

Practice Summary Paper

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Growing up my mother would take me to work with her, until my dad could come pick me up. She was a licensed practical nurse (LPN) at a local hospital. I enjoyed seeing and meeting the families in the waiting rooms and giving the kids who visited coloring supplies. Throughout the years I saw her interact with families and patients and realized how important her position was. I joined the program as a student nurse with no prior medical experience. My original goal was to provide the best care I could to my patients and be the support they needed, just like my mom. Throughout this program, I have learned that there are many patients needs and sometimes what is needed is not always wanted. I now understand the role and full scope of a registered nurse (RN). This degree is a stepping stone to a bigger desire of mine, to become a nurse practitioner (NP). I believe that this degree has deepened my understanding of nursing and the complexity of care that can be provided.

Analysis

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is an important part of nursing. Being able to decide what information is relevant and what actions need to be taken is necessary when providing the best care. During my program I have had many assignments that have focused on critical thinking. Before I did these assignments, I thought critical thinking was just someone using common sense. One assignment that I did really made me change my mind about critical thinking. I did a discussion board over an article describing a clinical situation and the critical thinking that took place during each step. Reading this article and thinking through the clinical situation made me realize that it was not just common sense. Critical thinking involved viewing an entire situation and applying the knowledge learned to the situation while implementing the necessary interventions.

Nursing Practice

Evidence-based practice is a goal of every facility in healthcare. Nursing practice is guided by evidence-based practice. During my program I created a pamphlet that addressed an evidence-based practice in nursing. I researched the reasons behind the practice and the statistics that supported the practice. The project helped me understand the way nursing practice comes to be. I used the practice I researched on a daily basis in the care I provided to my patients. Understanding the reasons behind the care that nurses provides has guided the care I provide to my patients.

Communication

Communication can be performed in many ways. Nonverbal communication is key in nursing. Often nurses need to engage with a patient and gain their trust quickly. During my program I created a project on my professional image of a nurse. This led me to look at not only the verbal communication but also the nonverbal communication. The manner in which I walk, sit, cross my arms, wear my clothes, and much more are all ways of communicating with someone. Creating this project allowed me to explore how this type of communication can affect the relationship with a patient. I now am more careful about the nonverbal communication that I present when I am in contact with a patient or their family.

Teaching

Education of patients and staff is important in the healthcare field. Nurses provide education to their patients frequently. Providing patients with brochures and booklets to describe their disease and medications is common among nurses. During my classes I performed a project in education of nurses. The education project performed was to assess and educate the nurses about diabetic care, focusing on differences in type 1 and type 2 diabetics. While

teaching the nurses about diabetic care I realized the amount of time needed to form an education plan and implement it properly. Creating an education plan and deciding what type of education will be most beneficial for the group being educated was difficult. I learned that educating a group of people on a subject requires more than just knowledge of the subject. Learning the methods by which the group learns best and acquiring the time and place for the education requires collaboration with many other people.

Research

Research is important in providing care to patients. Nurses often follow a type of research called evidence-based research. Each time an intervention or plan is put into place it must be evaluated. During my classes I implemented a teaching program. Research was performed on the nurses to determine the way they learned and the knowledge they had on diabetic care. After surveying the nurses, I had to develop a plan based on the answers they gave. Deciding which way to provide education to the nurses was difficult based on the research of their learning styles. Implementing education in each learning style would be difficult, combining the learning styles would be best. I learned that research is necessary for implementation of everything. Understanding the why and how are important in obtaining the desired outcome.

Leadership

Leadership is an important quality to have. When thinking about leaders' certain roles come to mind. Throughout my program I have come to realize that everyone can be a leader. I created a policy brief to submit to a representative of my choosing. This allowed me the opportunity to take on a leadership role and advocate for an issue that I believed needed attention. Advocating for patients is apart of leadership, often they can not advocate for

themselves. This project helped me understand that although I am only a nurse, I can make changes and speak on topics that I believe need to be addressed even though my position may be lower in the chain of command than someone else.

Professionalism

Performing interventions in nursing requires a sense of morality and ethics. Professionalism is being able to use a set of ethics and morality while providing care. While writing a paper on my personal philosophy of nursing I described an incident that I witnessed while in clinicals, as a student nurse. A provider wanted to change a wound dressing of a patient. The patient was capable of making decisions and stated “No”. The provider proceeded to gather two nurses from the unit and have them hold her down to change the dressing. Professionally, this was an unethical intervention that harmed the trust between the staff and the patient. Also, this situation was then reported to the board of directors at the facility for being unethical. Reflecting on this incident, I now have a better understanding of how to conduct proper interventions that do not violate the patients I care for.

Culture

Nursing has provided me many opportunities to communicate with patients of different cultures. While writing a paper on my personal philosophy of nursing I reflected on a situation where I was unsure of how to care for a client of another culture. I was a nursing student in clinicals at the time and I was providing care to young Muslim woman. Her father was at the bedside answering questions and making decisions for her care. I knew that this was part of their culture and did not want to disrespect their culture. During this time, I contacted a nurse on the unit because I was concerned that I might be neglecting the patient’s wishes by accepting her father as her decision maker. The nurse and I came up with a respectful way to clarify the

situation with the patient and her father. I spoke with them about their cultural wishes that would affect the care being provided. I asked “Who I should contact for decisions in care of the patient”? The father answered that he would be the decision maker and I explained that I needed to hear his daughter say this just for safety. No disrespect was shown in this situation and the patient and family were very receptive and understanding. I learned that although it may be awkward to ask these questions, they are necessary and can be asked in a respectful manner.

Appraisal and Summary

During my classes I learned different topics than I believed were needed. I believed nursing was critical thinking and skill application. Throughout the program I learned that the theories, research, education, and much more are all a necessary part of understanding the full role of a nurse. The many roles a nurse plays are critical in the chain of care. Floor nurses, clinic nurses, nurse educators, nurse researchers, nurse supervisors, and nurse managers are all apart of the care that the patient receives. I now feel comfortable in all my roles as a nurse and am able to engage in them all equally.

Learning about the different nursing theories throughout this program has expanded my thoughts on caring for patients. Originally, I was nervous of personally connecting with patients and dealing with the emotional issues they might have. My personality has never been to protect someone from the truth of the situation. While exploring these theories I have come to understand the role I have as a nurse on patient’s psychological wellbeing. Connecting with my patients gives me a better opportunity to care for them in a manner that is worth more than just making them physically healthy. I now can provide complete holistic care to my patients.

Before this program I was a newly graduated nurse with minimal experience in the healthcare field. Taking the course that I did have helped me understand the why behind a lot of

interventions that are offered to the patients. Also, I know understand the objectives and actions of my superior nurses more. I now connect with my patients on a different level and make a point to learn about their life not just their illness. Making these connections often enhances the desired outcomes and decreases the time they dwell on their hospital stay.

Conclusion

Being a nurse has been a dream of mine since I was little. Watching my mom at the hospital guided me to that decision. Throughout my bachelors' program I have learned the theories and roles that a nurse can use to enhance the care provided. Critical thinking, nursing practice, communication, teaching, research, leadership, professionalism, and culture, are the core competencies of my program. I have learned how to apply each of these to my nursing and integrate them into my care plans for my patients. I look forward to creating an environment with my patients that exudes trust, care, empathy, and dedication.