

CHAPTER NINE: TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

Practical Application: Book Activity

Practical Application

Setting the Scene

Stressful time often denotes being bombarded with many things at one time, perceived or actual, without sufficient time or ability to address them emotionally, cognitively, spiritually, and/or physically. The same goes for trauma — rapid exposure to numerous traumas one after another lessens one's ability to process the event before the next onslaught. This creates a cumulative effect, making it more difficult to heal from any singular trauma.

Think About It

Imagine an event that was particularly stressful (but not traumatic) in your life. Revisit this period as an observer watching the events unfold.

1. What made this event particularly stressful? Was it difficult to manage one situation before another circumstance came along demanding your time?
2. How did you process the event? What were the resources you used? Did you learn anything from processing it?
3. Are there any tools you'd use to process similar situations moving forward?
4. Suppose in your work area you were exposed to multiple poor patient outcomes over several days.
 - a. How do you think this situation might impact you and your role as a nurse?
 - b. Would you be able to use some of these same resources that you used to process your stressful event? Why or why not?

Practical Application: Additional Guidance

Exercise Title

Reflecting on Stressful Events and Building Resilience Application Practice

Objectives

- Understanding Stress and Trauma:
 - Explore the impact of cumulative stress and rapid exposure to trauma.
 - Recognize the challenges of healing from singular traumatic events.
- Personal Reflection:
 - Identify coping strategies and resources used during a stressful time.
- Professional Application:
 - Apply personal insights to the nursing role.
 - Consider resilience-building tools for managing work-related stress.

Preparing for the Exercise

- **Setting the Scene:**
 - Discuss the concept of cumulative stress and its parallels with trauma.
 - Emphasize the importance of processing events effectively.
- **Reflective Practice:**
 - Encourage students to choose a specific stressful event from their lives.
 - Remind them to observe the events as an objective observer.

Exercise Components

1. Personal Reflection (30 minutes):
 - a. Answer the following questions:
 - i. What made the chosen event particularly stressful?
 - ii. Was it challenging to manage multiple situations demanding your attention?
 - iii. How did you process the event? What coping mechanisms or resources did you use?
 - iv. Did you learn anything from this experience?
2. Workplace Scenario (45 minutes):
 - a. Imagine exposure to multiple poor patient outcomes over several days.
 - b. Discuss potential impacts on your well-being and nursing role.

- c. Consider whether the same coping resources would apply in this professional context.\
3. Resilience-Building Discussion (20 minutes):
- a. Explore tools for resilience:
 - i. **Self-Care:** Prioritize physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.
 - ii. **Support Networks:** Connect with colleagues, mentors, and friends.
 - iii. **Mindfulness Practices:** Ground yourself in the present moment.
 - iv. **Professional Boundaries:** Set limits to prevent emotional overload.

Evaluation and Assessment

- Assess students' reflections, depth of insight, and ability to apply personal experiences to professional contexts.

Integration into Curriculum

- **Alignment with Course Objectives:** Integrate trauma-informed care principles into nursing courses.
- **Sequencing:** Determine the appropriate timing and sequencing of the exercise within the course curriculum to complement other content and activities.
- **Integration of Theory and Practice:**
 - Include case studies related to stress management and resilience.

Resources and Support

- **Learning Resources:** Provide students with access to relevant literature, articles, and resources on epidemiology or disaster nursing, including:
 - [Trauma-Informed Care \(traumapolicy.org\)](http://traumapolicy.org)
 - [Self-Care \(aacnnursing.org\)](http://aacnnursing.org)
 - [Using Trauma-Informed Care to Guide Emergency Preparedness and Response | Blogs | CDC](#)
- **Student Support:** Share school/University resources for mental health support groups and counseling.
- **Faculty Support:** Offer guidance, feedback, and support to students as they engage in the exercise, addressing any questions or concerns they may have about the scenario or related topics.

Conclusion

By reflecting on personal stressors and considering resilience-building strategies, nurses enhance their ability to provide trauma-informed care and maintain well-being in challenging environments. Remember to customize this activity to the needs of your students.

Additional Activities

Role-playing/Communication Exercise

Scenario Title

Trauma-Informed Care

Objective

To enhance nursing students' understanding and application of trauma-informed care principles when interacting with patients who have experienced trauma. It focuses on fostering empathy, building trust, and creating a safe environment for healing.

Roles

- Nurse (Primary role)
- Patient (Role-played by a student)

Materials Needed

- Communication guidelines for trauma-informed care
- Scenario briefing cards
- Feedback forms

Scenario Setting

You are a nurse working in an emergency department. A patient arrives with injuries from a car accident. The patient appears distressed and avoids eye contact. You suspect the patient may have experienced trauma related to the accident.

Communication Activity

1. Pre-Exercise Preparation

- a. Brief participants on trauma-informed care principles and the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment for patients who have experienced trauma.
 - b. Review Trauma-Informed Care Principles:
 - i. Safety
 - ii. Trustworthiness and transparency
 - iii. Peer support
 - iv. Collaboration and mutuality
 - v. Empowerment, voice, and choice
 - vi. Cultural, historical, and gender issues
 - c. Discuss Communication Strategies:
 - i. Use of non-judgmental language
 - ii. Active listening skills
 - iii. Respect for patient autonomy
 - iv. Recognizing triggers and managing emotions
2. Scenario Introduction
- a. Introduce the scenario to participants and assign roles. Provide background information about the patient's potential trauma history related to the car accident.
 - b. Scenario Description:
 - i. The patient arrives in the emergency department with visible injuries and signs of distress.
 - ii. The nurse's role is to provide compassionate care while applying trauma-informed communication techniques.
3. Role-Play Interaction
- a. Participants engage in a role-play interaction where the nurse applies trauma-informed communication strategies to assess and provide care for the patient.
 - b. Role-Play Guidelines:
 - i. Nurse focuses on building rapport and establishing trust with the patient.
 - ii. Nurse demonstrates empathy and validates the patient's feelings and experiences.
 - iii. Nurse uses open-ended questions and active listening to gather information

sensitively.

- iv. Nurse respects the patient's boundaries and autonomy throughout the interaction.

Debriefing and Feedback

After the role-play, conduct a debriefing session where each participant reflects on their experience, provides feedback, and discusses lessons learned.

Debriefing Questions:

- How did you approach the patient to build trust and establish safety?
- What communication techniques did you find effective in this scenario?
- Were there any challenges in applying trauma-informed care principles? How did you address them?
- How did the patient respond to your communication approach?

Feedback:

- Participants provide feedback to each other based on observed communication skills, empathy, and adherence to trauma-informed care principles.
- Facilitator offers guidance and additional insights on effective communication strategies in trauma-informed care.

Reflective Practice

This activity could occur on a discussion board or by uploading a video using Flip or Canvas Studio.

How can nurses consistently incorporate trauma-informed care principles to promote patient-centered healing and recovery?

Interactive Module

Create an interactive escape room using Google Forms that challenges students to solve puzzles related to the chapter topic. These NCLEX-style questions can be a starting point.

1. Which action best demonstrates trauma-informed care by a nurse?
 - A. Providing detailed explanations without considering the patient's readiness to receive information.
 - B. Using open-ended questions to explore the patient's feelings and preferences.
 - C. Directing the patient's decision-making process to expedite treatment.
 - D. Minimizing patient autonomy to ensure compliance with treatment plans.
2. A nurse is caring for a patient with a history of trauma. Which intervention is most appropriate to promote a trauma-informed approach?
 - A. Engaging the patient in shared decision-making regarding their care plan.
 - B. Implementing restrictive measures to prevent potential harm to the patient.
 - C. Limiting communication to essential medical information only.
 - D. Encouraging the patient to conform to hospital routines without discussion.
3. Which statement by the nurse best demonstrates trauma-informed communication?
 - A. "I need to perform this procedure now, so please cooperate."
 - B. "Can you tell me if there's anything specific that makes you feel more comfortable during medical exams?"
 - C. "You seem upset, but we don't have time to discuss your feelings right now."
 - D. "I know what's best for you, so please trust my judgment."
4. A nurse is caring for a patient who becomes agitated during a procedure due to past trauma. Which action by the nurse demonstrates trauma-informed care?
 - A. Administering sedative medication without discussing options with the patient.
 - B. Ignoring the patient's distress to focus on completing the procedure efficiently.
 - C. Restraining the patient to ensure safety and prevent disruptive behavior.
 - D. Asking the patient about their past experiences and triggers to better understand their

reaction.

5. What is the primary goal of trauma-informed care in nursing practice?
 - A. Minimizing patient involvement in decision-making to reduce stress.
 - B. Applying rigid protocols to ensure consistent treatment outcomes.
 - C. Creating a safe and supportive environment for patients with trauma histories.
 - D. Promoting healthcare provider convenience by streamlining patient care processes.

Case Study: Delivering Trauma-Informed Care

Background

Owen is a 35-year-old man who was admitted to the hospital after a motor vehicle accident. He sustained multiple fractures and internal injuries. During the initial assessment, Owen appears withdrawn, avoids eye contact, and exhibits signs of anxiety when approached by healthcare providers. He discloses a history of childhood abuse and recent domestic violence.

Scenario

Clinical Presentation

Owen is in significant pain but hesitates to accept pain medication. He expresses fear about being touched and feels unsafe in the hospital environment. Owen's vital signs are stable, but he exhibits signs of emotional distress and hypervigilance.

Nursing Assessment and Intervention

The nurse recognizes Owen's signs of trauma and decides to implement trauma-informed care principles:

- Building Trust and Safety:

- The nurse introduces themselves calmly and explains his role in Owen's care.
- Uses non-threatening body language and maintains a respectful distance, respecting Owen's personal space.
- Empowering Patient Autonomy:
 - The nurse explains Owen's treatment options, including pain management strategies, and encourages him to make decisions about his care.
 - Offers choices when possible, such as adjusting bed positioning or selecting comfort measures.
- Sensitive Communication:
 - Engages in open-ended conversations to understand Owen's concerns and preferences.
 - Validates Owen's emotions and assures him that his feelings are understood and respected.
- Safety Planning:
 - Collaborates with the healthcare team to create a plan for minimizing triggers and ensuring a safe environment for Owen.
 - Implements strategies to reduce noise and limit unnecessary interruptions to promote a calm atmosphere.
- Trauma-Informed Documentation:
 - Records information in a factual and non-judgmental manner, focusing on Owen's responses to interventions and any observed triggers or concerns.

Outcome

Through consistent application of trauma-informed care principles, Owen gradually begins to trust the nursing team. He becomes more receptive to pain management interventions and actively participates in discussions about his treatment plan. Owen's anxiety levels decrease, and he demonstrates improved coping strategies during his hospitalization.

Questions for Reflection and Analysis

- What steps can you take to ensure Owen or similar patients feel comfortable with their

nursing team?

- What types of body language might make Owen uncomfortable? Feel safe?
- Why is it important to offer choices to patients, especially those with trauma?

Simulation

Scenario

Trauma-Informed Care in a Community Outreach Program

Objective

To enhance nursing students' understanding and application of trauma-informed care principles when interacting with individuals in a community setting who have experienced trauma. Nursing students will practice communication skills, empathy, and creating a supportive environment to facilitate healing and trust outside of traditional healthcare settings.

Setting

A community health center or outreach location, with simulated community members and interactive props.

Roles

- Nurse (Primary role)
- Community Member (Role-played by a student or a standardized patient)
- Observer

Materials Needed

- Scenario briefing cards

- Trauma-informed care guidelines
- Simulation equipment (basic medical supplies, community health education materials)
- Feedback forms

Simulation Outline

1. Pre-Simulation Briefing

- Introduce trauma-informed care principles, review scenario details, and assign roles.
- Review Trauma-Informed Care Principles:
 - Safety
 - Trustworthiness and transparency
 - Peer support
 - Collaboration and mutuality
 - Empowerment, voice, and choice
 - Cultural, historical, and gender issues
- Discuss Simulation Objectives:
 - Emphasize the importance of empathy, cultural sensitivity, and creating a safe environment for community members who have experienced trauma.

2. Simulation Introduction

- Introduce the simulation scenario to participants and set expectations.
- Scenario Description:
 - The community member (role-played or standardized) seeks assistance at a community health outreach event due to past trauma experiences, including domestic violence.
 - They are hesitant to engage with healthcare providers and may exhibit signs of distress or anxiety.
 - The nurse's role is to provide trauma-informed care while offering support and resources to meet the community member's needs.

3. Role-Play Interaction

- Participants engage in the role-play interaction, applying trauma-informed care principles to assess and provide support for the community member.

b. Key Actions for the Nurse:

- i. Approach the community member with respect and cultural sensitivity, acknowledging their experiences.
- ii. Use non-judgmental language and active listening skills to understand the community member's concerns and preferences.
- iii. Collaborate with the community member to identify their needs and goals for support.
- iv. Provide information on available community resources and empower the community member to make informed decisions about their health and well-being.

Debriefing and Feedback

After the simulation, conduct a debriefing session where each participant reflects on their experience, provides feedback, and discusses lessons learned.

Debriefing Questions

- How did you establish trust and safety with the community member during the simulation?
- What communication techniques were effective in promoting a trauma-informed approach in a community setting?
- Were there any cultural considerations or challenges in applying trauma-informed care principles? How did you address them?
- How did the community member respond to your approach? What improvements could be made?

Feedback:

- Participants provide feedback to each other based on observed communication skills, empathy, and adherence to trauma-informed care principles.
- Facilitator offers guidance and additional insights on effective communication strategies in trauma-informed care within diverse community settings.

Competency Assessment

Demonstration

- Conduct literature reviews on trauma-informed care practices, exploring current research, guidelines, and innovative approaches in nursing and healthcare.
- Initiate or participate in quality improvement projects within clinical settings to enhance trauma-informed care delivery and patient outcomes.
- Engage in community-based projects focused on raising awareness about trauma-informed care principles and promoting resilience within communities.

Clinical Activities/Opportunities

1. **Substance Use Clinics/Programs:** Participate in clinical experiences in programs that support individuals recovering from substance use disorder, many of whom have experienced trauma.
2. **Postpartum Support:** Participate in postpartum care and support services that address the emotional and psychological needs of new parents who have experienced trauma.
3. **Rehabilitation Services:** Learn about trauma-informed approaches to rehabilitation and recovery for patients recovering from injuries or surgeries related to trauma.