

Service Learning and RN to BSN Students: Understanding Vulnerable Populations

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PRESENTATION FORMAT: 15 minute oral presentation

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Public Health Professionals, Educators, Nurses, Community Health Organizations

ABSTRACT: Problem/Context: Nurses today are challenged to contribute to improving patient outcomes while managing costs. Nurses are required to have a broader knowledge base which goes beyond technological competence, to include abilities in leadership, health policy, system improvement, research and evidence-based practice, teamwork and collaboration (Institute of Medicine [IOM], 2011). In addition to a broad base of knowledge, competency in areas such as public health with a greater orientation to community-based primary care and an emphasis on health promotion are essential (IOM, 2011).

Approach to Solving the Problem: The experiential learning component of the Linfield RN to BSN program has been re-designed to include a service learning experience in the community. Students are now engaged in leadership experiences in a variety of community-based settings that emphasize health promotion and disease prevention for vulnerable members of the community.

Summary: Several studies have addressed service learning in nursing education; however, a gap in the literature exists related to the impact of service learning on RN to BSN students. A qualitative study was designed to examine the concepts that RN to BSN students identified as applicable to their nursing practice and to explore how students described the influence that service learning had on their leadership skills and knowledge of vulnerable populations. The findings from the study will be shared with the audience.

OBJECTIVE(S): Participants will describe the impact that the service learning experience had on RN to BSN student's related to leadership and working with vulnerable populations.

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