

Providing Support to the Nurse: Advanced Issues in Nurse-Patient Relationships

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Background

Traditionally, most scientific and professional attention has focused on enhancing quality of care for patients, but more recently, the well-being of nurses in the workplace also is being examined. The therapeutic encounter, between nurse and patient, takes place in stressful, time-limited situations with scarce resources. Nurses' experiences of these encounters are multifaceted and composed of emotional, cognitive, behavioral, cultural, and ethical aspects; and these experiences have implications for nurses' professional as well as personal life domains.

Course objectives

In this course we will review and discuss:

- Theoretical and clinical aspects of nurse-patient relationships' implications for nurses' professional and personal life domains.
- Sensitive and 'unspoken' struggles in the therapeutic encounter and ways that nurses cope with them.

Learning methods

Learning methods will be lectures, creative classroom-based exercises, students' presentations in class, and class discussions.

Course schedule

The course will address the following topics:

- Diverse implications of the therapeutic encounter on healthcare professionals (e.g., secondary trauma; compassion fatigue; moral distress; emotional labor, and vicarious posttraumatic growth).
- Impact of nurses' work on their function at home and on their relationships in both the work and home environments.
- When the patient's and nurse's life spans meet: Nurses experience of patients' stories of illness.
- Nurses' encounter with specific sensitive topics in their interaction with patients (e.g., breaking bad news; caring for dying patients; treating victims of trauma and abuse).
- Coping with patients' aggression and its impact on nurses
- Bullying among nurses.
- Using personal resources and self-care.

Assignments

Assignments will include reflective students' writings on their own practice experiences, readings, and a class presentation.

- In-Class Assignment: Provide a 20-minute Powerpoint presentation and Lead a 10 minute discussion on one of the topics specified in the course schedule (or another related topic) (40%)
- Written Assignment: Write a five-page paper, elaborating on the topic presented in class (or a different selected topic) (50%)
- Active participation in class (10%)

Recommended Readings

- Arnold, D., Calhoun, L., Tedeschi, R., & Cann, A. (2005). Vicarious posttraumatic growth in psychotherapists. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 45*, 239-263. doi:10.1177/0022167805274729
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- Goldblatt, H., Buchbinder, E., Eisikovits, Z., & Arizon-Messinger, I. (2009). Between the professional and private: The meaning of working with intimate partner violence in social workers' private lives. *Violence Against Women*, 15, 362-384. doi:10.1177/1077801208330436
- Hägglom, A. M. E., & Möller, A. R. (2006). On a life-saving mission: Nurses' willingness to encounter with intimate partner abuse. *Qualitative Health Research*, 16, 1075-1090. doi:10.1177/1049732306292086
- Halpern, J., Gurevich, M., Schwartz, B., & Brazeau., P. (2009). Intervention for critical incident stress in emergency medical services: A qualitative study. *Stress and Health*, 25, 139-149. doi:10.1002/smi.1230
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