

Submission title:

An evaluation of the benefits of an introduction of sexual health awareness to a mental health nursing programme

Abstract:

An evaluation of the benefits of an introduction of sexual health awareness to a mental health nursing programme

An evaluation of student opinion was undertaken following the introduction of specifically designed sexual health sessions within the undergraduate mental health nursing programme.

Datillo and Brewer (2005) state that whilst sexual health information is deemed important there is a dearth of evidence to support that this aspect is addressed in undergraduate nursing programmes and in particular the field of mental health. Buehler, 2014, identified that although Sexual issues frequently arise in practice, most mental health professionals are uncomfortable and poorly equipped to address them. This is echoed in the findings of Higgins, Barker and Begley (2006) who go so far as to suggest that the providers of nursing education actually reinforce the lack of acknowledgment around sexual health by simply not teaching it, in addition, Astbury-Ward (2011) simply state that student nurses are being let down due to the non-existent exposure to sexual health matters during their course.

The intention of this evaluation is to present the findings to enhance the body of evidence by providing an overview of the project aims, outcomes, student views and subsequent recommendations.

A group of 2nd year mental health nursing students were invited to attend an evaluative group to discuss their views on the value of the sexual health sessions delivered. This was important to gain an insight on the student's perceived impact of this learning and preparation for their future practice placements.

The presentation will focus on the process of gathering student opinion and evaluating them in conjunction with the relevant literature. Recommendations on how this information will inform future curricular development within the mental health nursing team will be discussed. To conclude, a personal reflection incorporating the challenges and benefits of undertaking this valuable project will be provided.

This evaluative project was part of the final module for the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

- Astbury-Ward, E. (2011). A questionnaire survey of the provision of training in human sexuality in schools of nursing in the UK. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, 26(3), pp.254-270.
- Buehler, S. (2014). *What Every Mental Health Professional Needs to Know About Sex*. New York: Springer Publishing Company, LLC.
- Dattilo, J. and Brewer, K. (2005). Assessing Clients' Sexual Health as a Component of Holistic Nursing Practice: Senior Nursing Students Share Their Experiences. *Journal of Holistic Nursing*, 23(2), pp.208-219.
- Higgins, A., Barker, P. and Begley, C. (2006). Sexuality: The challenge to espoused holistic care. *International Journal of Nursing Practice*, 12(6), pp.345-351

