**Teaching Spiritual Care to Nursing Students: An Integrated Modeling Approach**

By

Elizabeth Johnston Taylor, Nancy Testerman, and Dynnette Hart

*Journal of Christian Nursing* Volume 31, Number 2

Supplemental Digital Content

Faculty course coordinators at Loma Linda University School of Nursing (LLUSN) identified numerous methods for educating students to provide spiritual care. While many of the methods directly teach aspects of spiritual care from a nursing perspective, other methods are designed to strengthen the spiritual awareness and well-being of students so they are enabled to be aware and present for patients. This table shows methods faculty members use to teach spiritual care in 15 courses across the LLUSN curriculum.

Table 1. Topics and Methods for Teaching Spiritual Care Across the LLUSN Curriculum

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Course | Didactic instruction | Clinical setting instruction\* |
| Fundamental  Nursing Skills and  Basic Skills &  Health Assessment | * Lectures/discussion on: grief and loss, cultural differences related to spiritual needs, ethical principles related to spiritual needs, spiritual resources for comfort and relief of pain * Mental, spiritual, and cultural assessment * Expert spiritual care nurse from medical center lectures on spiritual needs, interventions, use of prayer, guidelines for different cultural groups | * What are spiritual needs * Discussion of patient with spiritual needs and how to address these * DVD showing clinician interacting with family dealing with spiritual issues * Discussing student experiences in clinical where spiritual care was provided * Included in “head to toe” physical assessment |
| Gerontological Nursing | Lecture on spiritual needs of elders | * Instruction and assignment on life story listening |
| Adult Health (Medical-Surgical) Nursing (I & II) | Thread throughout lectures: How God created humans with bodies that frequently compensate for illness | Relating examples of students giving spiritual support with prayer |
| Obstetrical & Neonatal Nursing | * Sharing previous OB student’s experience of answered prayer for neonate patient * As part of lecture of professionalism, values, and integrity, discussed need for personal examination and allowing God to transform * As part of lecture on substance abuse and domestic violence, discussed spiritual coping and support * As part of lecture on pregnancy changes, described God’s creation of the amazing body | * Chaplain discussed impact of spirituality on birthing, and the ethics of surrogacy, abortion, and care for those who are different than the nurse (e.g., sexual orientation, religion). Chaplain had a blessing for the students. * Field trip to biology museum generated discussion of creation, stem cell research, abortion, anomalies * Encourage students to have patients tell their story * Moments of silence around a deceased baby * Honoring the “ah” of a birth experience by listening to what the parents say * Clinical conference topics for discussion include: fetal demise; depression, loneliness, despair of various ante- and post-partum conditions; guilt, forgiveness as it relates to rape, incest, substance abuse; keeping family intact as promoting wholeness |
| Child Health Nursing | * Spirituality discussed in lectures on end of life care, growth and development of child, children’s reactions to hospitalization, and whole-family care |  |
| Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing | Topics of spiritual needs, religious coping threaded through lecture/discussions on mental health | * Discuss spiritual topics encountered such as devil possession, praying with patients * Student led instruction on communication skills and relaxation techniques * Small student facilitated support group with required self-reflection essay * Chaplain invited to one post conference |
| Critical Care | Writing assignment on how student experienced giving spiritual care |  |
| Health Promotion | Students complete a personal health and wellness assessment—including spiritual health. (They summarize their own strengths, weaknesses, areas to improve). Some choose to write goals that address areas of spiritual health and wellbeing. |  |
| Home Health Nursing | * Hospice chaplain participates in panel discussion * Assigned 2 chapters which discuss spiritual care * At start of class, prays not only for students making home visits, but for those whom they will serve | * Rotation in hospice provides exposure to spiritual care at end of life. |
| Public Health Nursing | * In class on education, teaching “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” * Faith community nursing | * Optional mission trip for clinical * Discussing patient assessments and care when spiritual need is identified * Rotation in faith community nursing which expects students to share a prayer or inspirational thought during each home visit (pre-printed cards with non-religious inspirational messages an option) * Volunteer parish nurses speaking at clinical conference * Discussion of spirituality in relation to aging, death, dying, grief * Different religious/belief systems |
| Community Mental Health Nursing | * Assignment to do a spiritual assessment on family member/friend or case study * Lecture on ethics and end of life care from different religions | * Personal and clinical use of mindfulness training * Framework of wholeness for community clients * Discussing and modeling ease with supporting small group member’s expressions of spirituality * How spirituality is integrated in 12-step programs * Students complete a 3-generation genogram of family of origin, then discussed and reflected upon in comfort of class in instructor’s home * Discussion of forgiveness and instilling hope; * Discussing cases in post conferences of clients for whom spirituality was integral to wellness |
| Professional Nursing Issues | * Spirituality incorporated in lecture on socialization * Illustrated values present in professional/patient situations |  |
| Senior Capstone: Leadership and Management (didactic and clinical) | * Lecture on spiritual/ethical advocacy, how to nurture a caring environment * Open didactics with readings from M. E. O’Brien’s (2011) *Servant Leadership in Nursing: Spirituality and Practice in Contemporary Health Care* * 1-unit module completed online that requires completion of Johnston Taylor workbook “What do I say? Talking with Patients about Spirituality” with weekly assignments   --module also requires students to describe and reflect on situation where they provided spiritual care   * Whole Person Care model of LLU revisited, reflection on how to best incorporate it in their care |  |
| RN to BS nursing classes (4) | * Online class on spiritual/ethical advocacy * Assigned Winslow & Winslow article on ethics of praying with patients, spiritual care * Assigned Taylor *What Do I Say?* workbook on how to talk with patients about spirituality * Module requiring students to describe situation where they provided spiritual care * Short answer questions that prompt reflection on how to respect patient and personal spirituality |  |
| Nursing Research | * Lecture on state of science in spiritual care by invited researcher |  |

\* Often includes “modeling” personal spiritual well-being and supporting patient spiritual well-being.