

Title:

The Basic Social Psychological Process of Faculty Experiencing Ethical Tension in Academia

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Session Title:

Ethical Dilemmas in Nursing Education

Slot:

B 13: Saturday, 28 October 2017: 3:15 PM-4:00 PM

Scheduled Time:

3:15 PM

Keywords:

Ethical tension, Grounded theory and Nursing faculty

References:

Fowler, M. & Davis, A. (2013). *Ethical issues occurring within nursing education*. *Nursing Ethics*, 20, 126 – 141. doi:10.1177/0969733012474290

Glaser, B. (1998). *Doing grounded theory: Issues and discussions*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Pratt, M., Martin, L., Mohide, A., & Black, M. (2013). *A descriptive analysis of the impact of moral distress on the evaluation of unsatisfactory nursing students*. *Nursing Forum*, 48, 231 – 239. doi:10.1111/nuf.12036

Abstract Summary:

This qualitative grounded theory study identified the ethical tension that occurs when faculty interacts in stressful and ethical situations with nursing students or colleagues. Learning to manage ethical tension may contribute to change factors that have a direct impact on modifying nurse academicians' intent to leave and the faculty shortage.

Learning Activity:

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE
Discuss the emotional tension that surrounds faculty in nursing academia	Themes/categories and quotes from interviews
Develop an insight into the process of managing ethical tension	Offer management and coping strategies

Abstract Text:

Purpose: The purpose of this qualitative grounded theory study is to identify the process that occurs when nursing faculty encounter stressful and ethically charged situations with nursing students or colleagues. An ethical dilemma may take place within a person when faced with failing a student through subjective assignments, unethical faculty behavior, disrespectful student actions, bullying, and many others. There is a paucity of papers on ethical tension with moral distress the more commonly used term to describe ethical dilemmas with educators. Pratt, Martin, Mohide, and Black (2013) conducted a descriptive analysis on the impact of moral distress with nurse educators. Findings from the review of six studies evidence that nurse educators' experiences commonly leave the educator mentally exhausted with the

intent to leave academia. Fowler and Davis (2013) indicate that many ethical issues experienced by nurse educators are not discussed in the literature, although incivility, cheating and plagiarism, mobbing, racism and others are becoming more prevalent topics. It is felt by the researchers that tension precedes distress therefore the intent of this research study is to gain an understanding of the tension that occurs within a faculty member when faced with an ethical dilemma prior to the occurrence of mental and physical reactions resulting in distress.

Methods: The research question driving this study is: What occurs when faculty experience ethical tension in nursing education?

University Institutional Review Board approval for ethical treatment of subjects was obtained. Grounded Theory (Glaser, 1998) an inductive process of discovery is the methodological approach used to meet the purpose of this study. A combination of purposive and theoretical sampling was used to identify potential participants. This resulted in a sample size of 11 full time faculty members (n=9) females (n=2) males self-identified as teaching didactic courses in NLNAC or CCNE accredited nursing programs in the mid Atlantic area of the U.S. and who experienced interactions with a student or colleague that resulted in ethical tension. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews lasting 60-90 minutes. Interviews and memos were analyzed and coded concurrently. Data collection continued until theoretical saturation was achieved.

Results: Themes and categories emerging from the data resulted in the discovery of the basic social psychological process (BSPP). This process occurs when nursing faculty encounter and act to resolve ethical dilemmas in academia. The core concepts of the BSPP include noticing ethical dilemmas, responding to the situation, experiencing the impact, and reflecting on outcomes. The resulting substantive theory explains how faculty experience and respond to ethical tension in academia.

Conclusion: Nurse educators are considered the gatekeepers for the nursing profession, therefore there are significant implications to investigating ethical tension-related impacts and responses when working with undergraduate/graduate students or colleagues; these issues warrant consideration especially for maintaining loyal and dedicated faculty as well as when recruiting new members into the rank of faculty.

Identifying methods of coping with and managing ethical tension may contribute to change factors that have a direct impact on modifying nurse academicians' intent to leave, making for a better work environment and enhancing the numbers of faculty members for teaching the increasing numbers of nursing students.