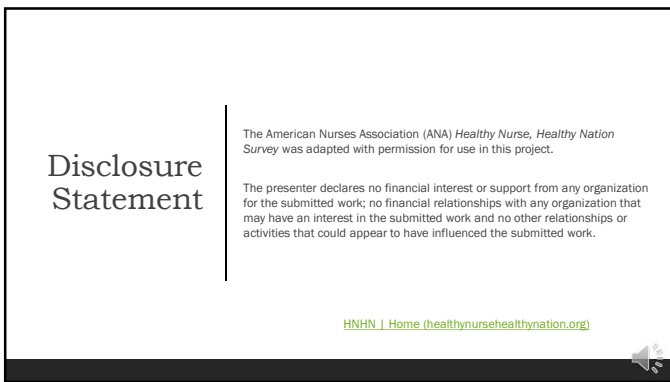


An Interdisciplinary Approach to Promote Self-Care and Wellness for Undergraduate Nursing Students

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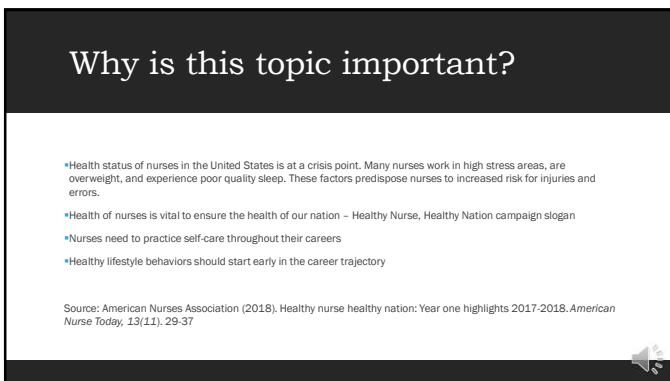


Disclosure Statement

The American Nurses Association (ANA) *Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation* Survey was adapted with permission for use in this project.

The presenter declares no financial interest or support from any organization for the submitted work; no financial relationships with any organization that may have an interest in the submitted work and no other relationships or activities that could appear to have influenced the submitted work.

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Why is this topic important?

- Health status of nurses in the United States is at a crisis point. Many nurses work in high stress areas, are overweight, and experience poor quality sleep. These factors predispose nurses to increased risk for injuries and errors.
- Health of nurses is vital to ensure the health of our nation - Healthy Nurse, Healthy Nation campaign slogan
- Nurses need to practice self-care throughout their careers
- Healthy lifestyle behaviors should start early in the career trajectory

Source: American Nurses Association (2018). Healthy nurse healthy nation: Year one highlights 2017-2018. *American Nurse Today*, 13(11), 29-37

Wellness Program for Nursing Students Pilot Program

Pre and Post Assessment of Wellness

Adapted version of ANA HNHN Survey was used for the assessment of wellness

Physiological Assessment included: BMI, BP, waist and hip measurements, body fat percentile, and one-minute push-up and sit-up tests

Baseline assessment was completed with a 15- week follow-up assessment

Emphasis was placed on 5 Domains

- Physical activity
- Sleep
- Nutrition
- Quality of Life
- Safety

Participants & Collaborators

4th semester senior pre-licensure nursing students enrolled in a community health course (n = 27)

Mostly female

Caucasian

Early 20s age demographic

Rural setting

- Nursing Faculty
- Health Promotion Faculty
- 2 Health Promotion graduate students
- 2 Dietician graduate students
- 1 campus licensed professional counselor
- Student Recreation Center staff
- Student Aquatic Center staff
- Fitness trainers

Quantitative Results

No statistical differences in pre/post survey responses

No statistical differences in physiologic metrics but there were individual student improvements (BP and weight loss)

Qualitative Results

- Increased student empathy of the difficulty experienced with behavior change
- Increased motivation for healthier lifestyle choices
- Increased recognition that healthier behaviors can be easy and affordable
- Increased awareness of health promotion techniques to integrate into patient/client education
- Nvivo Pro 12 software was used to analyze the qualitative data

Weekly Journal Prompts to Generate Qualitative Data

- How are you applying or integrating the HNHN Wellness Project information into your weekly routine?
- How are you using the information with the clients you provide care for during your weekly clinical experiences?

Emotional Responses

- Many students experienced an initial emotional response to the wellness program that was **NEGATIVE**
- Feelings of inadequacy
- Disappointment in their current physical condition
- Recognition of lack of self-care in their lives
- Frustration with managing their time
- Reports of excessive stress related to academic workload and jobs

"I know I am fat. I should be eating meals and healthy ones. I know I used to exercise more. I personally feel like it is just not possible for me to work out when there is so much to do already, mostly paperwork."

"Exercise, I do not feel I have much time for. There are too many papers, projects, quizzes, case studies, and just a bunch of busy work to try and get exercise in."

"My roommates and I currently have no groceries in our house to make our own food, so it's easy for me to resort to eating fast food. This is something I am trying to work on."

"I have been really busy and find myself thinking that I will get more serious about fitness once classes are done, but I know that there will always be excuses."

Emotional Responses

- As the program unfolded over the semester, the emotional responses of students became more **POSITIVE**
- Increased awareness of their personal lifestyle behaviors
- Began to experience the benefits of small changes gradually
- Recognized and acknowledged that tomorrow is another day to do better

"I have begun to think about different ways in which I can be taking care of myself better. This project has definitely made me more aware of how I care for myself and prepare to take care of others."


"I am really taking the initiative to help my body and mind this semester by eating healthier and getting more exercise. I have noticed that after a long day at clinical I am very tired, however, after a hard one-hour workout I get enough energy to go home and finish homework. This shows me firsthand how beneficial working out is both on the body and the mind."



Nutritional Strategies

- Calorie counts through use of phone apps
- Healthy recipes
- Meal prepping
- Decreased portion sizes
- Experimenting with "healthy" snacks
- Trying specific diets (Mediterranean, Intermittent fasting)
- Healthier food choices when eating out


- *"I meal prepped my food by cooking my lunches and dinners for the week. This ensures that I have a healthy meal to eat despite my busy schedule."*
- *"I have given up soft drinks and sweet beverages in favor of water, and I have been trying to drink nearly a gallon of water daily."*
- *"I have been trying to not snack throughout the day and not eat late at night."*
- *"Even when going out to eat, I chose healthier options, such as grilled chicken rather than pasta."*



Physical Activity Strategies


- Tracking/recording of physical activity
- Purposeful pursuit of physical activity (walking the dog, taking the steps versus the elevator, parking further away from the building)
- Partnering with friends/roommates for accountability
- Use of technology for motivation and fun (phone apps, Wii fit, Kinect Xbox)

- *"I have been trying to keep track of how many steps I take each day and challenge myself to exceed the previous day's steps each day if I can."*
- *"I feel myself with much more energies throughout the day when I make time for working out."*
- *"I went on a walk with a friend and plan to make that happen more regularly. Walking is a great way to exercise and also have time to catch up with a friend."*



Application to Clients in the Clinical Setting

- Greater empathy toward clients who are trying to make behavior/lifestyle changes
- Recognition of the role of stress and its impact on motivation
- Personal health status influences student nurse performance
- Becoming healthier is an ongoing journey and requires encouragement and support




"It is important for nurses to be healthy because if we can't take care of ourselves, we shouldn't be taking care of other people."

"Since I am participating in a healthier lifestyle, I feel that I can relate better to the struggle that my patients face when trying to do the same."

"I can provide better care for my patients when I feel better."

"I gained insight into the fact that it is not easy to maintain exercise and proper eating habits all the time, which allows me to really understand the room for grace with patients which a lot of time, I fail to do."

"It is important for me to continually encourage myself and my clients to engage in healthier lifestyles."



Surprises

- Few students mentioned the importance of sleep or strategies to improve the quantity and quality of sleep
- Stress management activities were rarely mentioned (yoga, meditation, music therapy)
- Stress in the clinical environment was not mentioned as it relates to personal safety and/or bullying
- Unhealthy behaviors tended to be minimized (ETOH, binge eating on weekends)
- This program was designed to provide strategies and opportunities for implementation NOW; some students indicated they were too busy now and would focus on the strategies in the FUTURE (after graduation)
- Student preceptors were mentioned as having an influence on whether the student embraced the program

- *"My preceptor today was an excellent role model. During our lunch break, we walked a mile around the parking lot. She says she does this every day."*
- *"The nurse I was with today said that many nurses take to food to cope with stress at work."*
- *"I think it is the great deal of stress nurses are in that result in them not making their health a priority."*

Implications for Nursing Education

Self-care and wellness initiatives resonate with nursing students.

Provision of content and resources to students through interdisciplinary education is relatively easy and inexpensive.

Wellness projects can influence student knowledge, behavior, and attitudes not only in their own self-care, but the care they provide to clients in the clinical setting.

Clinical preceptors influence students; it may be beneficial to engage preceptors in the design and implementation of future programs.

Integration of a wellness program across the entire curriculum may produce greater impact.

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