yielded new insights to the role of information access, usage and skill development in the practice of modern nursing practice
• Additional efforts should be devoted to addressing the information needs and abilities of practicing nurses

PARTNERS/PARTICIPANTS:
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