

Building Heroes with Heart: Immersive Clinical for Nursing Students with Children Impacted by Illness and Disabilities at a Medical Residential Camp

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INTRODUCTION

Healthcare delivery has become an ever-changing reality, with the migration of pediatric healthcare to primary care rather than inpatient clinical settings. (Mancini et al., 2019; Miller-Rosser, et al., 2019). Nurse educators must provide adequate pediatric clinical placements that allow nursing students to care for children with acute and chronic illnesses (Gibson-Young et al., 2023; Winston et al., 2022). Educators acknowledged a gap between current nursing school curricula and the scarcity of pediatric clinical settings (Winston et al., 2022). Recognition of this issue initiated exploration and collaboration with reciprocal benefits by bridging the lived experiences of a special needs child and undergraduate nursing students. Through a four-day immersive clinical experience, nursing students care for campers with various chronic illnesses and disabilities utilizing a holistic framework. This opportunity provides an unparalleled clinical immersion for nursing students, allowing them to broaden their knowledge, skills, and attitudes about caring for a unique pediatric population. Qualitative data analysis indicates a successful fusion of didactic and clinical concepts through experiential learning (King et al., 2020).

PURPOSE

This opportunity provides an unparalleled clinical immersion for nursing students, allowing them to broaden their knowledge, skills, and attitudes about caring for a unique pediatric population.



IMPLEMENTATION

Phase One: Orientation to the Camping Immersion Experience

- ❑ Methods of communication: verbal & non-verbal
- ❑ On-site tour of residential camp facilities with nursing students, faculty, and camp staff

Phase Two: Preparation for Camper Care

- ❑ Student personality analysis completed
- ❑ Formal training on sexual abuse, mandatory reporting
- ❑ In-person student interviews by camp directors
- ❑ Collaborative student-camper assignment by camp directors and faculty

Phase Three: Creating a Clinical Camp Culture

- ❑ Peer SBAR presentations by students to class, faculty, & camp directors

- ❑ Mobility and lift training by Physical Therapy
- ❑ Nutritional consideration training: Tube feeding, Gastrostomy tube care
- ❑ Medication administration for Gastrostomy tube

Phase Four: Camp Time!

- ❑ Student Teamwork-building exercises, ice-breakers with camp peer counselors
- ❑ Safety orientations for camp environment for wheelchairs
- ❑ Student standardized interview with camper caregiver/parent upon arrival ("report")
- ❑ Medication reconciliation with parent/caregiver by student with faculty oversight
- ❑ Three-day schedule of facilitating total care of camper
- ❑ Daily debriefing with student and as a group at end of camp



QUALITATIVE DATA FINDINGS

compassion
empathy
awareness
communication
teamwork
patience
time-management
understanding
bravery
adaptability
flexibility
perseverance
situational
selflessness
leadership
positivity
calmness
stamina
strength
critical
problem-solving
commitment
confidence
boundaries
support
resourcefulness
assertiveness
caring
endurance
opportunities
bonding

CONCLUSIONS

- ❑ Innovative opportunity for clinical immersion with scarcity of inpatient facility placement
- ❑ Partnership facilitates student exposure caring for unique pediatric populations
- ❑ Mutually beneficial collaborative endeavor to fulfill clinical pediatric requirements
- ❑ Facilitates empathy, compassion, autonomy and situational awareness for pediatric clients
- ❑ Increases competence in caring for children with disabilities and chronic illnesses



See our Heroes with Heart Video ❤️



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