



Moving Disaster Education from the Classroom to the Community



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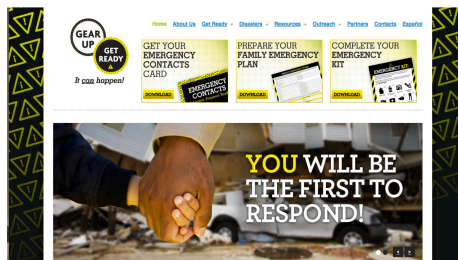
Indiana University Northwest

Abstract

Nurses have a long history in support of community engagement and health promotion. This relationship has served to establish the profession as the most trustworthy of all professions for the past decade. However, we struggle in understanding our role in the delivery of primary prevention methods for disaster readiness and emergency responsiveness. Recent events have consistently demonstrated the need for continued efforts toward community health promotion and resilience (Chandra et al., 2013). Yet, few models exist where nurses take a leadership role in engaging the community in disaster response preparation and potentially prevention. Additionally, even fewer examples exist in the direct involvement of undergraduate nursing students in this effort.

Objectives

This multilayered project was designed to: improve the engagement of a local SON in community-based disaster preparedness and improve the knowledge of local residents.



Literature Support

The concept of community resilience is the ability of a community to regain its prior level of functioning after a disaster event has occurred (Cutter, et al., 2008). Researchers acknowledge a lack of focus placed on disaster preparedness by traditional health care personnel and suggest action for improved delivery of holistic care (Adams & Canciani, 2008; Hipper, Orr, & Chernak, 2015). However, topics such as disaster preparedness are often left to emergency management personnel, fire safety, and local law enforcement.

Chandra et al. (2013)

- Community resilience can be developed through active community partnerships.
- Development of a community-based toolkit that includes strategies and materials for planning groups can support high priority areas of disaster education and support.

Kenner & Pressler (2014)

- Core education on emergency preparedness is required by all healthcare personnel.
- The integration of disaster education concepts in nursing education is essential in the development of a prepared nursing workforce.

Cusak, Ribson, & Rans (2010)

- Universities and Schools of Nursing are often overlooked in supporting community-level disaster preparedness.
- Numerous response capabilities and activities are available for nursing students in promotion of community-based disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

Development of Project

This project was designed as a multi-levelled community-based approach to: assess community awareness of disaster related events, deliver disaster response education to local residents using a variety of methods (seminar, games, social media), develop community collaborations, and establish a formal method for continued university involvement. The project was organized into four distinct phases. Each phase of the project was delivered over the course of an entire semester (approximately 15 weeks) to allow students an opportunity to become knowledgeable and engaged in the topic. Institutional Review Board approval was received for the applicable project phases.

Completion of a community assessment on disaster response awareness and ability

- Thirteen (13) undergraduate senior-level nursing students trained in data collection to gather feedback from a convenience sample of community members on disaster knowledge and readiness.

Development and delivery of community-based education on disaster response

- Eight (8) undergraduate senior-level nursing students developed educational programming to improve local knowledge about response capability, emergency management, personal hazard analysis, fire and water safety, community emergency response plans, using the national Gear Up, Get Ready™ campaign, developed by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA, 2017).

Development and delivery of a social media campaign focused on electronic delivery of educational content

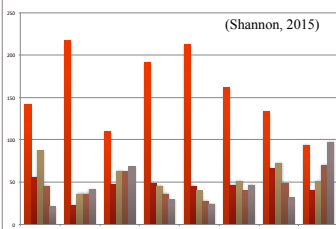
- Eight (8) senior-level nursing students initiated a social media campaign of monthly educational interventions (public service announcements, flyers, handouts, Facebook postings, Twitter feeds) to provide knowledge on topics such as fire safety, managing severe weather, and flood response.

Development and implementation of a campus-based, student-led organization for sustainability of disaster education delivery

- Seventeen (17) nursing students (10 sophomore-level and 7 senior-level) developed a campus-based student organization in collaboration with the local chapter of the American Red Cross. The Red Cross Club was formed to further the educational delivery of emergency preparedness for local citizens and to support the mission and vision of the American Red Cross in support of community education and disaster preparedness.

Results

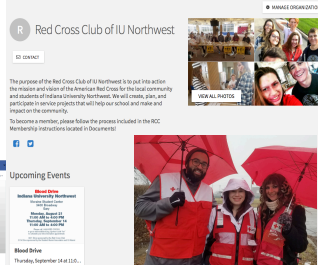
Students, faculty, and staff within the selected SON became increasingly involved in understanding their role and responsibility for disaster preparedness support within the community. Upon review of the student journals, a recurring theme revealed students found each of the activities to be a supportive learning experience for both personal knowledge on disaster nursing content and methods of community health promotion. Feedback from campus and community-based educational events were positive with 95% of attendees reporting improved knowledge on steps toward disaster preparedness.



What would you do in case of a fire, flood or snowstorm?



DISASTER PREP WORKSHOP!!!



Discussion

Challenges to project development and implementation included a lack of nursing student awareness and engagement in the topic. Traditionally, this content was formally included as a part of the nursing program's senior-level community-health nursing course addressing disaster-nursing content areas such as: Stages of disasters, Critical incident communication, Ethical practice, and Health promotion. However, when polled, faculty within the selected program reported limited class time devoted to the subject matter; failing to to include important areas such as:

- Assessment of families
- Implementation of care for communities
- Long-term care needs- community recovery
- Initiation of disaster patient care and referrals
- Implementation of appropriate steps to limit spread of an agent, including
- Provision of essential nursing care for individuals, families, special groups (e.g. children, elderly, etc.) at the pre-disaster, emergency and post-disaster phases

The intentional involvement of nurses in this endeavor supports the professional focus of community engagement and health promotion. As nursing education has continued to focus on the improvement of disaster nursing concept delivery in prelicensure curriculums, opportunities exist for the experiential learning of undergraduate nursing students in community-based disaster support. Local organizations began to report a desire to connect with the SON and greater campus in a collaborative community based initiative.

Acknowledgements

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