

The Importance of Education about Incivility and Bullying in Undergraduate Nursing Programs

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Purpose:

Workplace violence, incivility and bullying in nursing is widespread and a serious issue. Nurses do not always recognize bullying behavior patterns or know what to do about them. The goal of this project was to assess student knowledge of bullying and provide evidence-based teaching on the topic.

Background:

There are different types of bullying: lateral, vertical and mob bullying. Bullying behavior can be overt or covert. Incivility and bullying affects not only the individual, but also has organizational consequences and a detrimental effect on nursing (Brunworth, 2015). Novice nurses and nursing students are particularly vulnerable to incivility and bullying. 78% of new nurses reported being bullied (Berry et al., 2012). 79% of nursing school graduates believe that nursing schools should provide training how to handle hostile work environment (Kaplan, n.d.).

Methods:

A literature review was conducted to provide evidence-based interventions to address bullying behavior. Prior to an oral presentation on the topic, students were asked to fill out a questionnaire to assess their knowledge of the topic. The oral presentation included strategies to address bullying (figure 1).

Results:

32 undergraduate nursing students filled out the questionnaire assessing their knowledge of bullying. 92.8% reported observing friends or colleagues who have been bullied while in nursing school. 28.8% indicated they were bullied in nursing school and 34% were bullied during their clinical experiences. Only 9.6% reported feeling comfortable addressing bullying. 57.6% of students did not know necessary steps in how to address bullying. Informal feedback from students on the teaching was very positive.

Discussion:

Many students have either witnessed bullying or have themselves been bullied in nursing school. There is a need to introduce incivility and bullying education proactively and early. Multicomponent intervention strategies such as information sharing, skill application, and reflective process can help students to develop strategies to recognize and combat incivility and bullying while in nursing school and after graduation (Sidhu & Park, 2018, Olsen et al, 2020).

References

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Education about incivility and bullying alters students experiences of incivility and bullying while in nursing school and after graduation



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How to manage bullying



<https://pixabay.com/en/fear-syringe-nurse-funny-health-1180118/>

What steps to take:

1. Recognize that you are a victim/mentally separate yourself from bully/practice selfcare/build resilience and self-esteem
2. Speak up and confront the bully
3. Report to your manager/HR/other

Figure 1: One of the slides from the presentation to students