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# Hearing Voices That are Distressing: A Simulation Experience

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## Background

Nursing students are exposed to clients experiencing auditory hallucinations in a variety of settings. It is often difficult for students to establish a rapport with these clients. Past research indicates that having clinical staff establishing a good rapport with clients results in better treatment outcomes and improved safety for both clients and clinical staff.

While increasing empathy for clients experiencing auditory hallucinations is supported in the literature as a great means of establishing rapport, the literature is scant on how to develop empathy in students. Research on the use of simulation for training around client empathy is virtually non-existent.

## Problem Statement

Nursing students are not always well prepared to care for clients experiencing auditory hallucinations in a safe, compassionate manner. This can result in unsafe situations for clients and/or students.

## Goals

The goal of the project was strengthening safe nursing practice through improved empathy and communication skills for nursing students.

## Methods

A longitudinal pre-test, post-test, post-test design was utilized for the present research. *Hearing Voices That are Distressing: A Training and Simulation Experience (Deegan)* was used as the project training tool.

To assess student empathy, participants completed training and two post-training surveys (one at <time>, one at ><time>). Survey data were collected electronically via SurveyGizmo®. To minimize peer-to-peer pressure, student participation was voluntary. To minimize faculty-to-student pressure, participation was solicited by a non-faculty researcher.

A total of 83 students were invited to participate in the survey.

## Results

Surveys were completed by 38 of 83 potential nursing student participants (45% completion rate).

Results revealed the following:

- Nursing students are more empathetic immediately after the simulation experience with regard to caring and concern for their clients, being able to see things from their client's perspective, imagining things from the client's perspective, assessing clients, listening to clients .
- No changes were identified after the first and second post-testing in the categories of feeling pity, feeling soft hearted, evaluating both sides of a question, and putting myself in the client's shoes.
- Decreases in empathy were observed in results related to putting themselves in the client's place.
- Improved confidence in an emergency situation was observed in results related to being able to remain calm in emergencies, being in emotional situations with clients, feeling effective in dealing with emergencies.

## Conclusion

Patricia Deegan's *Hearing Voices That are Distressing: A Training and Simulation Experience* is a tool that supports building empathy in nursing students while encouraging and building safe nursing practice through improved empathy and communication.

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