

Nursing Students Behind Bars: An Innovative Pilot Project

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Objectives



1. The learner will be able to identify two potential challenges of providing health promotions and education during a health fair in a prison setting.
2. The learner will be able to explain how a senior level community nursing health promotion activity in a prison setting bridged theory to clinical practice.

Conflict of Interest /Funding

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NURSING STUDENTS BEHIND BARS

Prison Population Facts



- As of December 31, 2012 the total State and Federal prison population was 1,570,400 inmates. (Carson & Golinelli, 2013).
- The Department of Justice 2012 statistics report new incarcerations to state and federal prisons was 609,800 and the number of inmates released back to society was 637,400. (Carson & Golinelli, 2013).
- The most rapidly growing segment of the prison population is the middle aged (45-54) and older (>55). (Williams, Stern, Mellow, Safer, & Greifinger, 2012).

Vulnerable Populations



National Institutes of Health (NIH) identify the following as vulnerable populations
pregnant women, human fetuses, and
neonates, prisoners, and children.

Health Disparities



- With the introduction of Healthy People 2000 - the original focus was to *reduce* disparities.
- Healthy People 2010 - the focus moved to *eliminate* health disparities.
- Healthy People 2020 defines a health disparity as a “particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, and or environmental disadvantage”.

Social Justice



The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) defines as “acting in accordance with fair treatment regardless of economic status, race, ethnicity, age, citizenship, disability, or sexual orientation”. (AACN, 2008, p. 28).

World Health Organization



“Prisoners suffer a disproportionate burden of healthcare problems as their health needs are often neglected”.

Community Health Nursing in the Prison Setting



- Improving inmates health “holds potential for positively impacting the health of their family, friends, and community.”
- A health promotion and disease prevention approach to chronic disease could be “ethical, practical, and fiscally responsible”.
- Greater self-efficacy meant inmates engaged in more health-promoting and health-monitoring behaviors and felt they had better health.
- Facilitating a better transition back to the community promoted the inmates management of chronic conditions.



Background



- In Spring 2014, a qualitative pilot study with 12 senior level Baccalaureate students in a Community Health Nursing course.
- Medium security two levels Federal Penitentiary in west central Indiana.
- 200 inmates were hand selected and voluntarily participated in a health promotion fair.
- Rotated through interactive displays in time intervals.



Prison Health Fair Considerations & Challenges



Prior to the Health Fair

- Allow adequate time for preplanning for student and instructor screening/s and paperwork.
- Arrange for focus group/s and/or key informant/s to provide information.
- Provide student education regarding prison policies and procedures, safety considerations, dress, prison population characteristics.
- Transport health fair models, displays, equipment, and materials to prison one or more days prior to the fair.

Prison Health Fair

Considerations & Challenges



Day of the Health Fair

- Students should adhere to the prison visitor policy, bring photo ID, vehicle keys, and necessary medications.
- Arrive early for screening process.
- Set up.

Nursing, Respect, & Dignity







Student Feedback



"The prison health fair was one of my favorite clinical experiences."

"The inmates were polite, respectful, and interested in what we had to say."

"It was amazing to see a connection between us and the prisoners."

"The prisoners were respectful. They were interested in what I had to say and asked engaging questions."

"I am sure the presence of the guards helped keep the prisoners respectful, but I also had the impression the prisoners were grateful to our class for the health fair."

Prison Staff Feedback



The prisoners learned things they did not know and appreciated the handouts.

The only negative prisoner feedback was that the health fair lasted longer.

Will your students come back to do health fairs every semester?

The warden made it a point to visit the health fair and stated she was very impressed with the professionalism of the students and the displays, model, and handouts.

Conclusion



- Prison public health is important as many of them are released back to society.
- Working with the prison population provides students with a unique, safe opportunity similar to any community setting.
- A prison health promotion fair is a way for students to receive practical, hands-on experience with vulnerable populations and promote social justice.

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