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TITLE: A new step in the routine: Perceptions of baccalaureate student nurses about setting an intention before patient care activities in a nursing skills lab.

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Background

Brief “mindfulness” techniques before patient care interventions have been found to improve patient and nurse experiences (Creswell et al., 2014; Horner et al., 2014; VaderRief et al., 2015). Building upon this evidence, nurse educators taught student nurses “setting an intention” as part of initial steps for patient care skills.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to describe student nurse perceptions of learning a brief mindfulness intervention “setting an intention” prior to engaging in patient care activities in a skills lab setting during the junior year of a baccalaureate nursing program.

Design & Methods

Design: This research is a descriptive, qualitative survey.

Method: An anonymous paper survey was distributed to student nurses in a nursing skills lab after they were instructed about setting an intention and had the opportunity to implement this strategy during a nursing skills demonstration in the lab. Student nurses were asked to describe “setting an intention,” how they felt about this intervention, how it may have impacted the performance of a skill in lab, and other comments or experiences about “setting an intention.” The researchers analyzed the surveys to identify common themes.

Findings

Many student nurses reported that “setting an intention” resulted in benefits for themselves such as increased calmness and focus. Some felt this improved their performance of a skill demonstration in a nursing lab setting. The process described by students included relaxation techniques and mindfulness or focusing techniques as prerequisite steps toward “setting an intention.” A small number of students expressed lack of interest in this intervention. A few students mentioned positive perceptions of “setting an intention” in the care of actual patients in clinical settings.

Conclusions & Implications

The results of this study suggest that student nurses perceive benefits of “setting an intention” in a skills lab setting, and that this practice may fit well with initial steps such as performing hand hygiene, and providing privacy before procedures. Nurse educators may help students manage stress and perform more confidently in the skills lab by teaching strategies for “setting an intention” before skills demonstrations. Further research is needed to study student nurse perceptions of “setting an intention” in the clinical setting and to explore reasons why some students did not have interest in this practice.

References

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