Hoping to Pass: A Multi-Site Study Examines How a One-Time Intervention Affects High-Stakes Test Scores

Alice L. March, PhD; Joshua C. Eyer, PhD; Monika G. Wedgeworth, EdD; Mancy Haugen, PhD; Corrie Harris, PhD; and David Feldman, PhD

Capstone College of Nursing - The University of Alabama

Problem

- Standardized exams required to progress or complete nursing programs are perceived as high-stakes events
  - Thus, creating unfavorable learning conditions
- Significance
  - Affecting hope may change high-stakes exams scores
- Purpose
  - Test the effect of a one-time hope intervention on high-stake exam scores (subsection of a multi-site trial)

Methods

- Randomized control trial
- Prelicensure program
- Control group received guided relaxation
- Intervention group received one-time 90-minute hope intervention
- Instruments
  - Goal Specific Hope Scale
    - Items scores on 8-point Likert-type scale
      - 1 = definitely false to 2 = definitely true
  - Standardized Exam Score
    - Passing score of 850 expected

Results

- RQ 1: What are the changes in hope and how do they differ by group? (n=134; 2 time X 2 group ANOVA)
  - Hope scores improved significantly from baseline to post-intervention for both groups (Hope group [$F(1, 70) = 36.7$, $p < .001$]; Relaxation group [$F(1, 62) = 25.3$, $p < .001$]
  - Time by group interaction was not significant
- RQ 2: What are the between group differences in scores on final semester exams? (n=45; one-way ANOVA)
  - No statistically significant difference
  - Although not significant a slight score benefit was found (25.8) for hope intervention group [$F(1, 43) = 0.61$, $p = .44$]

Conclusion

- Preliminary result are promising
  - The greater increase in hope scores may become significant once additional data are collected
- The trend towards differences in test scores will be clarifies as additional data are collected
  - This may provide stronger support for interventions that could impact progression and completion
- Research in supported by the 2016 NLN Research Education Grant and by the University of Alabama Research Grants Committee