The use of self as a simulation process in teaching mental health nursing concepts

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Statement of the Problem: Teaching psychiatric and mental health nursing concepts is one of the challenging demands of nursing instruction. Using the self, both the students and instructor, through demonstration and return demonstration simulate the behaviors, thoughts, and feelings of actual patients in the clinical setting. The aim of this study is threefold. First, the nurse instructor must create a mechanism on how he or she can demonstrate mental disorders either through himself or a video; second, the students will provide a feedback of learning using dramatization as how they understood the disorder; and third, the instructor discusses the gap between what was taught and how the students learned the concept by providing his feedback through demonstration using locomotion, dramatization, and creative communication.

Methodology and Theoretical Orientation: A qualitative approach of inquiry using dramatization was used as primary methods of acquiring data for the study. The study took place in the first half of semester 1, the academic year 2017-2018 in the male campus of the University of Hail, College of Nursing. During the process, the students were asked to choose a mental health disorder performed to the class based on the perceived knowledge of the disease and guided by a video observation before the dramatization activity. After the dramatization, individual students answered a series of questions based on the role they portrayed in the dramatization and then small groups participated in focus groups.

Findings: Data was analyzed through expert observation, critique and feedback by the instructor during the dramatization, as guided by a checklist of signs and symptoms reflected in the DSM Criteria of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) and the prescribed textbook in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing.

Results and Discussion: The students claimed that they understood better the mental health disorders, either as someone portraying the clinical manifestations or as an audience compared with the traditional lecture method.

Conclusion and Significance: Psychiatric mental health nursing disorders are subjective and the success of understanding the concepts solely depends on how it is imparted to the learners. The ‘use of self’ is not only a means of providing care to patients but a way for the carer to understand how to provide care.

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