RESILIENCE IN UNDERGRADUATE NURSING STUDENTS: AN INTEGRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW
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SIGNIFICANCE
• Resilience has been defined as the ability to thrive after adversity. Resilient individuals have been described as those having a set of assumptions or attitudes about themselves that influence their behaviors and the skills they develop.
• Traumatic events (9/11, Hurricane Katrina, the Amish School shootings, college shootings) and pressures from bullying highlight the need to foster resilience in students to better prepare them for the future.
• We need to better prepare nursing students to face adversities and not only survive, but thrive, as they face additional life events and challenges with the hope and optimism for future successful outcomes.

BACKGROUND
• High attrition rates for nursing students linked to the stress associated with:
  1. Age-related changes
  2. The academic culture
  3. Unique adverse events (such as horizontal/vertical violence)
• Culture of nursing school found to be quite different from student expectations
• Intimate nature of nursing and patient care places students in many “first” situations including, but not limited to, exposure to nudity, death and dying, and alternative lifestyles

METHODS
• Databases: CINAHL, Health Reference Center, Health and Wellness Resource Center, Health Source: Nursing/Academic, MEDLINE, PsycArticles, PsycINFO, and PubMed
• Key terms: resilience, adolescents, protective factors, college students, coping strategies, nurse educators, stress management, faith, attrition, retention, dropout, violence, culture, nursing school culture, support, threat, and nursing student(s)
• Inclusion criteria: (a) English language publication, (b) peer-reviewed journals, dissertations, and books, (c) research and/or conceptual studies, (d) recent publication (2003-2010)
• Fifty-seven sources initially reviewed with 12 articles chosen for inclusion

FINDINGS
• While much has been written about resilience, few studies explore the concept with healthy, well-adjusted individuals. Most nursing research on resilience has focused on the concept and the development of theories, models, and measurement instruments.
• Three themes emerged from this review as relevant to the concept of resilience in undergraduate nursing students.
  Personal Characteristics
  “Protective Factors” (including: hope, optimism, self-efficacy, positive emotions, sense of humor, effective coping skills)
  • Can be learned or enhanced to reduce emotional stress and improve coping skills
  • Educators assist students in developing skills and behaviors that reshape and redefine factors to more effectively deal with adversities

  Professional Socialization
  • Positive role models and mentors important in role acculturation leading to increased sense of belonging
  • Students need opportunities to engage in meaningful interpersonal relationships
  • Educators assist students in reconciling discrepancies between assumptions and realities of workplace/clinical environments

  Intentional Support
  • Reinforce importance of strong support systems
  • Educators focus on engagement and partnership with students as well as being proactive in addressing issues of interpersonal violence
  • Educators implement preventive strategies and interventions to assist students in developing skills to better deal with adversities

IMPLICATIONS
• Reveals need to create learning environments that feature engagement, cooperative learning between faculty and students, frank discussions re: issues affecting students, a supportive learning environment, and promotion of sense of belonging
• May require restructuring of educational environment
• Strengthening of faculty/student relationship useful in guiding students through adverse events, helping them see past perceived obstacles to becoming more resilient
• Future research needed to explore students’ views of resilience and effectiveness of methods used in its development