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# Self-Reflection of Service Learning Project.

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My community health experience this semester was very interesting and fulfilling. I was assigned to the Nursing Mentorship Program in P.S 184, a school located in Brownsville Brooklyn New York. This class contained students who has a parent or both parents incarcerated.

Objective 1:

Demonstrates individual professionalism through personal behaviors and appearance.

A full clinical day was dedicated with orienting us, the students with the tools necessary for a successful and meaningful nursing mentorship program in P.S 184. The mentorship program was a new concept of nursing for most of us. Playing the role of a mentor was introduced to the class in the form of role playing, discussion and viewing a video tape on social/emotional learning. An eclectic therapeutic approach to helping children with incarcerated parents. At the end of the session the role of nurse mentor was clearer to us and was ready to play this new and unique role. We had to be fingerprinted and screened by The New York City Board Of Education before we were cleared to participate in any activities in the school. It is one of the policies of the Board of Education to ensure the safety of the children under their care. Being a nurse, professional behavior and appearance is expected at all times in the place of practice. We were expected to appear for clinical rotation appropriately dressed and wearing the school identification card at all times while on the school property. We are aware of the school’s attendance and lateness policy as outlined in the nursing department’s guidelines. In the first meeting of the students, we presented introductory letters to the students, which explained the nurse mentor program to the guardians of the children. The following week, I completed the functional health pattern assessment screening tool with my mentee student. The instrument screened for all behaviors that affected the child’s health. The name of the child was not required, at the same time, is required to protect the information that was obtained from the student as set forth by the HIPAA privacy rule and the ethical and professional nursing code and standards of care for community based nursing. We are expected to report any inappropriate and potentially criminal behaviors to our clinical professor that was obtained from the students as we interviewed and interacted with them. We prepared and demonstrated acceptable forms of social and emotional behavioral patterns in the form of skits and other learning activities. We demonstrated and acted out aggressive, passive and assertive form of behaviors.

Objective 2:

Employ analytical and critical thinking skills when providing care to individuals and families in the community setting.

As the weeks went on, we continued to interview and interact with the mentee students to obtain information and to develop a trusting relationship with them. From the information gathered it was clear that some of the personal, educational and health patterns the students had developed needed to be modified for the students to have successful outcomes. A number of relevant topics were developed and presented to the students. Exercise and sleep patterns, healthy diet, decision making, self-esteem and basic safety issues. The lessons were presented to students as skits, demonstrations, and discussions.

Most of the students attended school without having breakfast in the morning, skipping the most important meal of the day. They preferred junk food than a balanced diet which included fruits and vegetables. My mentee student has a behavioral problem, for which he was prescribed medication to keep him under control. When he did not take his medication for any significant period of time, he became violent and unpredictable. His behavior is considered a safety issue for other students and himself. In-most cases he will be suspended for his actions and made to restart his medication before returning to school. When I inquire whether he took his medication before attending school in the morning, he says yes, as to say don’t ask. At this point, outside supervision is needed to assist him in compliance with his regimen. His behavior at home is not much different. His mother, who is head of his household, has very little influence on his behavior and his compliance with his medication therapy.

Objective 3:

Effectively communicate with diverse groups and disciplines using a variety of strategies regarding the health needs of individuals and families in the community setting.

The students in the fifth grade reading level is between 2nd and 3rd grade level. We therefore had to adjust and plan the instructions to suite the level of the students. My mentee student reads at a 2nd grade level. He is pulled out from the class daily for speech development. With this in mind, I communicate with him in a way he can understand and without belittling or embarrassing him. Many methods were used to communicate our message to them. Demonstrations and skits were most frequently used to explain concepts. Even though they had students who spoke other languages in the classroom, English is the dominant language used in the classroom. During class discussion, some of the students will appear to be shy and has to be called upon to answer or participate in the discussions.

Objective 4

Establish environment conducive to learn and use a plan for learners based on evidence based practice.

The group I was assigned to had to present to the both classes basic safety issues. After many discussions and researching safety issues among teens, we came up with bullying and cyber safety as viable topics. Bullying is a common and a serious issue between teens. Bulling has led to depression, suicide, and violence between the perpetrator and the target, in some cases. Strategies that will lead to successful outcomes in handling bullies and potential dehumanizing behavior was developed.

Most teens now has a smart phones with access to the internet. Others have established some type of social network accounts. Proper behavior when using the internet and protecting themselves in relationships and their identities from predators and hackers was developed for our presentation to the students.

Objective 5.

Utilizing informational technology when managing individuals and families in the community.

The internet is the fastest way to obtain information and it is used by most students today as a form of socializing through Face book, twitter, and Instagram. Awareness of internet safety a key concern of my group in its presentation to the students of P.S184. At the end of our presentation each student should:

1. Never give out personal details that would identify who they are, such as name, address, phone number, school or photograph.
2. Tell a parent or teacher if they see any bad language or pictures on the internet, or if anyone write them anything they don’t like.
3. Don’t reply to any messages or bulletin board items that are suggestive, obscene, aggressive, or distressing.
4. Don’t use bad language online, neither take part in arguments or fights online.
5. Don’t accept offers of money or presents, even free offers.
6. Don’t order anything online or give out credit card details.
7. Don’t enter chat rooms and websites that you have agreed with your parents are off limits.
8. Don’t arrange any face-to-face meetings with anyone you have met on the internet unless your parents consent and they accompany you.

Objective 6.

Demonstrate a commitment to professional development.

It is important that the community health nurse join professional organizations such as The New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA), other professional organizations such as The American Nurses Association, The National League For Nursing and subscribe to professional magazines and journals, participate in journal clubs to assist the nurse in keeping current with changes in the profession, participate in continued education classes and certifications like CPR, which is required every two years, Pediatric Advance Life Support(PALS) and Advance Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS). Most agencies offers paid time off for nurses to attend continued education classes and offer grand rounds learning opportunity sessions within the institution. The committed community health nurse is consistently in touch with the community based organizations and helping members of the community take advantage of the resources they offer for social development. The community health nurse is considered to be a community resource person who individuals look for help in the time of need and for guidance.

Objectives 7.

Incorporate professional nursing standards and accountability into practice.

The goal of the community health nurse is respect for the community in which they serve. Providing service with dignity, compassion, respect for culture to prevent injury and disease. The community health nurse is the advocate for the care of individuals, families, community and population. The nurse is aware of agency policies and procedures and is an agent of change for the best interest of the patient or community. The nurse lobbies the legislature for change and to secure resources for the health of community.

Objectives 8.

Collaborate with clients, significant support persons members of the health care team.

As the patient advocate the community health works with the multidisciplinary team to obtain resources to assist the client. My mentee student is diagnosed with behavioral problems, for which he is on medication. When he is not in compliant with his regimen he becomes violent and disruptive, which gets him suspended. This puts him at risk of falling through the cracks of the school system to the crime filled streets of Brownsville. He needs the intervention of other care teams to stop him from falling through the cracks of the school system. The services of the social worker or visiting nurse to make sure he takes his medication as he should, is needed. The services of a Child Psychologist, for counselling and other forms of behavioral therapy is also needed. Just suspension from school for his misbehavior is not helping him to improve his behavior, it is only helping to fall further behind in his education.

Objectives 9

Recognize the impact of economics, politics, social and demographic forces that affect the delivery of health care.

The behavioral problem puts my mentee student at risk for falling through the cracks of the school system to the crime filled streets of Brownsville Brooklyn. This highlights the inequity and disparity of the school and health care system in that particular area. Being a black male with a behavioral problem in Brownsville Brooklyn, all the help he can get for his problem from the school system is suspension. I have seen students with the same problem in the Village of North Valley Stream N.Y school system. The children in North Valley Stream is consistently under supervision of Guidance Counselors and school’s Psychologist in helping them to manage their behavioral problem. When there is a cut from classes, there is a follow up phone call from the guidance counselor to determine the reason for cutting. I guess schools in more affluent parts of Brooklyn treatment of children with the same behavioral problem is much different. When parents get involve and fight for better conditions for their children, there is always a better outcome. The lack of parental support and failure to get involved in organizations like the PTA and Community Advisory Board, and other political action committees leads to the reduced allocation of resources for services and cut of these services when there is budgetary cuts in the City. Poor communities like Brownsville and communities which are not properly represented, are always the first to see their services reduced or removed altogether.

Summary.

The Nursing Mentor Program in PS. 184 Brownsville has been very fulfilling to me. A big problem there is the lack of male role models in the community, especially being African-American. Statistics for that section of Brooklyn has shown that in the majority of homes, the male or father does not reside or is absent. The mother is in most cases the head of the house hold. The father does not man up and take responsible for his family. It is well known and documented how children feels when the father does not play a part in their lives. The President of the United States, Barrack Obama, expressed how angry he was because of the absence of his father from his life, in his call for volunteers to his mentor program. Brownsville is a neighborhood with disparity in almost every area. In health, the area is plagued with very high incidents of Diabetes, Hypertension, Asthma, Childhood obesity. In education, high drop-out rates from school, low graduation rate. In economics, low home ownership, low incomes and little opportunity for employment. The incidents for someone living with diabetes to die of the complications is very high. The incidents for a young black male going to prison for a long time for crack, a cheaper drug, is higher than it is for someone living in midtown Manhattan getting caught with more cocaine. The community health nurse working in Brownsville Brooklyn has a tremendous amount of work to educate the clients, advocate for resources and lobby for changes in policies to meet the health needs of the community. I appreciate greatly the role I can play and is playing as a nurse mentor in the life of a young black male surrounded by high crime and very little opportunities in his community and try to make a difference in his life.