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INTEGRATION OF END OF LIFE CARE OF MILITARY MEMBERS AND VETERANS INTO A BACCALAUREATE NURSING CONCEPTS COURSE

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Statement of the Problem: Military members and Veterans have a unique end-of-life issue which impact and often complicates grief and bereavement. It is imperative that nursing faculty train and develop nursing students to meet the needs facing our nation as current conflicts draw down, our nation's Heroes return to their hometown, and ultimately faces end-of-life issues. The specific war (Vietnam, WWII, Korea, Gulf War, OEF/OIF) and perceived acknowledgement by the healthcare professional can impact the Veteran and/or caregiver's sense of pride and shame; impacting their sense of grief/ bereavement. The grief experience may be impacted if death is experienced as a result of injury or loss associated with Veteran military service. Health care providers and nursing students need to have a fundamental understanding about nursing care of these military members/ Veterans and family members/ caregivers, to effectively recognize emotional, physical and spiritual conditions and develop nursing interventions that positively impact end-of-life outcomes. The purpose is to describe the infusion of unique Veteran-specific end-of-life concepts in addition to existing grief, loss and bereavement content in a baccalaureate nursing program. The need to incorporate a specific Veteran focus stems from a high percentage of Veterans living in the surrounding area(s) of our State land-grant university.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: A mixed method research design, comprised of pre- and post -test survey results, assessing student perspective of the holistic impact of end-of-life care (emotional, social, and spiritual injuries) sustained by Veterans will be used. A video by Deborah Grassman entitled "Wounded Warriors: Their Last Battle" will be also be utilized to solicit qualitative perspectives and spearhead dialogue from the student perspectives.

Findings: Qualitative and quantitative findings will be shared with the 91 students participating in the concepts course.

Conclusion & Significance: End-of-life care as applied to nursing education will be discussed.

Biography

Libba Reed McMillan has been at Auburn University since 2008, and currently is an Associate Professor. She has over 33 years of diverse nursing experience. Her research interests include program evaluation, and military/veteran health: wounded warrior competency development, and community and family transition. She has served as Co-Primary Investigator for PROJECT SERVE (Student Education Related to Veteran Experiences) developing an elective for AU School of Nursing students. This experience is located at Walter Reed National Military Medical Centre (Bethesda, MD) teaching students nursing care of wounded warriors transitioning from acute to chronic healthcare systems. Dr. McMillan is a frequent podium and poster presenter at national and international conferences on topics related to Veteran health, critical thinking and patient safety.

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