INTRODUCING SIMULATION BASED PEDAGOGY FOR MENTAL HEALTH NURSING STUDENTS

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BACKGROUND

- Simulation is used as a pedagogy to mimic real-life experiences by incorporating interactive learning activities. It supplements traditional teaching methods, enabling mental health nursing students to develop professional competency without endangering or harming service users[2].

- Mental health nursing students gain the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values required to become competent professional nurses through clinical placements[4].

- National quality clinical learning environment audits[7] and feedback from mental health nursing students confirmed exceptional acuity levels in acute mental health settings, leading to feeling overwhelmed and unprepared to deal with clinical challenges[1].

AIM OF THE PROJECT

To introduce and evaluate simulation-based pedagogy (SBP) for mental health nursing students to enhance their learning experience.

METHODOLOGY

- The **'People's needs defining change'** model[5] is a Health Services Change framework that guides the quality initiative process, and this model was used for this organizational development project.

- The model guides change activities such as *defining* what needs to change, clarifying the "why", *designing* a better future with all stakeholders involved, and *delivering* and maintaining the change.

- Effective communication skills were used to collaborate with the relevant stakeholders to implement the SBP.

- 40 mental health nursing students participated

- Two half-day sessions of SBP was facilitated

- Four scenarios were identified and used in SBP

- Students' engagement with standardised patients (trained individuals who accurately portray patients with medical or health conditions).

- Post-intervention survey was conducted through Survey Monkey.

RESULTS

- The quality initiative / organisational development project was relevant and beneficial to the service

- Helped in the professional and personal development of the author

- Responses from the participants revealed:
  - Overall satisfaction with SBP
  - The simulation scenarios and the exercise were relevant to their nursing practice and acknowledged that the experience had impacted their confidence, therapeutic communication, and assessment skills.
  - Two of the respondents indicated "more time is needed."
  - One of the responders stated, "SBP is strongly recommended before allocating students to placements."

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- By applying SBP, nursing students can deal with uncomfortable issues like depression, suicide risk, sexuality, and challenging patients and family members.

- Beyond training, SBP may provide indirect ways to improve safety.

- SBP improves clinician education and training by focusing on conceptual knowledge, fundamental skills, and clinical task performance[3].

- The long-term impacts of SBP on the diverse viewpoints of healthcare organisations need to be studied, and further research on SBP is recommended.

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