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Mentoring an RN-BSN Student in Palliative Care Research

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Background

Palliative care's research base is expanding. Mentoring nurses addresses a critical need to expand knowledge and provide evidence-based care to seriously-ill patients and their families (1) and involving undergraduate nursing students in the research process can improve professional capacity (2). This semester-long project provides an immersive experience for an RN-BSN student to serve as a research assistant (RA) on a currently in-progress qualitative study. This study is exploring what services family members who lost a loved one in a cardiac adult intensive care unit (ICU) would find helpful from an ICU bereavement program.

Objectives

By the end of the project, the student RA will:

- 1 Develop knowledge about palliative care and the qualitative research process
- 2 Apply qualitative data analysis skills to interview transcripts and participate in developing findings
- 3 Enhance written and oral presentation abilities

Procedure

Interested RN-BSN students applied for the RA position and were reviewed by a group of faculty. The selected RA will complete up to 70 hours of experience over the course of the Spring semester 2018, taking an active role in recruitment, participant interviews, coding and analyzing data, presentations, and publication. The RA completed two online courses to gain knowledge in palliative care:

1. CSU Institute for Palliative Care's *What Every Health Professional Needs to Know about Palliative Care*
2. End-of-life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC)'s *Critical Care Curriculum*

To gain hands-on experience with qualitative data analysis, the RA worked with the faculty mentor on coding ten interview transcripts after completing training modules for NVivo 12, qualitative data analysis software.

The RA will have the opportunity to present a poster on the project and work with the researchers on a manuscript for publication.

Practice Coding*

I liked that the nurse told us what to expect. We didn't leave the hospital with questions. We knew what could be done was done.

You just keep thinking back and wondering if the right thing was done. And that's really hard.

It's helpful to know that you're not alone and that other people are feeling maybe the same thing.

Yeah, if the social worker could follow up and ask, "How are you?" That would really help to process what happened.

*Quotes were altered from original interviews.

Evaluation

Mid-project, the RA identified value in the immersive experience:

"I am able to go a step further and experience the practical application of what I'm learning. As a tactile learner, I think this is the ultimate learning tool!"

"I'm witnessing the process from the very beginning; I'm processing data and helping to make quantifiable meaning of life experience."

"This experience has given me a complete insider's tour of research in real time."

At the end, the RA will complete the Mentorship Effectiveness Scale to evaluate their mentoring experience (3).

Acknowledgment

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References

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