An Innovative Strategy for Community Nursing Student Simulation Experiences

Simulations have demonstrated effectiveness in educating nursing students about patient-centered concepts through various objectives that focus on enhancing knowledge, refining skills, improving self-confidence, and promoting critical thinking (Gore & Thomson, 2016; Jarvill et al., 2018). However, many nursing schools have simulation laboratories that concentrate on acute care needs for hospitalized patients, making it difficult for community nursing students to engage in simulations. The development of a home care simulation laboratory is an innovative strategy that can be used to enhance knowledge and learning needs of community nursing students.

Method

The director of the school of nursing was approached by the community course coordinator to request space to develop a home care simulation laboratory. After approval was granted, two neighboring vacant faculty offices were transformed into a client’s apartment, with one office serving as the kitchen and laundry room, and the other office becoming a living room and bedroom. A total of $51 was spent at garage sales by a faculty member to purchase a stove, refrigerator, and washer. A dryer, rocking chair, television, lamps, rugs, paintings, bedding, and a Ficus tree were donated by various faculty members within the school. A desk was uniquely converted into a client’s bed with use of blankets and pillows. Additionally, empty jars, food boxes, and medication bottles were collected to stock the rooms for a more realistic environment.

The home care simulation case study used was designed to meet the following student objectives:

- Demonstrate a welcoming, safe, and professional working environment.
- Implement patient safety measures.
- Demonstrate therapeutic communication.
- Perform accurate physical assessment.
- Perform accurate wound care procedure.
- Implement patient education using evidence-based practice.
- Demonstrate procedure for a home care visit.
- Identify appropriate referrals.

Clinical faculty members were used to portray the role of the client for a more authentic, real-life patient encounter. Prior to the simulation, students prepared for the visit by reading the client intake form and gathering needed supplies. During the simulation, students implemented patient safety and practiced therapeutic communication while demonstrating physical assessment and wound care skills. Students documented findings at the end of the simulation and participated in a debriefing session in which they reflected about patient goals, priorities, the home care process, necessary patient referrals, and overall experience.

Results and Conclusion

The first home care simulation included 30 community nursing students in February 2018 and revealed an overwhelmingly positive response. All 30 students evaluated the home care simulation experience as part of the course, with 29 indicating the simulation was an effective method of learning about home care. Comments, printed with permission, included:

- I learned and realized that in contrast to “floor nursing,” home care nurses have a far greater sense of autonomy, and perhaps even a greater opportunity to facilitate patient recovery and patient health via making meaningful clinical judgements and health care decisions in conjunction with the patient.
- It was realistic with the fridge and washers.
- I believe the simulation was very accurate.
- The home care simulation was a very effective way to learn about home care… It allowed students to learn about the subject in an environment where mistakes are okay and questions could be asked.

This home care simulation laboratory provided an effective and economical method of enhancing the students’ knowledge of the home health care setting. In the future, the use of this home care simulation laboratory can cross multiple nursing courses and incorporate an interdisciplinary health care experience, in which students from social work, nutrition, counseling, speech, physical therapy, and occupational therapy can work together as part of a patient-centered team. Truly, the prospects of this home care simulation laboratory are limited only by one’s imagination.

References


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